

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Level IV Drought Response Outdoor Water Use Rule, Schedules and Restrictions for Residential and Commercial Customers of EPD-Permitted Water Providers

March 4, 2009

*The document answers questions related to the Outdoor Water Use Rule, schedules and restrictions of the Level IV Drought Response.*

### 1) What is a Level IV Drought Response?

In 2003, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division and the Pollution Prevention Assistance Division developed the first Drought Management Plan for Georgia. The Plan consists of pre-drought mitigation strategies and drought response strategies. There are four levels of drought response, which are implemented according to the severity of drought conditions.

In Level IV, NO outdoor water use is allowed, other than for activities exempted in 391-3-30-.05 of the Rules for Outdoor Water Use, as the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) Director may order, or as otherwise provided for in House Bill 1281 as adopted by the 2008 General Assembly and signed by the Governor on May 17, 2008.

Many counties in North Georgia are designated in the Level IV Drought Response; however, the amount of available water in this broad geographic area varies greatly from water system to water system – even between systems that are adjacent to each other. Therefore, EPD developed a rigorous tool to predict the amount of water available to a system when water use and availability are compared to worse case drought scenarios (generally Summer 2007). Using this tool, EPD subdivided Level IV into specific, relaxed sub-categories represented by Levels IVa, IVb and IVc (see box below). Water providers that do not withdraw water directly from Lake Lanier or the Chattahoochee River between Buford and Peachtree Creek may petition EPD for authorization to impose these more relaxed restrictions on outdoor water use.

Citizens are encouraged to contact their water provider for the most up-to-date information on outdoor water use restrictions and schedules in their area.

**Level IV** – No outdoor watering except for exemptions provided for in Section 391-3-30-05 of the Rules for Outdoor Water Use;

**Level IVa** - Odd/even watering 1 day per week between midnight and 10:00 am: At the discretion of the permittee, odd addresses water on Sundays or Thursdays, even/unnumbered addresses water on Mondays or Saturdays;

**Level IVb** - Odd/even watering 2 days per week between midnight and 10:00 am: Odd on Tuesdays and Thursdays, even on Mondays and Wednesdays. At the discretion of the permittee odd addresses may water on Thursdays and Sundays, even/unnumbered addresses may water on Wednesdays and Saturdays;

**Level IVc** - Odd/even watering 3 days per week between midnight and 10:00 am: Odd on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, even/unnumbered on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays.

**2) What is outdoor water use and to whom does the Outdoor Water Use Rule, schedules and restrictions apply?**

Outdoor water use includes activities such as irrigating landscapes, washing vehicles, hard surfaces or buildings, water use for decorative fountains or ponds, and others. Pursuant to HB1281 filling and maintaining swimming pools is not considered to be an outdoor water use.

The schedules and restrictions outlined in the Rules for Outdoor Water Use apply to customers (households and businesses) who receive water from an entity (public or private) with a water withdrawal permit or a permit to operate a drinking water system from EPD.

Individual water providers are responsible for the enforcement of the Outdoor Water Use Rule, schedules and restrictions.

**3) What uses are exempted and therefore allowed by Section 391-3-30-.05 of the Outdoor Water Use Rule?**

- a. Capture and re-use of cooling system condensate or storm water in compliance with applicable local ordinances.
- b. Re-use of gray water in compliance with applicable local ordinances.
- c. Use of reclaimed wastewater by a designated user from a system permitted by EPD to provide reclaimed wastewater.
- d. Irrigation of personal food gardens.
- e. Water use, circulation and aeration for ponds or fountains, which maintain aquatic life.
- f. Water may be used to wash hard surfaces, such as streets, gutters, sidewalks driveways, school buses, fire trucks, emergency vehicles and police cars ONLY when necessary for public health and safety.
- g. Water may be used to water-in pesticides and herbicides.
- h. Landscape professionals who hold a valid business license may use water to hydro-seed a lawn.
- i. Landscape and irrigation contractors who hold a valid business license may use water during installation of irrigation equipment and as needed for proper maintenance and adjustments only.
- j. Sod producers, food and fiber producers, ornamental growers, fruit and vegetable growers, nurseries and retail garden centers may water their stock.
- k. Power-washing contractors who hold a valid business license may use water to run their power-washing equipment for customers.

- l. Water may be used on construction sites.
- m. Water may be used for commercial car wash operations.
- n. Water may be used for other activities essential to daily business (This exemption refers to activities that are part of a primary operation of a business. For example, a window washing business or a mobile car wash business is included in this category).

**4) What uses are authorized and therefore allowed by the Director's Order February 11, 2008, Director's Order March 3, 2009, or by HB 1281?**

a) Filling swimming pools

Each household, business or other institution/property owner may fill swimming pools without restrictions on day or time.

b) Hand-watering (plants, seed and turf)

Each household, business or other institution/property owner may use one garden hose equipped with a standard spray nozzle that automatically turns off when the nozzle is released, 25 minutes during the designated days and times to hand-water landscaping. This includes existing landscapes as well as small, newly installed landscape areas (i.e., flowerbeds, containers, etc.).

- Allowed watering hours are within the hours of 12:00 midnight to 10:00 a.m.
- Odd-numbered addresses may water Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.
- Even-numbered and unnumbered addresses may water Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.

c) Irrigating newly installed landscapes

New landscaping (plants, seed and turf) may be installed by anyone (professional or homeowner/property owner) and may be watered with an in-ground irrigation system, above ground hose-end sprinkler, soaker hose, drip or any type of low-volume irrigation system during the designated days and times for up to 10 weeks upon registration with the Outdoor Water Use Registration Program ([www.outdoorwateruse.com](http://www.outdoorwateruse.com)).

- A "newly installed landscape" is any plant, seed or turf that has been in place less than 30 days.
- **Replanting or reseeding an existing lawn is considered a newly installed landscape.**
- As the landscaping is being installed, it may be watered in at any time of the day.
- Allowed watering hours are within the hours of 12:00 midnight to 10:00 a.m.
- Odd-numbered addresses may water Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.
- Even-numbered and unnumbered addresses may water Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.

The Outdoor Water Use Registration Program is intended and designed to educate and inform participants about global water resources, Georgia's water resources, best landscape practices and proper watering techniques. There are two ways to obtain a certificate. Each requires a participant to successfully complete the program by reviewing and understanding a presentation and passing a test with at least 70% correct answers.

County Extension Office

Call a local County Extension Office to make an appointment to complete the Program. There is no cost for this option. Locate a County Extension Office by calling 1-800-ASK-UGA1, or by visiting [www.ugaextension.org](http://www.ugaextension.org), then selecting "Local Offices."

Online

Complete the Program online by choosing the Outdoor Water Use Registration button on [www.outdoorwateruse.com](http://www.outdoorwateruse.com). A credit card is required to pay the convenience fee of \$4.95 for the online option. For technical assistance with this option, contact [help@outdoorwateruse.com](mailto:help@outdoorwateruse.com).

d) Using drip irrigation and soaker hoses

Households, businesses or other institutions or property owners may water shrubs, trees, and flowerbeds one hour a day up to three days a week using drip irrigation systems and soaker hoses. This exemption does not allow watering of lawns or turf grass, which requires more conventional types of spray irrigation that uses significantly more water.

- Drip irrigation is a highly efficient irrigation system that slowly waters the soil directly around the base of individual plants through small flexible pipes and emitters. This minimizes evaporative losses, pooling, runoff and wetting of plant foliage. Drip irrigation may be part of a larger automated irrigation system or may operate as a standalone system connected to a typical outdoor faucet.
- Soaker hoses are a less expensive alternative to drip irrigation that are also much more efficient than traditional sprayhead or sprinkler irrigation systems. Soaker hoses are connected to a typical outdoor faucet and also deliver water slowly and directly to the soil around the base of individual plants. Soaker hoses are not the same as sprinkler hoses that spray water into the air where a lot of water is lost to evaporation.
- For more information on drip irrigation and soaker hoses visit [www.conservewatergeorgia.net](http://www.conservewatergeorgia.net).
- Odd-numbered addresses may water Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.
- Even-numbered and unnumbered addresses may water Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.