



CITY OF CAPE TOWN
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WATER RESTRICTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CITY OF CAPE TOWN

WATER & SANITATION

2015/16



green drop
CERTIFICATION

waste water service
REGULATION



blue drop
CERTIFIED

Excellent drinking water quality
MANAGEMENT

These questions and answers have been prepared to help you comply with the Cape Town level 2 water restrictions effective from 1 January 2016.

1. Will I be penalized or punished with some additional penalty fee for not using less water (from 1st of January) than what I am currently using?

There are no penalties for consumers who don't make additional water savings. However, the price of water will be increasing – especially for large domestic consumers. This means that you will pay more for the same amount of water used. This is necessary in order to encourage water savings. Due to the city's increasing block tariff for domestic consumers, this will have very little effect on small consumers and water efficient households. On the other hand, large domestic consumers will pay a significantly higher marginal price for water as shown in the below table.

Steps	Unit	Level 1 (10% reduction) incl VAT (until 31 December 2015)	Level 2 (20% reduction) incl VAT (from 1 January 2016)
Step 1 (0 < 6 kl)	Per kl	R0	R0
Step 2 (>6 < 10,5 kl)	Per kl	R11,07	R11,66
Step 3 (>10,5 < 20 kl)	Per kl	R15,87	R18,24
Step 4 (>20 < 35 kl)	Per kl	R23,51	R29,75
Step 5 (>35 < 50 kl)	Per kl	R29,03	R45,40
Step 6 (>50 kl)	Per kl	R38,30	R85,09

When working with averages it is estimated that if the average customers reduce their consumption by 10%, their bill should remain at a similar rand value. In practice this will be impacted on by other factors like the number of days between water meter readings.

For more information on your bill and the 20% saving tariffs for both water and sanitation as applicable to the level 2 restrictions effective from 1st of January 2016, click [here](#).

2. I have applied to register my borehole/wellpoint, but haven't received my official, free display sign from the City. Will I be fined?

To register or re-register your borehole or wellpoint, residents simply should send an email to Borehole.water@capetown.gov.za. On application via this dedicated email address, proof of application will be provided, which can be printed and kept until you receive your official (free) display sign as required by the latest water restrictions.

3. Do I need a display sign if I am using bath water to water my lawn?

Yes, when using greywater you need to put up a sign stating that you are using non-potable water for irrigation clearly visible from a public thoroughfare. See [here](#) for more details (section on signage).

4. Can I use bath water to water my garden at any time or only on watering days?

You can use bath water to water your garden any time as bath water cannot be stored for a period of time without causing a health nuisance. A visible signage saying you are using non-potable water for watering your garden must be displayed. This must be clearly visible from a public thoroughfare. See [here](#) for more details (section on signage).

5. I have a large property. Can I use the allowed times to fill buckets or a tank(s) and then water until it is used up, or can I get an exemption to water for longer?

You cannot fill containers and use them later to water the garden. However, single residential properties larger than 1000 square meters can apply for exemption. You should understand the consumption cost implication – the more water you use, the more expensive it is. To apply for a special exemption, send a completed [Special Exemption Application Form](#) to the Director: Water & Sanitation via email to Water.Restrictions@capetown.gov.za.

6. Can I wash my car with a hose on my lawn while watering?

Yes, it may be washed provided it is washed in the prescribed times provided for irrigation and only if the hosepipe is fitted with an automatic self-closing device.

7. I want to clean my roof using a high-pressure hose, but I am not using a contractor. Do I need an exemption and will I get it?

You need to apply for an exemption. Conditional approval may be granted. Please note that the exemption will be for a defined period that will be determined by the Director: Water and Sanitation. To apply for exemption, send a completed [Special Exemption Application Form](#) to the Director: Water & Sanitation via email to Water.Restrictions@capetown.gov.za.

8. Can historical / museum gardens be exempt from the water restrictions?

Yes. Exemptions are possible to various types of customers. See [here](#) for more details. To apply for exemption, send a completed [Special Exemption Application Form](#) to the Director: Water & Sanitation via email to Water.Restrictions@capetown.gov.za.

9. When will the revised restrictions commence and what level of restrictions will be enforced?

From 01 January 2016. The 20% level (also called “level 2 restrictions”) will be enforced. See [here](#) for more details.

10. What am I allowed to do and what not with watering?

For details of the revised restriction measures see [here](#) for more details.

11. What happens if it rains heavily after 1 January 2016 and the dams fill up?

In terms of the City’s water by-law, the Director: Water and Sanitation may at his discretion revoke the restrictions.

12. How do you calculate a household's average water consumption for the purposes of working out what they should be saving?

Residents need to familiarize themselves with their municipal account as such information (actual reading) is reflected therein, month to month. Alternatively, they must keep track of their consumption by reading their own meters and recording such. Further to this they need to be able to identify areas of water wastage and use the water saving tips available on the City's Water and Sanitation website. On average, a basic household (without any luxuries, e.g. swimming pool) can use between 6 kl -20 kl a month, but this is dependent on a range of things and is merely an assumption. For more information on your bill and the 20% saving tariffs for both water and sanitation as applicable to the level 2 restrictions effective from 1st of January 2016, click [here](#).

13. How effective were water restrictions in 2005? How did consumption patterns change in that period of restrictions?

The water restrictions imposed in 2005 were at a level of 10% and the actual saving amounted to 15.5% - most of which was sustained. This indicates that a large proportion of consumers changed their habits permanently and installed alternatives, such as boreholes, greywater irrigation systems, and in some cases laid paving to minimize irrigation requirements.

14. What penalties are proposed this time?

Spot fines of up to R1 500 may be issued by the City of Cape Town in terms of the Water Bylaw. Repeat offenders could be summonsed and be liable for prosecution resulting in a fine of up to R10 000, or imprisonment up to six months, or both.

15. Experience and common sense show us that rich people, who are also the heaviest water users, will be able to afford the punitive water tariffs and therefore will have no incentive to save water. Poor people, on the other hand, will not be able to afford them, so are likely to bear the brunt of the higher prices or having to cope with less water. What steps are being taken to address this?

The free water allocation remains free and is set at 6 kilolitres per domestic household. The lower steps of the tariff structure have low increases, while the higher steps are subjected to higher percentage increases, thus assisting the poor and those who save water. Informal settlement residents receive all water for free. See also question 1 above.

16. A water consumption reduction of 20% implies a reduction of 20% in the City's income from water and sewerage. How will this affect the council's operations?

The tariff is designed to be revenue-neutral when applied to the current consumption levels. The proposed increases are designed to recover the loss in income/revenue due to the reduction in billed consumption, so no operational consequences /effects are expected.

- 17. If there's a significant decrease in the flow of water through the city's sewerage system, will this affect its operation? Are there any health risks associated with this?**

Most of the water saving comes from a reduction in irrigation or other "luxury" uses like swimming pools. It is therefore not expected that there will be any serious effect on the sewerage system. This will however be monitored.

- 18. How will you make allowances for large households? It would be unreasonable to expect someone living alone to be able to save as much water as a family of six living in the house next door.**

While there is no simple or inexpensive way to monitor the number of people in a household for every connection, the free water does allow for a free basic allocation of 25 litres per day for a household of up to 8 people. This is the basis for the 6 kilolitres for each household. Each and every one of us can save water, the volume/extent will differ from person to person, but whatever the volume, it makes a difference and is well appreciated.

- 19. Will restrictions affect municipal swimming pools?**

It is recommended that ALL swimming pools be covered by a pool cover to avoid evaporation when not in use. No automatic top-up systems are allowed.

- 20. What special arrangements (if any) are being made to ensure the maintenance of the City's golf courses? Have you quantified the amount of water used to water golf courses?**

Almost all golf courses in the City are irrigated using recycled (treated effluent) water from wastewater treatment plants, boreholes or other resources.

- 21. Will you continue to use municipal trucks to spray road surfaces during the period of restrictions? If so, why? And how much water do they consume?**

Municipal street-cleaning generally uses non-potable water.

- 22. What steps is the Council, as a water consumer itself, taking to ensure it reduces its usage?**

The City continuously identifies its large water use points and engages with the relevant directorates to determine areas of water saving, for example the retro-fitting program which entails the removal of automatic flushing urinals in its buildings. All council directorates are also expected and bound to comply with the restrictions in their water-related activities.

23. What steps are you expecting provincial consumers – such as schools and hospitals – to take to reduce consumption?

The water restriction notice applies to all users. Council has embarked on a partnership with schools to help reduce consumption through its awareness and education programme on water saving and the training of school caretakers to fix leaks. Other water saving tips are available on the City's [website](#) for everyone to make use of.

24. Can a stepped penalty be introduced, so that those who consume less than 25kl per month, for example, are not required to reduce their usage at all?

This is the basic principle applied in the proposed tariff increase, those using less water pay less, and those using more water pay more. See also question 1.

25. How will you police restrictions?

Water Inspectors will monitor compliance with the restriction measures, over and above the Water Bylaw in its entirety and issue spot fines where applicable. The public are normally our most vigilant enforcers and they may report offenders on 0860 103 089.

26. How are homeowners, who use borehole water for their gardens, expected to respond to the water restrictions?

The restriction notice indicates that where other sources of water (i.e. not drinking water from municipal supply) are used, a notice to this effect must be erected in a position clearly visible from a public thoroughfare. In addition, when watering gardens, parks, open spaces, etc. with alternative water resources (e.g. rain water harvesting, grey water re-use, treated effluent water, wellpoints and boreholes) you are encouraged to do so only before 09:00 or after 16:00 on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

27. Sectional title owners who save water will still be penalized if other owners in their block continue to be wasteful or profligate. How will you address this?

The planned media campaign is aimed at ensuring that everyone co-operates and contributes to the targeted savings in water consumptions. It is therefore hoped that fellow water saving residents will bring the appropriate pressure to bear on those who may not be so inclined.

28. Who are the 10 biggest water consumers in the City of Cape Town?

Consumption figures for individual consumers are considered confidential and cannot be released to the public. However, systems are in place to monitor bulk consumers.

- 29. Must landscapers (who are contracted to install sprinklers and plant and maintain new trees and plant in new developments) apply for exemption to maintain new plants via the sprinkler systems, which they have installed?**

Landscapers can apply for exemption. Time exemptions may be granted. Landscapers are also encouraged to plant water-wise gardens. Drought resistant lawns may be irrigated with sprinklers during establishment. To apply for exemption, send a completed [Special Exemption Application Form](#) to the Director: Water & Sanitation via email to Water.Restrictions@capetown.gov.za.

- 30. What about school sports fields and minor sports stadiums which are too large to water within the allocated times?**

These facilities can apply for exemption. To apply for a special exemption, send a completed [Special Exemption Application Form](#) to the Director: Water & Sanitation via email to Water.Restrictions@capetown.gov.za.

- 31. Can owners of boats rinse and flush their motors after fishing?**

Flushing of motors is permitted within the ambit of the restriction measures.

- 32. Can someone who uses borehole water to water grass and plants (therefore saving water) use their hosepipe to wash their car in the allocated times?**

It is recommended to rather use a bucket, but if a hosepipe is used, it must be fitted with an automatic self-closing device.

- 33. Can the owner of a very large residential property who cannot water the whole property using a hosepipe during the allocated time, get an exemption?**

Yes, you can apply for an exemption. To apply, send a completed [Special Exemption Application Form](#) to the Director: Water & Sanitation via email to Water.Restrictions@capetown.gov.za. See also question 5 above.

- 34. Are notices in three languages being provided at e.g. cash offices, libraries, clinics etc?**

Notices will be displayed at all City buildings and other public spaces.

- 35. Are car valet services compelled to use trigger nozzles on hoses?**

Yes

36. Can I fill and top up my swimming pool?

Yes, this is not restricted, but it is recommended that all swimming pools be covered.

37. With whom do you register your borehole? Do you pay for registration and the borehole sign?

Wellpoints and boreholes should be registered. To register or re-register, residents simply should send an email to Borehole.water@capetown.gov.za. After registration you will receive the necessary display sign.

The registration and signage are free.

38. Who do you fine if Council is contravening the water restrictions?

This matter will be dealt with in accordance with City procedures.

39. Is it illegal to wash down the forecourt of a petrol station?

Hosing down is not allowed. If washing must be done, a bucket must be used.

40. If a person has a visible leak on their property and is not in a position to fix it, what can be done? Does Council have a system in place whereby a plumber will be sent to repair the leak and bill the tenant?

No, it is the owner's responsibility to employ the services of a registered plumbing contractor to attend to the problem, at the owner's cost.

41. How can I report an irrigation violation?

By calling 0860 103089, or sms 31373, or email WaterTOC@capetown.gov.za.

42. Are there watering restrictions for vegetable gardens?

Agricultural crops are considered as gardens and irrigation may therefore occur only before 9:00 or after 16:00 on the prescribed days.

43. I live on agricultural land, do watering restrictions apply to me?

The water restriction bylaw applies to all homes and businesses located within the City of Cape Town's jurisdiction. The details vary depending on type of consumer. To apply for a special exemption, send a completed [Special Exemption Application Form](#) to the Director: Water & Sanitation via email to Water.Restrictions@capetown.gov.za. See [here](#) for more details.

44. I have hired a company to power wash my driveway, is this allowed under the current watering restrictions?

No, power washing driveways with drinking water is not allowed.

45. I've noticed my neighbour is watering outside of what is allowed according to the City's restrictions. What should I do?

You could speak with your neighbour to see if they are aware of the watering restrictions. If they aren't aware, direct them to the City's website (<http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/Water/Pages/Water-restrictions.aspx>). If you have concerns please, contact the customer line on 0860 103089 / sms 31373 or send an email to WaterTOC@capetown.gov.za.

46. Do you have any water saving tips?

Yes. See [here](#) for more information.

47. Can I use a drip system or soaker hose?

Micro-drip systems are allowed and a great way to conserve water while irrigating. Soaker hoses, like sprinklers, can be used only during the prescribed watering schedule.

48. My charity was planning a fund-raising carwash. Can we still proceed?

We encourage you to please practice water-saving washes by using waterless products or if not available, rather use buckets and not hosepipes. Otherwise you will defeat the whole purpose of raising funds by raising your water account. To apply for a special exemption, send a completed [Special Exemption Application Form](#) to the Director: Water & Sanitation via email to Water.Restrictions@capetown.gov.za.

49. Why is irrigation being limited?

It is the one of the largest categories of water use in the City of Cape Town.

50. How, where and what is the procedure that should be followed to apply for an exemption should I be entitled/request for one?

To apply for a special exemption, send a completed [Special Exemption Application Form](#) to the Director: Water & Sanitation via email to Water.Restrictions@capetown.gov.za.

51. I work in the poorer areas of the City and I regularly see large volumes of water running to waste in these areas where the occupants cannot afford to repair the leaks. What has the City done and what are they doing about this?

The City has a project in place in terms of its policies, to repair leaks at indigent properties and install a water management device in order to control the water usage to prevent further leaks and water wastage.

52. What is the City doing about the homeless people using the City's fire hydrants to wash vehicles?

Using fire hydrants, by anyone, for anything other than their intended purpose without permission is an illegal act (refer to section 55 of the Water Bylaw). Offenders could be charged for obstructing the duties of an authorized official, as stated in section 64 of the Water Bylaw.

53. Can my kids use the sprinkler in the backyard?

Instead of using sprinklers, we would encourage you to check out one of our water parks.

54. Can I pull my vehicle along the side of a river and wash it with bucket water on the river bank? If not, then why not?

No, the cumulative impact would threaten the ecological life of the system. Rivers are considered part of a stormwater system, so abstraction without permission and disturbance of the river banks are acts in direct violation of section 4 (g) and (h) of the Stormwater Management By-law.

55. May paved areas be hosed down with municipal tap water?

No. Paved areas can only be hosed down with non-potable water.

56. I want to hire a water slide. Do I need an exemption or does the person hiring it out to me need one?

The business owner must obtain an exemption.

57. What appeal process will be installed to allow consumers who believe they have been unfairly penalized to seek redress?

You may appeal to the Director: Water and Sanitation, PO Box 16548, Vlaeberg, 8000.
