



Frequently Asked Questions

I am a City water customer. Where does our water come from?

Residents are served with treated water by Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) or the City of Martinez Water District. The Martinez Water District receives untreated water from CCWD through a system of reservoirs and canals; treats and pumps water to our customers. The vast majority of our water source is from the Delta. The Delta water primarily comes from tidal action in the San Francisco Bay, and rain and snow runoff in the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins. To avoid high salinity CCWD pumps water at points in the delta when the San Francisco Bay salinity influence is minimal. This water is stored in Los Vaqueros Reservoir to provide the highest quality water available regardless of the time of year or salinity levels in the Delta.

What is a Drought Emergency, and what impact does it have on me? Facing a fourth-consecutive dry year and severely reduced water supplies, Governor Jerry Brown on April 1 mandated a 25 percent statewide reduction in water use. This unprecedented action reflects the severity of the drought and what is needed from all Californians to ensure conservation-minded indoor water used can be met.

How much do customers need to conserve?

As mandated by the State, the City must reduce water use 25%. The City is asking residential and commercial customers to reduce 25% below their water use in 2013, and irrigation customers to reduce 40% below their water use in 2013.

When will the CCWD Drought Program go into effect?

The City is asking its customers to cut their use immediately. The drought program will roll out in two steps beginning with the 25% reduction goal and prohibitions on May 6, 2015. It is expected all of the water use prohibitions will go into effect immediately. The new baseline and proposed fines and pricing adjustment will go through a 45-day notification and public review period with two public hearings on June 3rd and June 17th. With approval on June 17th, the new baseline and pricing adjustment go into effect immediately and will be final on July 17th.

How can I find my 2013-water use?

This information will appear on the water bill.

When do I start watering twice a week?

Right now! If you have an automatic timer, set it to water only two days a week.

Will there be a temporary pricing adjustment?

To encourage customers to meet the 25% reduction requirement, the City Council will consider temporary conservation pricing adjustments as called for in the Governor's Executive Order and Contra Costa Water District ordinances. These include a temporary price adjustment for households that use 200 gallons per day or more, a fine for violating water use prohibitions and adjusting baseline use to 2013. Customers, who achieve the requested reduction, will reduce their total bill even with a pricing adjustment.

Even if I save 25 percent, will my water bill go up?

No, you will save money. A single-family home that used an average of 400 gallons per day that cuts its use by 25 percent will save approximately \$16 on the water bill.

Will the City impose fines for not complying with the water use prohibitions?

Yes. If approved by the Council in June, Martinez would first issue a warning and work with customers to educate them about the prohibition and their violation. If after that, the customer continues to violate the prohibition, the City would issue a \$250 fine. At a second violation, the City would issue a \$500 fine. If the violation continues, the City may suspend the service and charge a penalty of \$10 per HCF (748 gallons). If approved by the Council, the fines would become effective on July 17th.

When do the temporary pricing adjustments start?

They won't start until the City Council approves them. Public hearings will be held in June.

Why is 2013 used as the baseline?

The State mandated Water Agencies use 2013 as the baseline.

My household uses under 200 gallons per day, do we have to save another 25% and will we be subject to the pricing adjustment?

Conserving another 25% is probably not realistic depending on how much you use outdoors, but in a statewide emergency we all have been called upon by the Governor and the District to look for additional ways to save - every gallon counts. The pricing adjustment would only apply to customers/households that use over 200 gallons per day. While your household would not be subject to the adjusted unit cost, remember everyone must follow the water use prohibitions in place or be subject to a fine of up to \$500.

I heard the state increased CCWD's conservation rate from 25% to 28% - how will that apply?

On April 18, the state released an update on their draft drought regulations. They did increase Martinez's conservation standard to 28%. Considering these are still in draft form, The City and CCWD has not proposed changes to the 25% program. The City and CCWD is reviewing and commenting on the latest draft. Final regulations are expected in early May, and the City and CCWD will consider if further adjustments are needed.

What about Excess Use Charges?

In 2009 the City implemented excess use charges of 4-times the usage charge for water used above allotments. Those charges are not proposed in the 2015 Drought Program.

Will we have enough water?

The City and CCWD can meet conservation-minded demands through a combination of its Central Valley Project allocation, Los Vaqueros Reservoir storage, groundwater supply, recycled water, and available water transfers. By targeting reductions in discretionary water use, the City and CCWD can manage overall water demands in order to preserve storage in Las Vaqueros Reservoir in the event of a continuing drought, while minimizing the impact on the economy within CCWD's service area which includes the Martinez Water District.