

# Fresno to tighten down all yard watering to twice a week

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In a July 2014 file photo, Tou Moua, a water conservation representative for the City of Fresno, approaches a property management office where sprinklers are operating during illegal hours.

ERIC PAUL ZAMORA — THE FRESNO BEE

Fresnans will soon have less time per week to legally water their yards.

City officials on Tuesday said that, effective Aug. 1, properties may water two days a week rather than the current three. They can't water at all during the winter (Dec. 1 to March 1), instead of one day a week under the old rules.

The new rules are a response to the drought. And they apply to all types of properties -- homes, businesses, government offices, churches, schools and anything in between.

"While we have already implemented a strong water conservation program, we continue to experience a dramatic drop in our groundwater level," City Manager Bruce Rudd said.

Rudd said Fresno is getting substantially less water than usual from the nearby San Joaquin and Kings rivers. He said the city can't continue to deplete its aquifer. He said the State Water Resources Control Board recently mandated more conservation.

Combine it all, Rudd said, and City Hall had no choice but to insist on stricter water-saving measures.

The key rule is tied to the consumer's address.

Odd-numbered addresses (street numbers ending in 1, 3, 5, 7 or 9) should water on Tuesdays and/or Saturdays.

Even-numbered addresses (street numbers ending in 0, 2, 4, 6 or 8) should water on Wednesdays and/or Sundays.

There is to be no watering on Mondays, Thursdays or Fridays.

Time of day is important, too. Watering must occur only between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. No irrigation is allowed when the sun is blazing.

Washing the family car in the driveway is permitted, but the washer must use a bucket and a hose equipped with a shut-off nozzle for quick rinsing.

Listing the new rules was the easy part of Tuesday's news conference at a southeast Fresno well site. City officials then headed in two other directions.

They reviewed enforcement efforts.

The city will issue warning citations to people wasting water outdoors. The citation will come with a friendly chat meant to reform unwise behavior. Future citations can lead to a fine of \$45 per day. After a fifth citation, the city has the option of shutting off water.

The city's water police will patrol. Rudd encourages residents to tell City Hall of wasteful watering at city facilities. He didn't ask neighbor to monitor neighbor, but made clear that any waste is damaging to the civic health.

Now that Fresno's residential as well as commercial customers are on computerized meters, the Public Utilities Department gets 24/7 data on everyone's water use. Rudd said this information will be crunched daily to sniff out water-wasters.

Rudd on Tuesday also emphasized the big picture.

The rains will return some day, he said. Fresno must be ready to reap the bounty, for another drought will surely follow. That means it is important to build the infrastructure now to capture or reuse every drop of water at Fresno's disposal, he said.

The city will try to accelerate its budding recycled-water program, Rudd said.

The new era of conservation must become habit, he said.

And the city must build new groundwater recharging basins, replace aging pipes and add another surface-water treatment plant.

Rudd didn't mention Measure W by name, but the potential voter initiative on Mayor Ashley Swearingin's proposed \$410 million upgrade to Fresno's water system was surely the unacknowledged guest of honor at Tuesday's news conference.

