

# Our plans to tackle droughts

Our Drought Plan: summary document

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Water** 

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# Introduction

This is our plan for what we will do in a drought.

It sets out what will happen and when, and who or what will be affected.

## For the company

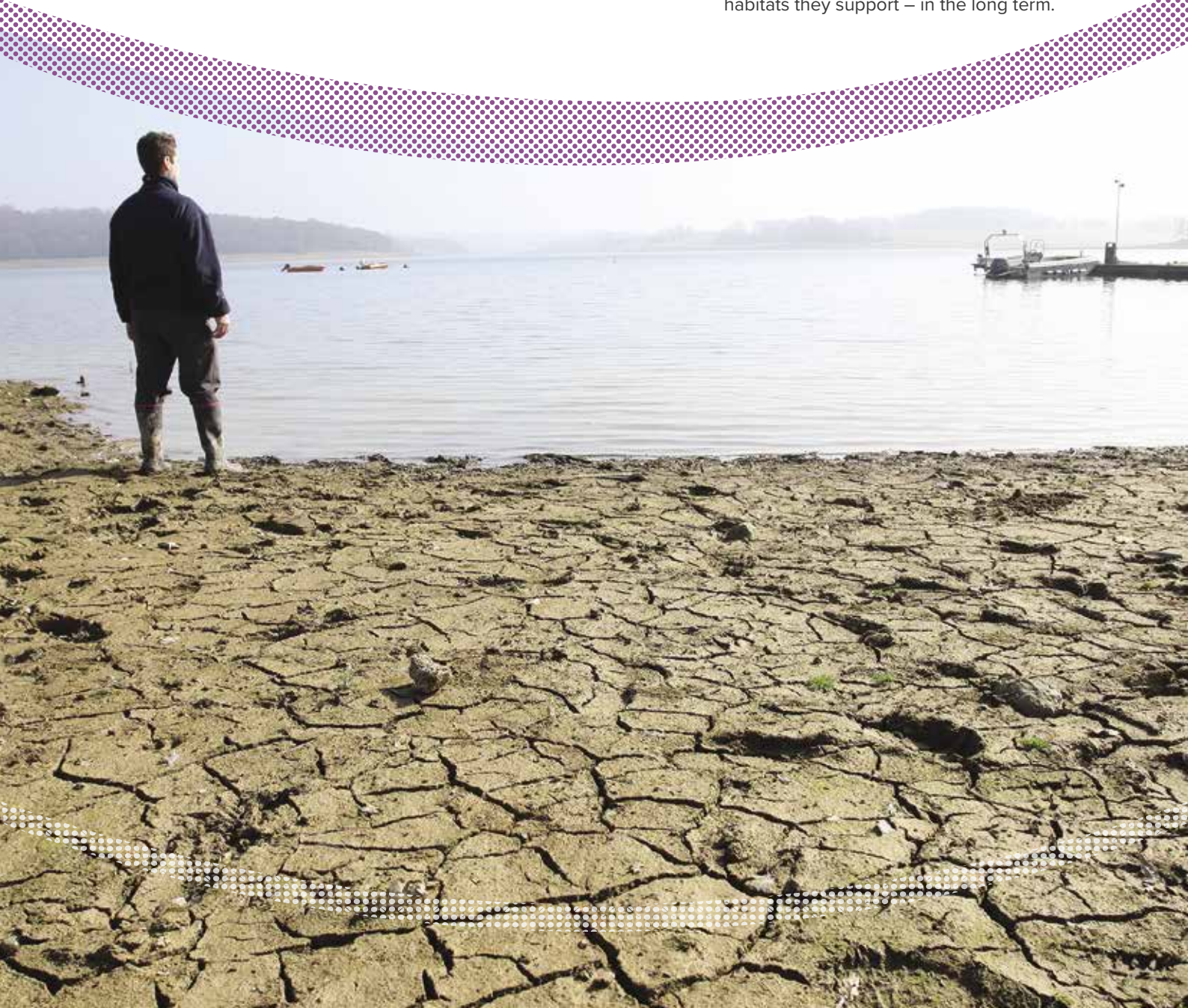
Our plan details the actions we will take to save and produce more water during a drought.

## For customers and businesses

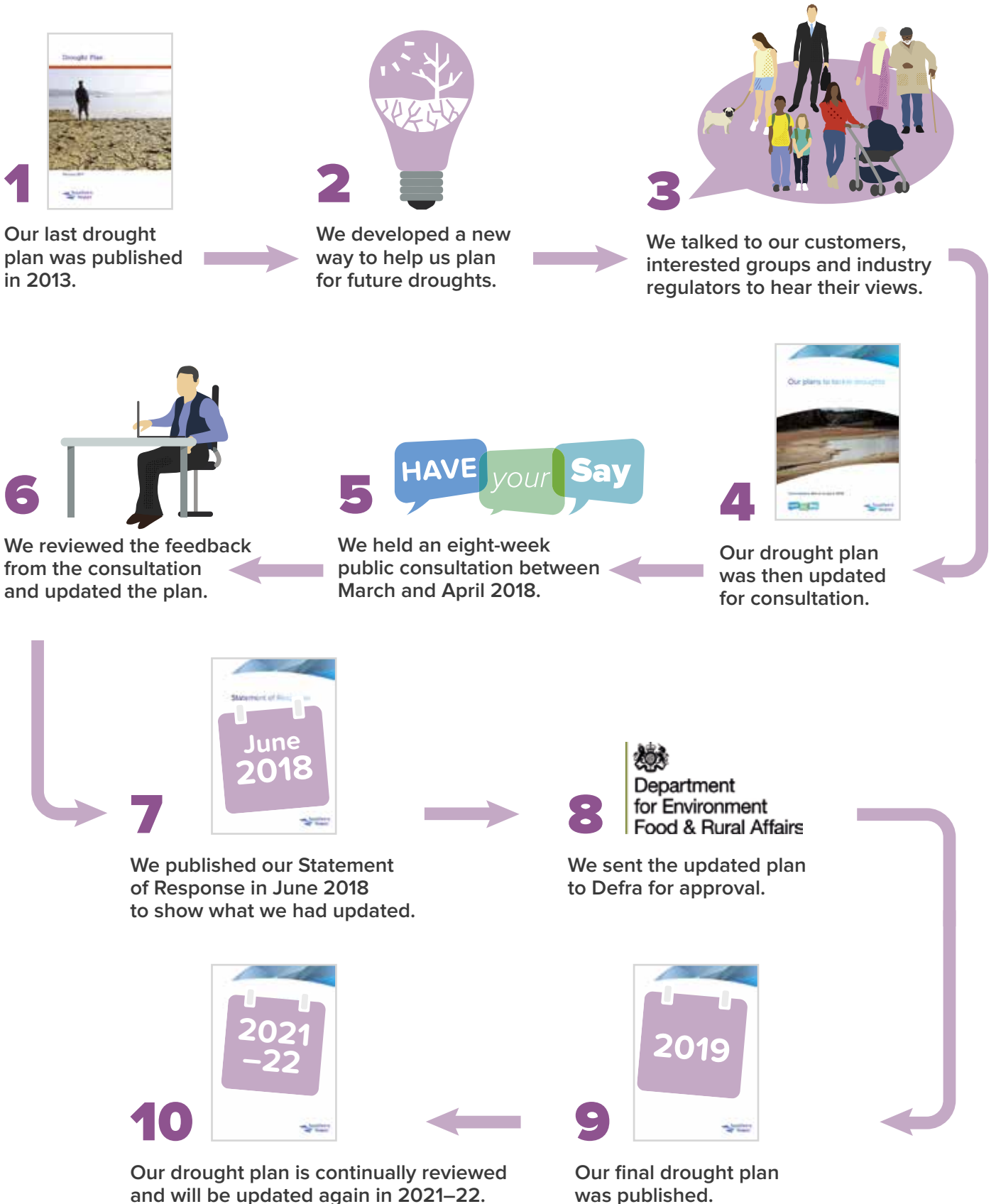
Our plan sets out what actions customers and businesses will need to take so they have enough water for all the important essentials in life – drinking, washing and cooking in the home, and keeping the wheels of our important regional economy turning smoothly.

## For the environment

Our plan also needs to protect the natural sources our drinking water comes from so we do not damage them – or the wildlife and habitats they support – in the long term.



# How our plan was developed



# How this plan links to our other work

This drought plan summarises the tactical decisions and actions that need to be taken when we are dealing with very specific, often short-term, water supply challenges caused by a drought.

However, our planning for droughts is closely linked to our work to manage water supplies more generally.

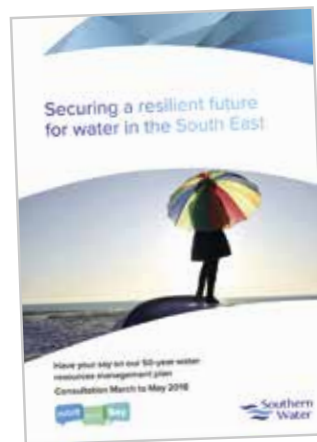
We have other plans that make sure water supplies are safe, high quality and reliable at all times – whatever the weather, whatever the challenge.

These other plans are:

## Our 2020 to 2070 Water Resources Management Plan

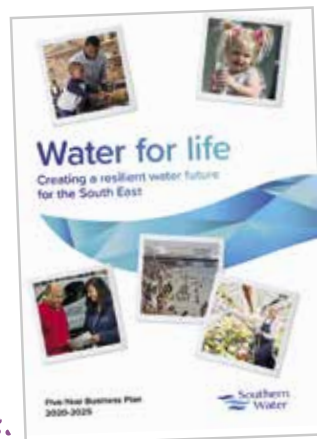
This identifies what water is needed, where and when, over a much longer timeframe to keep our customers' taps flowing and ensure our region's water sources stay healthy and

thriving. Looking that far ahead means we can plan to deliver the right investment in water supplies at precisely the right time.



## Our 2020 to 2025 Business Plan

We produce a business plan every five years which sets out what services we will deliver and how much they will cost.



Our 2020 to 2025 business plan allows us to immediately deliver the first five-year tranche of investment set out in our 2020 to 2070 Water Resources Management Plan.



# What matters to you

To develop this plan, we held many detailed conversations with customers, businesses, communities and water regulators about how we should manage a drought.

This input is important as we can't tackle such events on our own. Everyone who uses and needs water has a part to play in a drought. That includes accepting the need for some temporary restrictions on the use of water.

We have also used the learnings from the Summer 2018 heatwave when action was taken in Northern Ireland and the north west of England to conserve depleted water supplies.



## Customers

### What they said

Customers want our communications about drought to be clear, simple and jargon-free.

They also want to be able to understand easily and quickly:

- what we are doing to save water
- what they are being asked to do to save water
- what they are not allowed to do in a drought
- who or what might be exempt from any water use restrictions.

There was a strong desire to receive the relevant information in a more visual way too.

### How we have reflected that in this drought plan

We have really simplified this drought plan so it is clearer on what will happen and when, who will be affected and how.

We have done this in a more visual way too with a table (see page 11 onwards) so it's easier for customers to immediately understand the impact on them, their home or their business when there is a drought.

## What we have learnt from recent droughts

A relatively dry and cold winter in 2017, followed by a summer heatwave in 2018 – when demand for water soared – particularly affected water supplies in two areas of the UK: Northern Ireland and the north west of England.

In Northern Ireland, Temporary Use Bans came into force for households to help conserve water supplies.

### How we have reflected those learnings in this plan

A dry winter followed by a hot summer – when demand for water is high – is one of the many types of drought we are prepared for, and which this plan takes account of.

We also know that no two droughts are exactly the same, so it is important the actions we take are flexible and adaptable and will work to conserve water supplies.

# What matters to our regulators

## The Environment Agency

The Environment Agency is the regulator that scrutinises and challenges our drought plans. (It also has a legal duty to protect the environment and those habitats that also rely on our region's natural sources of water.)

### What they said

The Environment Agency had particular concerns about the impacts on Hampshire's specially-protected chalk rivers – the River Test and River Itchen – if we needed to take more water from them during droughts.

It had already asked us to reduce our abstraction on the River Itchen during droughts to meet an important piece of legislation called the Habitats Directive, and then asked us to also reduce our abstraction on the River Test. We agreed to phase these reductions in abstraction to give us enough time to identify and investigate other options that could maintain customers' water supplies.

In the meantime, if a drought occurred, the Environment Agency's approach would be to review any application by us to take more water from these two rivers as and when the need arose.

## What we will do differently

We have agreed a way forward with the Environment Agency that allows it to meet its legal duty to protect the environment, while we can also meet our legal duty to maintain water supplies at all times.

The agreement enables us to apply to the Environment Agency for drought permits and orders to take more water from the Rivers Test and Itchen, and the Candover boreholes, when we need to during a drought.

In the meantime, we will:

- continue to develop alternative water resource schemes which will allow us to permanently reduce our reliance on the River Itchen and River Test for customers' water supplies
- agree the ecological monitoring, mitigation and compensation measures that need to be in place before we apply for any changes to our abstraction on these rivers
- agree what drought-specific actions need to happen, and in what order, to minimise the risks of long-term environmental damage to the water sources in south Hampshire.



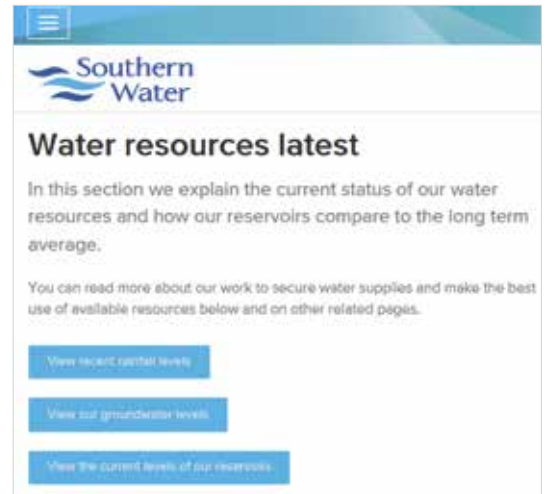
# Getting the latest drought information

Our customers told us they wanted to know straight away about an impending drought or how bad it is – they expect widespread coverage across radio, television and social media channels, such as Twitter and Facebook, so they can do their bit to save water.

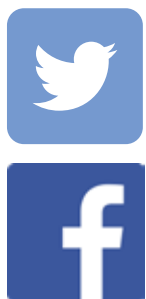
They also want to be able to check what restrictions are in place so they know what is and is not allowed.

Our drought communication plan sets out all the ways we will communicate to make sure we are getting the drought message across loud and clear.

We will also use our website – **southernwater.co.uk** – to capture lots more detail about a drought so it becomes the go-to place for all important information.



▲ Above  
southernwater.co.uk



▲ Above  
Twitter @southernwater  
and Facebook /SouthernWater



# Our plan for tackling droughts

## Stages of drought

### What we will do to spread the word



Normal: No drought	Stage 1: Impending drought	Stage 2: Drought	Stage 3: Severe drought – phase 1	Stage 4: Severe drought – phase 2
Continue delivering routine water conservation messages	Awareness campaign with media and partner organisations	Drought communication plan launched	Drought communications ramped up	Drought communications ramped up
Water resources information available on our website	Promote saving water tips and products	Latest drought information published on our website	Latest drought information published on our website	Latest drought information published on our website
	Dedicated drought customer services team	Media campaign	Letters, texts and emails to customers	TV and radio broadcasts
	Latest drought information published on our website	Communicating restrictions	Advertising	Working with businesses
		Support for vulnerable customers		

### What we will do to protect the environment



Normal: No drought	Stage 1: Impending drought	Stage 2: Drought	Stage 3: Severe drought – phase 1	Stage 4: Severe drought – phase 2
Continue gathering environmental data so we can see the impact of drought actions when we introduce them	Rest our underground water sources	Prepare for another dry winter	Prepare for another dry winter	Prepare for another dry winter
	Begin extra environmental monitoring ahead of drought actions	Increase environmental monitoring to measure impact of drought actions	Continue extra environmental monitoring	Continue extra environmental monitoring
	Prepare measures to protect habitats and species	Take action to protect habitats and species	Take action to protect habitats and species most at risk	Where possible increase action to protect habitats and species most at risk

# Our plan for tackling droughts

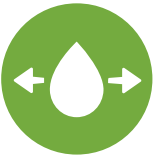
## Stages of drought

### What we will do to save more water



Normal: No drought	Stage 1: Impending drought	Stage 2: Drought	Stage 3: Severe drought – phase 1	Stage 4: Severe drought – phase 2
No extra action needed – but continue our ongoing water efficiency and leakage work	Ramp up leak detection work  Promote water-saving products	Ramp up leak detection work  Review the amount of water we share with our neighbours	Ramp up leak detection work  Focus water-saving audits in drought areas	Ramp up leak detection work  Work with businesses to save water

### What we will do to produce more water



Normal: No drought	Stage 1: Impending drought	Stage 2: Drought	Stage 3: Severe drought – phase 1	Stage 4: Severe drought – phase 2
No extra action needed	Operate water sources in 'drought mode' to conserve storage	Fast track schemes that give us extra water  Move more water to where it's needed most  Apply for drought permits for sources specified in the drought plan which should have sufficient water  Ask our neighbours to give us more water	Ask our neighbours to give us the full amount of water they can spare  Extend drought permits at water sources that can cope  Apply for drought orders at unused water sources or more sensitive locations	Apply for/extend drought orders at unused water sources or more sensitive locations  Prepare for emergency desalination plants and water reuse schemes

# What householders and businesses need to do

We apply triggers to help determine what needs to be done, by who and when, at different stages of drought. These are:

**Normal: No drought**

**Stage 1: Impending drought**

**Stage 2: Drought**

**Stage 3: Severe drought – phase 1**

**Stage 4: Severe drought – phase 2**

These triggers are important because they make sure we and others take action in good time to help reduce demand, so water supplies can be maintained as a drought worsens.

For each stage of drought that is triggered, there is a set of actions that customers need to take to restrict their use of water in homes and businesses.

Similarly, there is a set of automatic or discretionary exemptions that can apply to homeowners and businesses too for each stage of drought, as it is triggered.

Over the next few pages, we detail these restrictions and exemptions, which are introduced under Temporary Use Bans (TUBs) and Drought Orders, for each stage of drought.

## Normal: No drought

No extra action needed



## Stage 1: Impending drought

Use water but please don't waste it



## What householders and businesses need to do

### Stage 2: Drought

#### Stop using hosepipes for:



- ❌ Watering a garden – which includes public gardens, parks, lawns, verges, allotments, open green spaces, sports areas
- ❌ Cleaning a motor vehicle
- ❌ Watering plants at domestic premises
- ❌ Cleaning a private leisure boat
- ❌ Any domestic recreational use
- ❌ Cleaning walls and windows of domestic premises
- ❌ Cleaning paths or patios
- ❌ Cleaning other artificial outdoor surfaces

#### Also, stop using water for:

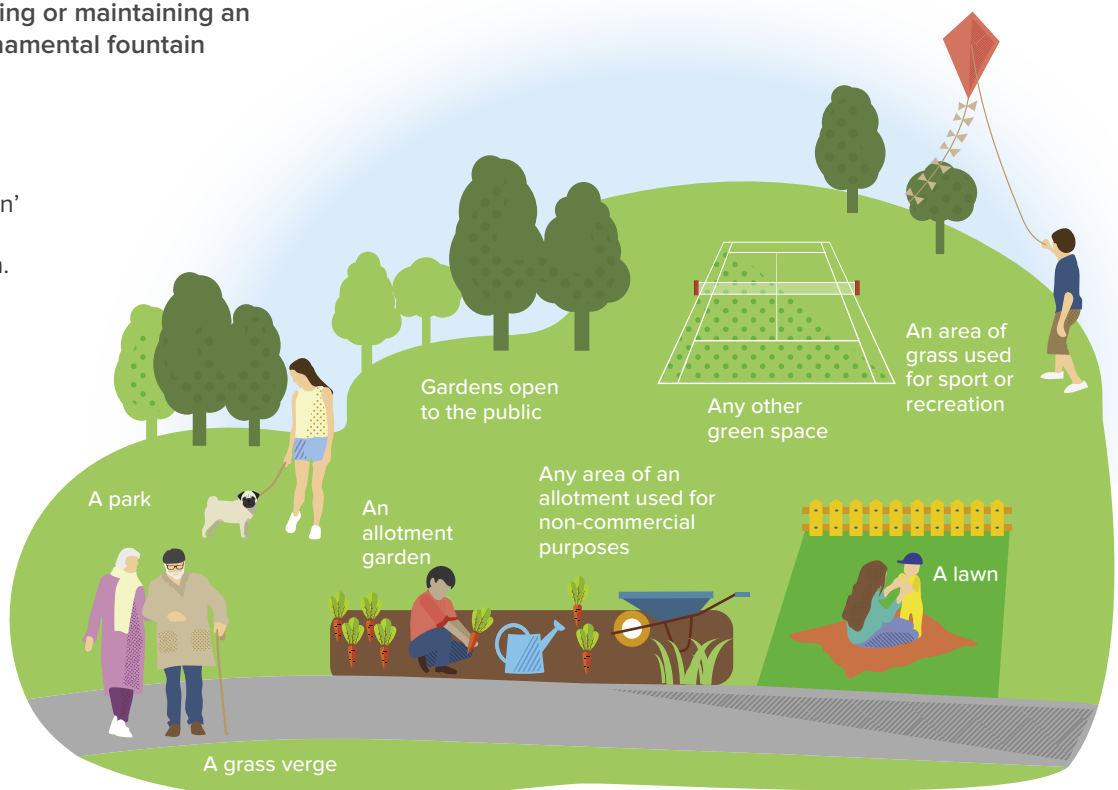
- ❌ Filling or maintaining a domestic swimming or paddling pool
- ❌ Filling or maintaining an ornamental fountain

### Definition of 'garden'

The definition of 'garden' includes those areas shown in the illustration.

A 'garden' does not include:

- Agricultural land
- Land used commercially (that is, for growing plants and crops)
- A temporary garden or flower display
- Plants in an outdoor pot or in the ground but under cover



### Stage 2: Exemptions

- A** Automatic exemptions
- D** Discretionary exemptions

#### Automatic exemptions:

- A** Water-using activities which protect health and safety
- A** Blue Badge holders
- A** Customers using an approved drip or trickle irrigation system fitted with a pressure-reducing valve and timer
- A** Companies using hosepipes as part of their cleaning business

#### Discretionary exemptions could include (check our website for latest):

- D** Vulnerable customers with mobility issues
- D** Watering newly-bought plants for 14 days
- D** Watering food crops at home or on allotments
- D** Watering newly-laid turf for 28 days
- D** Removing graffiti
- D** Pools with covers that reduce evaporation

## What householders and businesses need to do

### Stage 3: Severe drought (Phase 1)

Restrictions under **Stage 2** plus a ban on:

- ❌ Watering outdoor plants on commercial premises
- ❌ Filling or maintaining a commercial swimming or paddling pool
- ❌ Filling or maintaining a pond
- ❌ Operating a mechanical vehicle washer
- ❌ Cleaning any vehicle, boat, aircraft or railway rolling stock
- ❌ Cleaning commercial premises
- ❌ Cleaning a window at commercial premises
- ❌ Using water to suppress dust
- ❌ Use of automatic cisterns



### Stage 3: Exemptions

Automatic exemptions:

- A Water-using activities which protect health and safety

Discretionary exemptions could include (check our website for latest):

- D Companies whose sole business needs to use water e.g. removing graffiti, growing plants, producing food



## What householders and businesses need to do

### Stage 4: Severe drought (Phase 2)

Restrictions under **Stage 2** and **Stage 3** plus a ban on:

- ❌ Watering national and international sports grounds between 7am – 7pm (and only for two hours between 7pm and 7am)
- ❌ Hand car washing businesses and all automatic car washes
- ❌ Window cleaning using water-fed poles
- ❌ Cleaning of paths, patios – including graffiti removal
- ❌ Cleaning of artificial outdoor surfaces – including graffiti removal
- ❌ Watering outdoor plants on commercial premises – even if newly planted or irrigation systems in place
- ❌ Cleaning any vehicle, boat, aircraft or rolling stock – including graffiti removal
- ❌ Cleaning any commercial premises – including graffiti removal
- ❌ Cleaning industrial plant

### Stage 4: Exemptions

Automatic exemptions:

- Ⓐ Water-using activities which protect health and safety



### Important!

For now, some of these actions may happen more frequently for customers and businesses in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight due to the particular water supply and environmental challenges we face in that part of the region.

This will be the case until around 2030 when we will have new water resource schemes in place that can reduce the risk of restrictions happening in the first place.

# What happens if the drought gets worse?

If we experience a drought which is more severe than we have planned for, we may need to ask the Government for an Emergency Drought Order.

This would allow us to take more drastic actions such as:

- rationing water supplies to homes and businesses to certain times of day
- asking customers to collect water for drinking, washing and cooking from standpipes in the street, or mobile water tankers at key community locations.

These actions are a last resort and the possibility of them happening is extremely rare – once in every 500 years on average – and we would take every step to avoid them.

## More information

You can find out more about our drought plan at [southernwater.co.uk/droughtplan](https://southernwater.co.uk/droughtplan).





**southernwater.co.uk**

You should send any comments to:  
[wrmp@southernwater.co.uk](mailto:wrmp@southernwater.co.uk)

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