

Drought Stages and Action Steps in Connecticut

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Issue

Does state law or regulation require residents and businesses to reduce water use during a drought? How does [SB 506](#) (2017) (File No. 404) change the water use reduction requirements?

Summary

Connecticut regulations identify four drought stages: advisory, watch, warning, and emergency. During a drought, the regulations either ask or require residents and businesses to reduce water use by certain percentages from non-drought levels. [SB 506](#) (2017) (File No. 404) accelerates the rate of water conservation for residents and businesses.

Existing Requirements

Water companies supplying water to 1,000 or more people or 250 or more consumers, and other water companies as requested, must file water supply plans with the Department of Public Health (CGS § [25-32d](#)). Each plan must include a water supply emergency contingency plan that identifies actions to be taken during each of the four drought stages: advisory, watch, warning, and emergency (Conn. Agency Regs. § 25-32d-3).

Under the regulations and the [Connecticut Drought Preparedness and Response Plan](#), during each drought stage, residents and businesses are either asked or required to reduce water use by the following amounts from non-drought levels:

- Advisory: Voluntary 10%
- Watch: Voluntary 15%
- Warning: Mandatory 20%
- Emergency: Mandatory 25%

Raised Bill 506 (2017)

As raised, [SB 506](#) (2017) (File No. 404) retains the four drought stages. It increases the amount of water use reduction that residents and businesses have to achieve during a drought watch, warning, or emergency. It also makes water use reduction mandatory during a drought watch.

Under the bill, during each drought stage, residents and businesses are asked or required to reduce water use as follows:

- Advisory: Voluntary 10%
- Watch: Mandatory 20%
- Warning: Mandatory 35%
- Emergency: Mandatory 50%

The bill requires a municipality, when it implements water use restrictions because of a drought advisory, to post on its website specific measures or activities that residents and businesses may take to achieve a 10% voluntary water use reduction. And it requires a municipality, during a drought watch, warning, or emergency, to post on its website activities that are prohibited and specific measures that residents and businesses must take to achieve the mandatory 20%, 35%, or 50% water use reduction.

Currently, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection maintains a [website page](#) that provides tips on how to conserve water.

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