



Water Rationing Action Plan

June 2024

Responding to Water Rationing

This Water Rationing Action plan is applicable to all users that are supplied water through the City of Lethbridge distribution system. This includes City of Lethbridge residents, industrial/commercial/institutional customers, regional customers, and the City of Lethbridge.

How to Prepare

Establish an emergency plan for water rationing in your home or business.

Some things to consider: Where can I reduce water use in an emergency? How will I reduce?

Prepare an Emergency Kit that includes provisions for water rationing.

Check out the City of Lethbridge website or Gouvernement of Alberta website for more details.

Understand when water rationing may be required.

Know the difference between water rationing and water conservation.

Engage in water education and awareness.

Don't be afraid to ask questions!

How to Respond

Implement your emergency plan and reduce water usage. Understand and follow any restrictions and prohibitions in this Water Rationing Plan.

How to Recover

Find out what happened during water rationing.

Refer to the City's website and social media feeds to find out why rationing was required and how your efforts helped.

Discover ways you can be more prepared for future water rationing.

Review your emergency plan with your family or employees and make any changes necessary. Keep your plan up to date and review it regularly.

Consider your water usage throughout the year.

Refer to the Water Conservation Plan and the Water Conservation Strategy for ideas to increase water efficiency in your home and/or business.

How to Respond

Managing the Situation

Get informed and Stay informed.

Understand why water rationing is required, what stage of rationing the City of Lethbridge is in, and implement your emergency plan as appropriate.

The City of Lethbridge will engage and inform the community with:

1. the **cause** of water rationing
2. The **current stage** of water rationing.
3. If water rationing is expected to be **long term or short term**.



Triggers

Because of the nature of the Oldman River through Lethbridge, the trigger to enact any of the stages of water rationing will be at the discretion of the Engineer but will include the following five elements.

1. Water levels in the Oldman Reservoir:
 - Stage 1: Oldman Reservoir level is below the 5th percentile.
 - Stage 2: Oldman Reservoir level is below the 3rd percentile.
 - Stage 3: Oldman Reservoir level is below the 1st percentile.
 - Stage 4: Discussion with Alberta Environment and Protected Areas.
2. Snowpack data from Alberta Environment and Protected Areas.
3. Water supply forecast from Alberta Environment and Protected Areas.
4. River flows into the Oldman Reservoir.
5. Consensus of the signatories to activate any water sharing agreements that Lethbridge may be party to.

Water Rationing Stages

Stage 1: **Community Aware**

Demand Reduction Target: 5%

Violation Charges:

- Residential: Letter & possible \$100 violation charge
- ICI: Letter & possible \$500 violation charge

Stage 2: **Community Pressure**

Demand Reduction Target: 10%

Violation Charges:

- Residential: Letter & possible \$200 violation charge
- ICI: Letter & possible \$700 violation charge

Stage 3: **Community Threat**

Demand Reduction Target: 15%

Violation Charges:

- Residential: Letter & possible \$300 violation charge
- ICI: Letter & possible \$1,000 violation charge

Stage 4: **Community Crisis**

Demand Reduction Target: 20%

Violation Charges:

- Residential: Letter & possible \$400 violation charge
- ICI: Letter & possible \$1,500 violation charge

Emergency: **Immediate Concern**

Demand Reduction Target: Maximum effort

Violation Charges:

- Residential: Letter & possible \$500 violation charge
- ICI: Letter & possible \$2,000 violation charge

Public participation is required from all areas in order to reach targets until the issue is resolved.

City of Lethbridge can only apply violation charges to residents and businesses within the City. Regional partners may be subject to regional bylaws.

Stage 1

Community Aware

Outdoor Water Rationing Actions:

Prohibited Actions (unless approved by the Engineer)

- Watering that results in runoff, including to ditches, swales, storm drains, and gutters.
 - Including: Lawns, trees, shrubs, gardens and bedding plants, washing or hosing down sidewalks, driveways and streets.
- Water for washing vehicles at locations other than commercial car washes.
 - Washing vehicles in driveways, fundraising car washes **Note: this activity is regulated under Bylaw #5594
- Washing down outdoor surfaces.
 - Exterior buildings, sidewalks, driveways, walkways, outdoor furniture, patios and decks
- Filling of private in-ground or portable pools/spas/hot tubs larger than 3,000 litres.
- Water used for decorative features and fountains.

Restricted Actions

While following the above prohibitions, you may water **up to 2 HOURS on your designated day before 10am or after 6pm:**

- Lethbridge Residents: **BLUE/BLACK** cart collection days **ONLY**
- Industrial, Commercial, Institutional: **SATURDAYS ONLY**
- Regional Customers: **MONDAYS ONLY**

Water Conservation Suggestions:

- Run dishwashers with FULL loads only.
- Limit washing machine to FULL loads of laundry.
- Limit water for lawns and ornamental container plants in favour of high value assets like trees, shrubs, and food producing gardens.

The City of Lethbridge will:

- Assess the situation and evaluate the risk, while considering the social need and public good.
- **Take part in all Stage 1 rationing, as well as the following:**
 - Reduce irrigation to parks/landscaping based on tier and rationing stage.
 - Turn off water to city owned pond fountains.
 - Close spray parks that do not utilize recirculated water. The scheduled filling of outdoor pools will not be changed.
 - Prohibit hydrant flushing except for water quality purposes
 - Provide public updates if and when the situation changes.

Stage 2

Community Pressure

Includes Stage 1 actions in addition to those below (NOTE: the more strict actions apply)

Outdoor Water Rationing Actions:

Restricted Actions

NEW lawns, trees, and shrubs.

- Watering permitted only for sod or trees/shrubs that were laid or planted within 10 days of the restrictions coming into force or during the restriction period.
 - For the first 10 days, **ONLY 2 HOURS total per day is allowed**
 - *After 10 days, the regular outdoor restrictions apply*
- Watering permitted only for lawns seeded within 10 days of the restrictions coming into force or during the restriction period.
 - For the first 20 days, **ONLY 2 HOURS per day is allowed**
 - *After 20 days, the regular outdoor restrictions apply*

While following the prohibitions, you may water **up to 1 HOUR on your designated day before 10am or after 6pm:**

- Lethbridge Residents: **BLUE/BLACK** cart collection days **ONLY**
- Industrial, Commercial, Institutional: **SATURDAYS ONLY**
- Regional Customers: **MONDAYS ONLY**

Water Conservation Suggestions:

- Run dishwasher with FULL loads only.
- Limit washing machine to FULL loads of laundry.
- Limit baths to half normal water, and limit showers to 5 minutes.
- Flush toilet only when needed.

The City of Lethbridge will:

- Assess the situation and evaluate the risk, while considering the social need and public good.
- **Take part in all Stage 1 and 2 rationing, as well as the following:**
 - Evaluate the need to reduce or stagger the times spray parks and outdoor pools are open. Draining and refilling of public pools for shutdowns will be restricted to essential maintenance requirements only.
 - Provide public updates if and when the situation changes.

Stage 3

Community Threat

Includes Stage 1 and 2 actions in addition to those below (NOTE: the more strict actions apply)

Outdoor Water Rationing Actions:

Prohibited Actions (unless approved by the Engineer)

- Filling outdoor pools, ponds, and hot tubs.
- Use of outdoor irrigation sprinklers.

Restricted Actions

NEW lawns, trees, and shrubs

- Watering permitted only for sod or trees/shrubs that were laid or planted within 5 days of the restrictions coming into force or during the restriction period.
 - For the first 10 days, **ONLY 1 HOUR total per day is allowed**
 - *After 10 days, the regular outdoor restrictions apply*
- Watering permitted only for lawns seeded within 5 days of the restrictions coming into force or during the restriction period
 - For the first 20 days, **ONLY 1 HOUR per day is allowed**
 - *After 20 days, the regular outdoor restrictions apply*

Outdoor watering only allowed using **HANDHELD CONTAINER**.

- Lethbridge Residents: **BLUE/BLACK** cart collection days **ONLY**
- Industrial, Commercial, Institutional: **SATURDAYS ONLY**
- Regional Customers: **MONDAYS ONLY**

Washing vehicles at commercial car washing facilities that use City of Lethbridge water is DISCOURAGED.

Water Conservation Suggestions:

- Reduce the use of dishwasher and clothes washer.
- Reduce toilet flushing by 1/2 the amount of regular frequency.
- Shower instead of bathe; limit showers to a maximum of 5 minutes.

The City of Lethbridge will:

- Assess the situation and evaluate the risk, while considering the social need and public good.
- **Take part in all Stage 1, 2, and 3 rationing, as well as the following:**
 - Engage in regular communications with critical infrastructure and key stakeholders.
 - Evaluate the need to reduce water use for arenas; stagger the times, or close spray parks and/or outdoor pools.
 - Provide public updates if and when the situation changes.

Stage 4

Community Crisis

Includes Stage 1, 2, and 3 actions in addition to those below (NOTE: the more strict actions apply)

Outdoor Water Rationing Actions:

Prohibited Actions (unless approved by the Engineer)

- **NO** outdoor watering, including with handheld containers.
 - This includes lawns, trees, shrubs, and gardens.
- Use of rented fire hydrants is **suspended**.
 - Including for hydro-seeding, dust control, settling backfill.
- Water for construction purposes is **suspended**.
 - Including for grading, compaction, dust control, etc.

Washing vehicles at commercial car washing facilities that use City of Lethbridge water is DISCOURAGED.

Water Conservation Suggestions:

- Restrict hand washing of dishes if and when possible.
- Limit dishwasher and clothes washer use to full loads.
- Limit flushing of toilets to when solids are present.
- Reduce shower times to 3 to 5 minutes.

The City of Lethbridge will:

- Assess the situation and evaluate the risk, while considering the social need and public good.
- **Take part in all Stage 1, 2, 3, and 4 rationing, as well as the following:**
 - Evaluate the need to reduce, stagger the times, or close spray parks, outdoor pools, and/or arenas .
 - Provide regular public updates if and when the situation changes.

Emergency

TRIGGER: Activation of the Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) in accordance with the City of Lethbridge Municipal Emergency Management Plan, or at the discretion of the Engineer.

Immediate Concern

Situations:

EMERGENCY water rationing may be required due to one or more of the following reasons or situations:

- Mechanical issues/failures
- Water quality concerns
- Infrastructure threats
- Environmental pressures

Water Rationing Actions:

Take all action possible to reduce water use

- All outdoor watering is prohibited.
- Do not run the tap unnecessarily.
- Reuse water where possible.
- Shower instead of bathe, keep showers to 3 to 5 minutes.
- Only use the dishwasher and clothes washer when necessary and only with full loads.
- Flush toilets only when necessary - "If it's yellow let it mellow, if it's brown flush it down."

Please note: when emergency water rationing is required, all users involved will be asked to conserve water to the extent possible. Reduction targets and timelines will be situation specific.

The City of Lethbridge will:

- Assess the situation and evaluate the risk, while considering the social need and public good.
- Inform the community and regional water users (as necessary) of the situation and need for emergency water rationing.
- Strive for a 40%+ reduction in water usage until the situation and resolution are understood, at which time the reduction level target will be reevaluated and communicated to the public.
- Inform the public of the estimated timeline for emergency water rationing as information becomes available.

Keep informed and updated:

The City of Lethbridge will to provide updates on the emergency measures situation as information becomes available.

Water Rationing Stages Summary Chart

Watering Activity				
Stage 1		Stage 2		Stage 3
Demand Reduction Target: 5%		Demand Reduction Target: 10%		Demand Reduction Target: 15%
Stage 4				Demand Reduction Target: 20%+
Runoff down sidewalks, driveways and streets		Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed
Washing down outdoor surfaces		Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed
Water for decorative features or fountains		Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed
Irrigation sprinkling for Residential and Commercial lawns		Up to 2 hours between 6 pm & 10 am Residential—Blue/black cart collection days Commercial—Saturdays Regional—Mondays	Up to 1 hour between 6 pm & 10 am Residential—Blue/black cart collection days Commercial—Saturdays Regional—Mondays	Not Allowed
Hand watering for flower beds, gardens, trees, and shrubs		Allowed	Allowed	Not Allowed
Newly planted grass, trees, and shrubs		Hand watering only, Residential—Blue/black cart collection days Commercial—Saturdays Regional—Mondays		
Note: If Stage 2 is reached, it is recommended that NO NEW planting occur		Allowed	Refer to the Water Rationing Action Plan for details	Not Allowed
Water for pools, ponds, and hot tubs		Allowed	Allowed	Not Allowed
Water for construction purposes		Allowed	Allowed	Not Allowed
Washing vehicles at car washes		Allowed	Allowed	Discouraged
Note: washing vehicles at locations other than car washes is prohibited under Bylaw 5594; use car washes sparingly				
Indoor Water Suggestions To reach reduction targets		REDUCE the use of washers and dishwashers. FULL loads only.	Run FULL loads of washers and dishwasher, shower time (5 min) and bath levels (½) REDUCE toilet flushing	REDUCE flushing of toilets to only when necessary, shower times to 3 to 5 min, restrict handwashing dishes if and when possible

Water Emergency: Demand Reduction Target: Maximum Effort

Emergencies may be due to mechanical issues/failures, water quality concerns, infrastructure failures, or environmental pressures. Emergency water rationing will require IMMEDIATE reduction in water use. Keep informed on areas affected and actions that are needed.

Call 3-1-1 (403-320-3111) for more information or to report any problems.