



Meiners Oaks Water District

Drought Contingency Plan

For Drought Stages 1-5

Revision 2.2

Adopted by MOWD's Board of Directors

Final

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Prepared by MOWD

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By Resolution No. 2016816-1*

www.meinersoakswater.org

Meiners Oaks Water District
Drought Contingency Plan

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Glossary

Casitas MWD	Casitas Municipal Water District
CMWD	Casitas Municipal Water District
Customer	Single account/metered service
GPM	Gallons per minute
MDD	Maximum Day Demand
MOWD	Meiners Oaks Water District
unit, HCU	100 cubic feet

Meiners Oaks Water District

Drought Contingency Plan

Introduction and Purpose

California is in the midst of the worst short-term drought in recorded history which has adversely affected Meiners Oaks Water District (MOWD). By fall of 2013, the pumping capacity of the District's wells had dropped so low that, for a time, MOWD had to purchase all of its water from Casitas Municipal Water District (Casitas MWD). Although heavy rains in late February, and early March of 2014 improved groundwater levels for a while, the drought is not over. As the drought has progressed, our reliance on water purchases from Casitas MWD during significant portions of the year has continued. For example, our wells dropped out of production again in summer of 2016.

The immediate water supply problem for MOWD was that, until July of 2014, MOWD had only a single 4-inch meter to Casitas MWD, limited to 1,000 gallons per minute. During hot summer days, MOWD's maximum day demand (MDD) can peak at over 1,200 gallons per minute (GPM). (MDD is the maximum 24-hour water demand expressed as a constant flow over 24 hours.) Without a second connection to Casitas MWD, we may not be able to meet that peak demand, and our tank levels could drop to the point that we would no longer be able to supply adequate water for fighting fires within MOWDs' boundaries. Fortunately, in July 2014, the second connection to Casitas MWD was installed and is now functional. This second connection has reduced the short-term danger of outages. Nevertheless, we must implement measures in preparation for a potentially worsening drought.

A closely related problem is that MOWD uses chlorine (only) for disinfecting its well water, while Casitas MWD uses chloramines (chlorine with a small amount of ammonia added). Blending those two types of disinfectants can create problems at low mixing rates. For that reason, we cannot run our wells when their flow is too low to mix properly with Casitas water. That is another reason we may need to stop using our wells in drought conditions.

The purpose of this *Drought Contingency Plan* (Plan) is to outline the specific steps MOWD plans to take to bring its water demand into balance with its limited water supply. Though this plan is intended to respond to a short-term emergency, it will also guide future actions by the District in future droughts. However, it is not intended to restrain future actions by MOWD's Board of Directors in response to actual drought conditions as they may occur. Though we hope otherwise, it is possible that future or ongoing droughts could be worse than was foreseen during the preparation of this Plan.

In January 2014, Governor Brown declared California to be in a drought emergency. His proclamation B-29-15, B-37-16, requested water agencies to update their drought contingency plans; this plan satisfies that provision. Also, on July 15, 2014, the State Water Resources Control Board adopted emergency regulations for statewide urban

water conservation, by Resolution No. 2014-0038. The requirements of those regulations, as they pertain to MOWD, were added to Revision 2.1 of this *Drought Contingency Plan*.

MOWD is a not-for-profit public agency with an elected Board of Directors. We have no shareholders. Any money left over at the end of one year is used the following year to operate and maintain the District and deliver water to our customers.

Summary of MOWD's Drought Plan

The Plan consists of the following major measures to be undertaken by MOWD:

- 1) MOWD will adopt and enforce all appropriate and applicable water conservation measures and policies adopted by its wholesale supplier, Casitas MWD. MOWD will enact a five-stage drought plan, consistent with stages that are adopted by Casitas MWD. For each drought stage, our customers will be requested to reduce water usage by a given percentage. Water use must decrease as the level of Lake Casitas drops.
- 2) The use of more costly water from Lake Casitas will continue to be paid by a "Casitas surcharge" (or "Casitas pass-through") to be added to our customers' water bills. As the lake level drops, the cost of Casitas water could increase dramatically. (Casitas has currently revised their allocations and resale rates for their 5 drought stages.) In a severe multi-year drought, that will provide additional incentive to reduce water use, minimize landscaping, and remove unproductive or decorative orchards.
- 3) Each service connection will be assigned a monthly base monthly allocation based on the larger of (1) the service connection's average annual demand from 2010 – 2012, or (2) a minimum amount sufficient to meet the demands of a typical residential account (15 units per month).¹
- 4) MOWD will implement a waiver process under which a customer may be granted an adjustment to his/her allocation amount, subject to approval by the Board. The waiver criteria are established in a separate document. (See Attachments A and B)
- 5) Irrigation scheduling for our larger agricultural accounts will be implemented during critical periods and hot spells. MOWD has a phone number (805-646-6035) with a recorded message to notify large agricultural users when they can irrigate their parcels. We also encourage residential account holders with orchards and large landscapes to check the number before irrigating.
- 6) In July 2014, MOWD installed a second, *emergency* backup connection to Casitas MWD to increase our peak supply capacity.

¹ A "unit" equates to 100 cubic feet of water (or 1 "HCU"), and is equivalent to 748 gallons.

- 7) As MOWD workers observe instances when customers are not conserving water properly, they will leave “friendly reminders” of appropriate conservation measures that should be taken. A sample “door hanger” notice with a list of possible steps to take is provided on the following page. MOWD staff will keep a log of notices that are handed out. The list will run continually as long as the drought persists.
- 8) When MOWD is in Stages 2-5 of a drought, MOWD will impose fines for improper use of water, as directed by State regulations. Fines will range from \$100 per violation to \$550 per violation for repeat offenders.
- 9) MOWD will put information concerning the drought and water conservation on its website: www.meinersoakswater.org.
- 10) When and if water demand exceeds the available supply to the point that we no longer have sufficient fire storage, MOWD staff will have no choice but to shut off the supply to its agricultural accounts until the peak demand event (hot spell or wildfire) subsides. We would place a written notice at a convenient location for each account holder. An email notification will also be provided for those irrigators who give us their email addresses in advance. With the new second connection to Casitas MWD (see introduction), this action is less likely to be needed.
- 11) Water use may be subject to further restrictions in more advanced stages of drought. If, after receiving two notices of excessive water use, all accounts that continue to violate any water use restrictions then in effect, a flow restrictor may be placed on that account holders water meter at the account holders expense for a limited period.

Further information on these measures is provided in this Plan and on MOWD’s website. MOWD’s five drought stages are defined in Table 1. The actions that will be taken by MOWD in concert with drought stages, and associated restrictions on water use, are described in Table 2.

Each time Casitas MWD declares a new stage of drought, MOWD’s Board would, at its discretion, adopt by resolution a corresponding drought stage as described in Table 1. Similarly, when sufficient rainfall occurs, MOWD would reduce its drought stages by resolution as appropriate, in conjunction with Casitas MWD.

For planning purposes, it can be seen that without rain and with a demand of 20,000 AF/Yr from Lake Casitas, Stages 2 and 3 might each last around one year. That allows some time for additional planning and drought response. However, Stage 4 may only last around 6 months. Stage 5 would be limited by the depth of the minimum pool and the difficulty of draining the last water out of the lake – due to potential limitations of the outlet works.

It is important to recall that evaporation from Lake Casitas can be as much as 10,000 AF/Yr when the lake is full; this is about half of its safe yield of 20,000 AF/Yr.

Once Lake Casitas is drained, and MOWD’s wells are dry, there is no water to deliver to our customers. Therefore, it is important to reduce water demand and

conserve existing supplies before that happens.

Table 1. MOWD Drought Stages

MOWD Drought Stage	CMWD Drought Stage	Requested Reduction in Water Use	Triggering Conditions For MOWD Stages	Lake Casitas Storage
Stage 1	Stage 1	0%	Lake Casitas over 50% of capacity. MOWD wells near full capacity. No projected water shortages.	50 – 100% (> 127,000 AF)
Stage 2	Stage 1 <u>Or</u> Stage 2	20%	MOWD wells projected to be insufficient to meet full demands. <u>OR</u> Lake Casitas drops below 50% storage capacity and Casitas MWD declares a Stage 2 condition.	40 – 50% (100,000 – 127,000 AF)
Stage 3	Stage 3	30%	Casitas MWD declares a Stage 3 condition.	30 – 40% (75,000-100,000 AF)
Stage 4	Stage 4	40%	Casitas MWD declares a Stage 4 condition.	26 – 30% (65,000-75,000 AF)
Stage 5	Stage 5	50%	Lake Casitas approaching minimum pool elevation. Casitas MWD declares a Stage 5 condition.	0 – 26% (< 65,000 AF)

Table 2. MOWD Actions During Drought Stages

Drought Condition	MOWD Actions	Reduction Measures	Penalties/Surcharges
Stage 1: Lake Supply 100%-50% Acre Feet Available 254,000 – 127,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Declare Stage 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Keep conservation in the forefront <input type="checkbox"/> Internet, bill stuffers, etc... <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly Reminders	<input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary reductions of 20% from all customer classes <input type="checkbox"/> Positive shut-off nozzles are required at all times <input type="checkbox"/> No rinsing of sidewalks or driveways, public roadways, parking lots or structures	<input type="checkbox"/> No allocations or penalties to be enforced
Stage 2: Lake Supply 50%-40% Acre Feet Available 127,000 – 100,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Declare Stage 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Increase public notification <input type="checkbox"/> Continue friendly reminders <input type="checkbox"/> Display District banners <input type="checkbox"/> Enforce water waste prohibitions <input type="checkbox"/> Promote agricultural water use evaluations provided by Casitas MWD	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue Stage 1 conservation efforts <input type="checkbox"/> Impose mandatory 20% reductions from all customer classes <input type="checkbox"/> Increase conservation measures <input type="checkbox"/> Moratorium on new service connections <input type="checkbox"/> Restrict watering to (2) times per week <input type="checkbox"/> Restrict outdoor watering to 6 PM to 9 AM <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce watering for large landscapes <input type="checkbox"/> Drinking water only served upon request in restaurants <input type="checkbox"/> Plumbing leaks to be fixed within 48 hours of discovery <input type="checkbox"/> No watering during or 48 hours after measurable rainfall <input type="checkbox"/> Prohibit the washing of streets, sidewalks, parking lots, driveways, or buildings (except for health and safety reasons)	<input type="checkbox"/> Consider drought surcharge <input type="checkbox"/> Consider revenues <input type="checkbox"/> Implement fines for improper use

Drought Condition	MOWD Actions	Reduction Measures	Penalties/Surcharges
Stage 3: Lake Supply 40%-30% Acre Feet Available 100,000 – 75,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Declare Stage 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Continue increased public notification and education <input type="checkbox"/> Update District banners <input type="checkbox"/> Enforce water waste prohibitions <input type="checkbox"/> Provide monthly letters to customers updating the drought (Bill Stuffer)	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue enforcing Stages 1 and 2 applicable guidelines <input type="checkbox"/> Impose 30% mandatory reduction for all customer classes <input type="checkbox"/> Restrict watering to (1) time per week <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce water allocations <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce watering for large ornamental landscapes <input type="checkbox"/> Prohibit use of potable water for dust control and compaction <input type="checkbox"/> Require that plumbing leaks be fixed within 36 hours <input type="checkbox"/> Prohibit outdoor watering between 10 AM and 6 PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Implement customer allocations <input type="checkbox"/> Implement drought surcharge <input type="checkbox"/> Continue fines for improper water use <input type="checkbox"/> Consider revenue (possible rate change)

Drought Condition	MOWD Actions	Reduction Measures	Penalties/Surcharges
<p>Stage 4:</p> <p>Lake Supply 30% - 25% Acre Feet Available 75,000 – 65,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Declare Stage 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Intensify public awareness and education <input type="checkbox"/> Continue drought updates through letters, bill stuffers, and billing statements <input type="checkbox"/> Update District banners 	<p><i>Likely Measures</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Continue Stages 1-3 conservation measures <input type="checkbox"/> Decrease water allocations <input type="checkbox"/> Impose 40% mandatory reductions for urban and agriculture use <input type="checkbox"/> Consider prohibiting water use for agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> Prohibiting water to fill new swimming pools and fountains <input type="checkbox"/> Prohibiting temporary construction meters <input type="checkbox"/> Prohibiting the watering of lawns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Keep drought surcharge <input type="checkbox"/> Consider increasing drought surcharge <input type="checkbox"/> Install service line restrictors for consumption misuse <input type="checkbox"/> Change language in “Friendly reminders.”

Drought Condition	MOWD Actions	Reduction Measures	Penalties/Surcharges
Stage 5: Lake Supply 25%-0% Acre-Feet Available 65,000 – 3,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Declare Stage 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Continue intensified public awareness and education <input type="checkbox"/> Continue drought updates through letters to customers <input type="checkbox"/> Change district banners <input type="checkbox"/> Prohibit all non-essential uses <input type="checkbox"/> Coordinate with State and Local agencies for enforcement options <input type="checkbox"/> Join Casitas MWD to implement crisis communication plan	<i>Likely Measures</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Continue Stages 1-4 conservation measures <input type="checkbox"/> Decrease water allocations <input type="checkbox"/> Impose 50% mandatory reductions for urban use <input type="checkbox"/> Cease all outside watering <input type="checkbox"/> Prohibit water use for agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Consider increasing drought surcharge <input type="checkbox"/> Continue fines for improper water use <input type="checkbox"/> Consider rate adjustment

Summary of Casitas MWD's Water Conservation Plan

Casitas MWD provides good information on water conservation on their website (www.casitaswater.org). This website also provides links to other relevant sites. Additional information on Casitas MWD and their drought planning is provided in their *2015 Urban Water Management Plan*, adopted June 22, 2016; this is also posted on their website. Casitas MWD's program includes the following elements relevant to all service connections within MOWD:

1. All residential account holders within MOWD may receive a free water survey from Casitas MWD.
2. Casitas MWD provides rebates for high-efficiency washing machines, high-efficiency toilets, and other devices.
3. Casitas MWD also offers turf removal rebates through the State

4. Casitas MWD provides agricultural evaluations for certain agricultural customers.
5. Casitas MWD's primary focus on reducing water demand during droughts is based on charging higher rates as the level of Lake Casitas drops (Section 15 of their 2009 Rates and Regulations.)

MOWD's customers may contact Casitas MWD to determine which of these programs may apply to them.

In addition to the voluntary and mandatory reductions in consumption, Casitas MWD will impose per unit drought surcharges for any water delivered to their resale agencies above the resale agencies' annual base allocations. The schedule of reductions is illustrated in Table 3. The drought-stage-specific reductions that would apply to MOWD's annual allocation from Casitas MWD are illustrated in Table 4.

Table 3. Lake Casitas Demand Reductions and Resale Agency Drought Surcharges

Stage of Drought	Reduction in Use/Consumption	Resale Agency Allocation Reduction	Drought Surcharge	Corresponding Lake Supply Percent/Volume in Acre Feet (AF)
Stage 1	20% Voluntary	20%	\$ 0.00	100%-50% 254,000 to 127,000 AF
Stage 2	20% Mandatory	20%	\$ 0.00	50%-40% 127,000 to 100,000
Stage 3	30% Mandatory	30%	✓	40%-30% 100,000 to 75,000 AF
Stage 4	40% Mandatory	40%	✓	30%-25% 75,000 to 65,000 AF
Stage 5	50% Mandatory	50%	✓	25%-0% 65,000 to 3,000 AF

Table 4. MOWD's Annual Allocations from Casitas MWD [a]

Drought Stage	Reduction	MOWD annual allocation from Casitas MWD (AF/yr)
1	0-20% Voluntary	1030
2	20% Mandatory	824
3	30% Mandatory	721
4	40% Mandatory	618
5	50% Mandatory	515

[a] pending MOU

It is important to note that when Stage 5 has been declared, the only water available may be for health and safety water.

MOWD Customer Allocations

To further promote conservation, MOWD has established for each metered account (“customer”) a single base allocation based on the larger of (1) the customer’s average annual demand from 2010 – 2012, or (2) a minimum amount sufficient to meet the demands of a typical residential account (15 HCU per month). Demand reductions will be required by MOWD customers as Lake Casitas’ storage decreases. Demand reductions will be implemented by applying percent reductions to the base allocation. The percent reductions applied to MOWD customer base allocations will be consistent with the mandatory reduction requirements implemented by Casitas MWD as they move through the different stages of drought (see Tables 3 and 4 above).

Mobile Home Parks

Consistent with our method for establishing base allocations for all service meters, mobile home parks (Parks) with a single service meter will receive a single base allocation that represents the average monthly water use by the Park during the three-year period from 2010 through 2012. MOWD recognizes that on average in some Parks, individual mobile homes were using less water per month during 2010-2012 than the lowest Stage 5 residential service meter allocation specified by this Plan (i.e., 50% of the default minimum 15 units/month = 7.5 units/month). As a consequence, if a Park’s monthly base allocation equates to ≤ 7.5 units/month per mobile home, the monthly base allocation for a Park will not be subject to drought-stage-specific mandatory reductions. In such cases, the monthly allocation for the Park will remain equal to the average monthly use by the Park during 2010-2012 regardless of drought stage. However, if a Park’s base allocation equates to > 7.5 units/month per mobile home, the Park’s base allocation will be subject to the schedule of mandatory drought reductions until the drought-stage-adjusted allocation for the Park equates to ≤ 7.5 units/month / mobile home - after which time no further mandatory reductions will be applied to the Park’s account.

It is important to recognize that this approach does not provide for increases in a Park's base allocation above the Park's average monthly use during 2010-2012. Instead, the approach may affect whether, or how, mandatory reductions applied to a Park’s base allocation during drought stages.

Future conditions may require MOWD to impose deeper cuts on monthly water use than are anticipated by this Drought Contingency Plan. In such case, MOWD may establish a different approach for deriving or implementing monthly allocations for Parks.

Future Changes to MOWD’s Drought Contingency Plan

If the drought continues, we expect that Casitas MWD will adopt specific steps to implement water use restrictions such as limits on watering lawns, landscaping, and farms. In response, MOWD will refine its plan to incorporate specific steps consistent with Casitas MWD’s actions. This Drought Contingency Plan is considered to be a “living document” to be amended as necessary with Board approval.

In the meantime, we ask all of our customers to use good sense to implement well-known

water conservation measures, such as those described on our “Friendly Reminders.”

Fines for improper use of water

In Stages 1-5 MOWD will impose fines for water uses that are prohibited by State regulations and/or MOWD’s Drought Plan. In Stage 3, prohibited uses of water are as follows:

- 1) The application of potable water to outdoor landscapes in a manner that causes runoff such that water flows onto adjacent property, non-irrigated areas, private and public walkways, roadways, parking lots, or structures.
- 2) The use of a hose that dispenses potable water to wash a motor vehicle, except where the hose is fitted with a shut-off nozzle or device attached to it that causes it to cease dispensing water immediately when not in use.
- 3) The application of potable water to driveways and sidewalks.
- 4) The use of potable water in a fountain or other decorative water feature, except where the water is part of a circulating system.
- 5) Outdoor irrigation of any portion of your landscape more than once per week.
- 6) No watering between the hours of 10 am and 6 pm.
- 7) Large-scale irrigation that results in water flowing into ditches or channels, water ponding, or excessive runoff.
- 8) Use of potable water for dust control.

Note: A positive shut-off nozzle is defined as “A device attached to the end of a hose that must be manually squeezed, depressed or otherwise held in place to allow water to flow out the hose and which automatically shuts off the flow of water when continuous manual pressure is released.”

MOWD will issue fines for serial violations of these regulations as follows in Table 5:

Table 5. Fines for Improper Use of Water

	Stage 1	Stages 2 and 3	Stages 4 and 5
First violation	No fine	Warning	Warning
Second violation	No fine	\$100	\$150
Third violation	No fine	\$100	\$250
Fourth violation	No fine	\$200	\$350
Fifth violation	No fine	\$300	\$450
> 5 violations	No fine	\$500	\$550

MOWD staff will document all violations in the following manner:

- 1) Field staff will give a verbal warning
- 2) Field staff will give a “Friendly Reminder” to the customer or property and place

it in a convenient location.

- 3) Field staff will then submit a copy of the “Friendly Reminder” and a photograph depicting the misuse of water to office staff.
- 4) Office staff will then forward this information back to the account holder accompanied with a letter of explanation.
- 5) Further notices will be accompanied with a fine.
- 6) The list will run continually as long as the drought persists. Stages 1-5 will be as declared by MOWD and Casitas MWD.
- 7) Fines will be attached to an account holder's water bill.

These regulations will be enforced in a reasonable and balanced way. For example, otherwise prohibited water uses may be allowed if required to protect public health and safety.

What You Can Do

All of our customers are requested to take steps in response to the drought. Here are some specific steps you can take:

- 1) Please postpone any new landscape plantings until the drought is over.
- 2) Please consider not having a vegetable garden this year.
- 3) Please upgrade your irrigation system, or make adjustments where necessary to make it more efficient.
- 4) Please consider water efficient appliances. (Rebates are available through Casitas MWD.)
- 5) Abandon your lawn until the drought is over. (Rebates available through Casitas MWD)
- 6) Overgrown trees and shrubs should be pruned or stumped to reduce their water needs.
- 7) Irrigate at night or in the evening.

Agricultural property owners should consider the following steps:

- 1) Please stop irrigating any unproductive or marginal trees in your orchard.
- 2) If your trees need pruning, this would be a good time; pruned or stumped trees need less water.
- 3) Please focus your irrigation at night and no more than one time per week.

Possible Future Water Use Restrictions

During a worsening or future drought (Stages 4 and 5), specific water use restrictions

would be adopted by MOWD. It is not within the scope of this Plan to define all of the potential water use restrictions that could be adopted under a worsening drought. Such restrictions could be adopted by the MOWD Board in response to reduced water supply, in coordination with Casitas MWD and in conformance with the laws of the State of California. Such water use restrictions would include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) A prohibition on watering lawns.
- 2) A ban on washing vehicles.
- 3) A halt to supplying water to agriculture.
- 4) A prohibition on irrigating outside landscaping.
- 5) A prohibition on filling new pools and fountains using potable water

It is hoped that these measures will not be required. In a worst case scenario – 3 or more years of continuing drought culminating in Stages 4 and 5 – they might become necessary. These measures would only be adopted in a dire water shortage emergency after extensive customer outreach and public meetings.

Legality of Drought Incentive rates

California law does not allow public agencies to collect more revenue than necessary to provide services, and the rates charged for those services must reflect the cost of providing them. (Proposition 218) Emergency regulations adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board in July 2014 encourage incentives to reduce demand, such as “drought rate structures.” (Water Code Sections 100-540,350-359, 31020-31035.1)

When preparing MOWD’s annual budget, it is intended that the proposed rates will be “revenue neutral,” that is, we will not in the aggregate collect more revenue than required to deliver water to our customers and satisfy our regulatory obligations.

Additional information

Additional information on water conservation can be found at <http://saveourwater.com>.
www.meinersoakswater.org www.bewaterwise.com www.casitaswater.org

Additional information on drought water rates can be found at
<http://www.allianceforwaterefficiency.org>.

Address: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Field Person Name: _____

Friendly reminder From your water district

MOWD has declared that Stage 3 water shortage conditions exist, and we must all conserve water as best we can:

Current Drought Stage

Stage 3

- ☐ Please do not overwater your lawn and landscaping
- ☐ Please adjust your sprinklers so they don't spray on or run off onto asphalt or concrete
- ☐ Please set your sprinkler timers to run between 6pm to 10 am.
- ☐ Please limit washing your car, and use a shut-off nozzle on the hose at all times. Including quick rinses.
- ☐ Please check your irrigation and plumbing system for leaks and make necessary repairs within 36 hours.
- ☐ Do not wash sidewalks, driveways, buildings or patios **unless for health and sanitary reasons i.e... (restaurants)**
- ☐ Do not refill your pool or decorative fountain with potable water
- ☐ Other:

Meiners Oaks Water District's Drought Contingency Plan

Frequently Asked Questions - FAQs

1. If I go over my allocation limit, do I pay a higher rate for all the water I use or only for the amount I go over?

The over-allocation fee applies only to the amount you use over your allocation limit.

2. I am on a fixed income and can't afford higher water rates. How is that fair?

If you are a retiree on a fixed income, you may plant drought tolerant landscaping or forgo a lawn to avoid paying higher rates.

3. I have specialized water needs that the proposed rates do not consider. Can I obtain any additional amounts for use within my allocation?

Our intent is to implement fair water rates, but we acknowledge that we cannot know everything about our property owners uses. Therefore, we have created a waiver system as described in the plan; the district will provide specific criteria that will be considered when granting waivers. If you think your situation fits/meets the waiver criteria according to the plan, send us a letter describing your water use and why you think you qualify for additional water. However, be aware that we are a non-profit agency and any reduction in rates to one account must be offset by an increase in rates to others.

4. Can I receive an increase of water allocation at the proposed rate if my residential meter supplies several houses or a granny flat?

*One of the best management practices for water conservation is to measure water use. Therefore, a property owner with several houses or a granny flat on a single meter may fund the installation of the separate water meter(s) and may receive an allocation of water for each meter. However, if your granny flat or extra dwelling was inhabited during 2010-12, the allocation for the second dwelling has been accounted for. If the extra dwelling was **not** inhabited, please provide proof to the District confirming your declaration. If proof cannot be supplied to support your case, the District may not consider an additional water allocation. To encourage conservation, those meters should remain in use after the drought is ended.*

5. How much would it cost me to install a new $\frac{3}{4}$ " residential meter?

The cost of installing a new meter depends on the size of meter and service requested. The property owner is responsible for purchasing and installing the meter with an approved design and location in the public right-of-way, after payment of the meter connection charges as described in MOWD's Schedule of Fees and Rates. Any applicable connection fees to Casitas MWD must also be paid as well. Call the District for more information.

6. What if my granny flat is not occupied?

Then there would be no water use there and an account holders water bills would not be substantially increased by owning a granny flat.

MOWD cannot control or monitor who lives where. However, once a separate meter is installed on a granny flat, service there may be disconnected at the property owner's request and no more monthly bills would be received for that meter until service is restored.

7. If I reduce my water use now, how do I know that I will not be cut back in the future to some percentage of my lower water use? Isn't it better for me to use more water now so I can have a higher allocation in the future?

Our intent for the duration of this drought is to base historical water use on the pre-drought, 2010-2012 for that metered service periods, using more water now will not increase your historical allocation.

Attachment A Waiver Policy

Water Allocation Waiver Policy

Introduction

As part of its rate-setting program in times of drought, Meiners Oaks Water District has assigned monthly base allocations to each of its metered accounts. These base allocations are subject to further reductions during declared stages of drought. The purpose of this allocation system is to collect additional revenue from those who use the most water, to fund over-allocation charges paid to Casitas MWD when MOWD exceeds its annual allocation of water from Lake Casitas. The allocation program also provides incentives to conserve water during droughts.

Individually metered account allocation assignments are available on MOWD's website, meinersoakswater.org. The account holder just needs to enter his/her first 7 digits of their account number. Example: 01-12345

A customer with unique circumstances not fairly treated by the allocation program may request a waiver to receive an additional allocation for that metered service. The waiver process is described below.

Basis for Establishing Base Allocations for Each Account

MOWD's monthly base allocations (before reductions) for each account are based on the larger of the following two criteria:

- 1) A minimum amount that should be sufficient to meet the demands of a typical residential account/meter is 15 units per month. This amount is intended to protect human health and sanitation.
- 2) The metered accounts average historical monthly demand during the period from 2010 through 2012. This process supports additional uses of water that historically occurred at that property before the current drought started.

Waiver Process

Although MOWD has attempted to be as fair as possible in setting up its allocation program, there may be legitimate uses of water not properly accounted for. Therefore, MOWD has implemented a waiver system whereby a property owner may request a higher allocation for that metered service.

Criteria for Considering a Waiver

MOWD may grant an additional allocation if the account holder can demonstrate that the condition/property meets one of the following criteria:

- 1) The properties allocation does not include a portion adequate to meet the minimum needs for indoor use to protect health and safety. Considerations will include:
 - A change in occupancy that results in more than 4 full-time residents
 - Medical needs supported by a letter from a medical provider
 - Evidence of below-normal indoor use during years 2010-2012
- 2) The metered or property's historical use during 2010-2012 was not representative of reasonable and efficient water uses that historically occurred on the property. For example, a house or business may have been unoccupied between the years 2010-2012.
- 3) The property owner/tenant implemented new water demands after December 31, 2012, that provide a significant new public benefit to residents of Meiners Oaks, beyond considerations of profit. These new water demands cannot include extraneous landscaping. Specific examples include:
 - Licensed care facility (adult or child)
 - Schools
 - Public health facilities
 - An increase or correction in the number of dwelling units on the property

In applying these criteria, an account holder may separate indoor, and additional outdoor water uses for the purpose of evaluating each.

Additional allocation amounts will not be approved for new water uses that have been added to a property since December 31, 2012, unless those uses provide an appreciable public benefit. A drought is not a good time to seed a new lawn, plant new trees, acquire new horses, or start new water-intensive hobbies. Also, the following factors will be given less weight when considering a waiver:

- Adverse impacts on the viability of marginally profitable or unprofitable agriculture, on the basis that non-productive fields and orchards should be removed from use during times of extreme drought.
- Financial hardship for those on a fixed or limited income, on the basis, that the easiest way to reduce water cost is to cut back on landscaping, gardening, and orchards, which would reduce water bills.
- Requests based on the type of water use (agriculture vs. domestic), on the basis, that we are trying to treat all historical water use categories as equitably as possible.

Waiver Application and Approval Process

If a customer satisfies one of the appropriate criteria, he/she may request a higher allocation or other exclusion. The waiver process will be as follows:

- 1) An account holder must write a letter to MOWD describing his/her unique situation, provide detailed information, and explain why he/she feels entitled to additional allocation. The letter should be clear and thorough. The account holder should also fill out and attach the waiver request form, provided on MOWD's website. (Note: a paper copy of the filled-out form should be attached to the letter. The form is not interactive online.)
- 2) MOWD's general manager will review the information provided and advise the account holder whether or not the letter provides sufficient information for the MOWD Board to make an informed decision. If the general manager thinks the request may have merit, he will submit the request to the Board at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. If the general manager believes the written request is inadequate or without merit, he will advise the applicant to provide additional information or justification. The account holder may then provide the additional material in a new or supplemental letter or may decide to submit his/her original letter to the Board as is.
- 3) At its next regular Board meeting (third Tuesday of each month), the Board will review the submitted information and justifications. The applicant may present his/her arguments at the meeting in person. The Board may grant the request as presented or make modifications, or the Board may deny the request at its sole discretion. This topic would be discussed in open session with public attendance unless special conditions apply. The final Board decision will be made by voice vote and would be documented in the minutes
- 4) The account holder could appeal a Board decision on a waiver request by writing another letter to MOWD presenting any new facts or arguments.

Possible Future Water Use Restrictions

The District's water allocation program was designed for drought Stages 2 and 3. They may be extended by the Board into Stage 4 if the lake level continues to drop. However, there is a possibility that, with worsening drought, the allocation program could be suspended. At some point, as Lake Casitas approaches empty, it may become necessary to prohibit all outside irrigation. At that point, water use would be limited to indoor use only and allocations could become moot.

Attachment B Resolution



Resolution 20160816

Water Allocation Waiver Policy

WHEREAS, in accordance with Water Code Sections 350, 31020-31035, the Board of Directors of MOWD intends to take necessary steps to reduce water demand and bring it into balance with available supplies; and

WHEREAS, the mission of the Meiners Oaks Water District and its staff is to produce and deliver a reliable and sustainable supply of water to meet the needs of the residents and properties and the community within its boundaries, and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the Board of Directors to establish policy to uphold and support monthly base allocations that have been assigned to each of MOWD's water customers for the purpose of collecting additional revenue to fund over allocation charges paid to Casitas MWD, to provide incentives to conserve water during droughts and to be fair in setting up its allocation program; and

WHEREAS, MOWD has implemented a Water Allocation Waiver Policy whereby a customer may request a higher allocation due to a legitimate need for a higher allocation of water by submitting a letter along with the waiver request form describing their situation and reasons for needing the higher allocation; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the General Manager to review the information and determine whether or not the situation merits the necessity of a higher allocation and present said request to the Board of Directors at the next regular Board meeting; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the Board of Directors to review the request and make a justifiable determination to said request and will be made by voice vote and inform the customer with determination; and

WHEREAS, upon the drought worsening, MOWD and its Board of Directors have the responsibility and possibility to suspend or amend the water allocation program as deemed necessary.

NOW, therefore be it resolved by the Meiners Oaks Water District Board of Directors that the Water Allocation Waiver Policy in its entirety is

Passed, Approved and Adopted this 16th day of August 2016.

James Kentosh, President of Board
Meiners Oaks Water District

Stacey Gilbert, Secretary to the Board
Meiners Oaks Water District