

BALTIMORE, MD (August 6, 2012) – The Maryland Department of the Environment announced today that a drought "warning" is in effect for the Eastern region of Maryland. The previously announced drought "watch" for the Central region of Maryland remains in effect.

More Information

MDE monitors precipitation, stream flow, groundwater levels and reservoir storage to determine the [drought status](#) for each of the six regions of the state. If two or more of the four [indicators](#) for a region reach "watch," "warning," or "emergency" levels, then the region is placed in the corresponding status.

During a drought watch, MDE increases oversight of water supply conditions and encourages citizens to become more aware of their water use and to conserve water.

During a drought warning, local water systems should implement water conservation measures. Residents and businesses should also look for ways to reduce non-essential water usage. Local water systems, municipal and county governments can require water-use restrictions at any time due to local conditions, but MDE is not at this time aware of any local jurisdictions implementing voluntary or mandatory restrictions due to conditions.

During a declared drought emergency, mandatory restrictions on non-essential water use are implemented.

The status for all other regions of Maryland, including areas served by Baltimore City and Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission public water, is "normal."

Core Facts

The Eastern region includes Kent, Queen Anne's, Talbot, Caroline, Dorchester, Wicomico, Somerset and Worcester counties. Monitoring shows that groundwater and rainfall for the region are at "warning" levels and streamflow is at the "emergency" level. Rainfall in the Eastern region in the six months since Jan. 31, 2012, is on average 6.6 inches below normal, or about 70 percent of normal.

MDE provides [recommendations](#) for each drought status. Actions recommended for warning stage include:

- Drought conditions evaluated on a weekly basis
- Residences, businesses, and industry voluntarily comply with nonessential water use restrictions
- Water systems actively implement water conservation measures, individually contact industrial users to reduce water usage, and discontinue flushing water lines, fire hydrants and distribution equipment
- Facility managers for government buildings identify leaks and accelerate maintenance and/or repairs

The drought watch continues in the Central region, which includes Frederick, Carroll, Cecil, and parts of Baltimore, Harford, Howard and Montgomery counties. Monitoring shows that groundwater levels in the region remain below normal. Rainfall in the Central region in the six months since Jan. 31, 2012, is on average 3.3 inches below normal, or about 85 percent of normal. Reservoirs in the Central region are 98 to 100 percent full.

Actions recommended for watch stage include:

- Public awareness and education
- MDE and water systems provide the public with water conservation tips
- Water systems aggressively pursue leak detection
- Reduced water usage for main flushing, street flushing and park irrigation
- Homeowners, government facilities, businesses and industry should reduce water use for irrigation

Quotes

"While MDE encourages citizens to conserve water at all times, conservation becomes especially necessary when we are under a drought warning. If every Marylander takes even small steps, like fixing leaks, using appliances that save water and waiting to run the dishwasher until it's full, we really can make a difference."

--Robert M. Summers, Secretary, Maryland Department of the Environment

Additional Information

- [Water Conservation Tips](#)
- [Drought Assessment and Response](#)
- [Current Conditions](#)
- [Governors Advisory Committee Report on Water Conservation](#)