

Memorandum

*Flex your power!
Be energy efficient!*

To: DISTRICT DIRECTORS
DEPUTY DISTRICT DIRECTORS
MAINTENANCE

Date: February 6, 2014

File:



From: TONY TAVARES
Chief
Division of Maintenance

Subject: **WATER CONSERVATION AND DROUGHT ACTION PLAN**

California's recurring and prolonged droughts, finite water resources and increasing water costs make efficient water use vital to operating and maintaining the State Highway System (SHS) and protecting the State's \$1.4 billion investment in highway planting. Due to the ongoing drought conditions and to comply with the Governor's Drought State of Emergency, <http://gov.ca.gov/news.php?id=18379>, District Maintenance employees must act immediately to reduce water use by 50 percent. This must be accomplished by prudently and efficiently applying water while continuing to maintain the landscape, using recycled (non-potable) water where available, and by implementing new technology and improved components in all State facilities (buildings and roadsides).

Each District shall review and inventory existing irrigation components (controllers, valves, backflow, flow sensors, etc.), adjust irrigation schedules, repair leaks and damaged irrigation devices, and continue monitoring and adjusting irrigation systems, as appropriate. Call upon your District Water Managers, Landscape Specialists, Landscape Supervisors and Landscape Architects to recommend and implement water management strategies.

In order to maintain and continue good water management practices, all District Maintenance is immediately to comply with the following drought response actions:

1. Immediately reduce all landscape irrigation using potable water by 50 percent.
2. Coordinate closely with local water purveyors to determine local drought conditions, which may require additional reductions and actions, to comply with all local conservation plans and voluntary/mandatory rationing programs.
3. Cease all (100 percent) landscape irrigation in severe water shortage areas as defined by the California Department of Public Health: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/NR14-012.aspx>
4. Cease all (100 percent) irrigation of turf grasses and lawns at all facilities and roadsides (i.e. State Roadside Rest Areas, Maintenance Stations, Truck Weight Inspection Facilities, etc).

5. Identify a qualified, full-time District Water Manager by Friday February 14, 2014, to lead this conservation effort.
6. Revise irrigation controller schedules so that all operations occur during the night, where possible.
7. Check, repair, and adjust irrigation controllers for optimum operations. Continue to maintain irrigation systems in good repair and make adjustments as needed for proper application of water. Do not allow water to run-off onto the pavement. Respond to alerts of leaks, errant sprinklers, and breaks generated by "smart" irrigation controllers within 24-hours.
8. Replace inefficient irrigation and plumbing components with water efficient components.
9. Use non-potable water for field operations where feasible.
10. Apply mulch and reduce pruning of trees and shrubs (except when addressing safety issues) to reduce water loss through evaporation from the soil.
11. Identify opportunities for staff training of water conservation concepts offered by local water purveyors or irrigation material suppliers, and manufacturers.
12. Eliminate the washing of State vehicles, except where it would present a potential health and safety issue to the driver or traveling public.
13. Monitor water use on a monthly basis to ensure water reduction strategies are showing intended results. Coordinate with your local water purveyors and the Division of Accounting to facilitate water consumption data.
14. Inform the public of Caltrans drought actions, by installing signage to identify areas irrigated with non-potable water.

Redirect existing Maintenance employees to assist with these drought conservation efforts, as appropriate.

By implementing a prudent water conservation plan, Caltrans will eliminate excessive water use, while at the same time protecting roadside planting.

c: Malcolm Dougherty, Director
Richard D. Land, Chief Deputy Director
Deputy Directors
Division Chiefs
Keith Robinson, State Landscape Architect
Kuo-Wei Lee, Chief, Office of Landscape and Litter abatement