

Stage 2 Watering Restrictions Go into Effect April 3, 2025

By Derek Warren, Water Conservation Specialist

Effective April 3, 2025, the City of Horseshoe Bay City Council has implemented the City's Stage 2 watering schedule for all residents and businesses as required by LCRA's Firm Water purchase contract. Per an LCRA news release on March 3, "these actions are needed to help preserve and extend our water supplies in the face of a drought that shows little signs of easing over spring and summer," said John Hofmann, LCRA Executive Vice President of Water. "Our water supply reservoirs - lakes Buchanan and Travis - remain stressed and are now sitting at about 51% of capacity." As of March 25, the combined lake levels have dropped to 49% of capacity, emphasizing the need for conservation.

Stage 2 limits automated irrigation systems to once per week and only from midnight (12 a.m.) to 10 a.m. on your assigned irrigation day. Watering with a hose using a hand-held sprayer, with positive shut-off, or a fillable watering bucket is allowed anytime. **Drip irrigation is no longer exempt at this stage 2 level.**

Per the City's agreement with LCRA and the Horseshoe Bay Drought Contingency Plan, the City will continue to actively monitor for compliance with a target of 20% demand reduction as required by City ordinance in Stage 2.

New Watering Schedule

Automated landscape irrigation is limited to 10 hours only, from midnight to 10 a.m., on your watering day. **Watering between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. is prohibited. No watering is allowed on Monday or Friday.**

CUSTOMER CLASS	WATERING DAY
NO WATERING ALLOWED	Monday
Commercial and multifamily customers	Tuesday
Odd-numbered addresses ending in 1, 3	Wednesday
Even-numbered addresses ending in 0, 2	Thursday
NO WATERING ALLOWED	Friday
Odd-numbered addresses ending in 5, 7, 9	Saturday
Even-numbered addresses ending in 4, 6, 8	Sunday

Drought Conditions Prompt a Need to Conserve Water

The lack of substantial rainfall over our winter and early spring seasons has not replenished the levels of Lakes Buchanan and Travis as predicted and drought conditions persist. Normally, rainfall saturates the ground and flows through the Colorado River Basin and into the lakes. For more information on drought conditions, you may search the internet for Texas Drought Status.

Optimal Irrigation Practices You Can Use

With these new restrictions comes the issue of how to irrigate your yard with your current equipment. If you have a fully automatic irrigation controller, there are programming settings you

can use to keep enough water in your yard and still comply with the new schedule. Instruction manuals for irrigation controllers are available online from your system's manufacturer website. You may also contact a licensed irrigation company to set up this schedule.

Cycle soak is a method of watering where you take the overall amount of water needed per week during the hotter months and split that into two watering cycles per zone during the allowed 10-hour period. For example, landscapes that utilize drought tolerant turfgrass and native plants require about one inch of water each week to keep the root systems healthy. This applies the water at a rate that allows maximum percolation (soak time) without applying it at a rate too high to reach saturation (which can cause run-off from your yard), assuming your collective run-time does not exceed the cut-off time of 10:00 a.m. Landscapes with noticeable slopes will need to apply their water at a much lower rate to minimize run-off.

More Information

If the typical “heat dome” returns this year along with triple-digit temperatures, it is important to be realistic about your lawn’s appearance. Preserving the root systems of your drought tolerant turfgrass and plants is the focus. Drought-tolerant plants may not look lush and green during high heat periods, but they will survive and come back with an acceptable loss. Drought-tolerant and native plants have “adapted” to survive drought events by declining on top and preserving their root systems, which is the part that really matters. Once rain returns, they can push out replacement green growth within a couple of weeks.

Further outdoor water use restrictions apply. Please view the Stage 2 Drought Contingency Plan for other important outdoor water use rules in the City of Horseshoe Bay Ordinance Chapter 13, Sec. 13.10.076 (C) (www.ecode360.com/39029808), Restriction (retail customers). A water variance may be approved for native, drought-tolerant plants and lawn grass only. See City Code Section 13.10.082 for more information.

You may also contact City of Horseshoe Bay Water Conservation Specialist, Derek Warren, at 830-598-9973 for specific questions regarding your existing landscape and irrigation system or for new or future projects. For water-saving rebates, tips, tools and resources, visit www.WaterSmart.org.