

◀ DROUGHT: IMPROVING RESILIENCE FOR YOUR BUSINESS ▶

RAPIDLY RUNNING LOW

Water resources, particularly in the South East, are already under pressure from increasing demand. For much of the country, low rainfall in winter (not summer) is the key determinant of potential drought. UK weather is notoriously variable and dry spells are possible year-round, which can have impacts all year. Additionally, climate change is likely to alter rainfall patterns further impacting availability of water resources.

PLANNING FOR DROUGHTS

Although it is impossible to avoid the impacts of a drought when one does occur, there are a number of practical steps that you can take to minimise disruption and maintain productivity. One of the most important steps you can take is to prepare a **drought plan** - this could form part of your Business Continuity Plan. Drought plans will help you and your employees:

- ✓ Understand the drought events your supply system is vulnerable to, and the likelihood of these different events occurring
- ✓ Know what you will do during a drought - for example, how you will maintain supply or reduce demand
- ✓ Understand the details of any drought permits and orders you may apply for in order to continue trading as normal
- ✓ Identify how you can monitor and assess the adverse effects of your actions on the environment, and any mitigation measures you could take
- ✓ Minimise the adverse effects of your actions before, during and after a drought and assess the cumulative effects of your actions
- ✓ Communicate with your customers, suppliers, water regulators and other interested bodies about the drought and what your business is doing
- ✓ Set out what you will do when the drought is over, including how you will review what you've done and improve your planning for next time

WATER USE RESTRICTIONS

You do not always have to halt operations in the case of a drought. Water regulators may grant exceptions, depending on the type, phase and length of a drought. Businesses and systems that are eligible for exemptions include:

- ✓ **Drip or trickle irrigation systems fitted with a PRV and timer.**
- ✓ **Businesses using hosepipes as part of their business (such as hand car washing, window cleaning or graffiti removal).**

Some water companies also offer discretionary exemptions in certain circumstances. If you think you may be eligible for a discretionary exemption, contact your water supply company. You may need to put a business case forward to apply for an exemption.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Your business may have some specific circumstances that would require consideration in your drought planning or any application for an exemption, such as:



Any data exchange arrangements you have made with the Environment Agency or Natural Resources Wales.



Any consultations you've carried out with other water companies and a statement of how you have taken these into account.



Any agreements you have made with other water companies about bulk supplies, transfer of water or division of shared resources.

You should also ask yourself:



How you have tested your drought plan against different drought scenarios (short-term drought, long term drought and different types of drought).



How will water savings you make be balanced against adverse effects on your customers and businesses you work with?



How will customers, neighbouring companies and interest groups be told about the introduction, phasing in, and lifting of any temporary restrictions?

For more information on the managing the impacts of drought, visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/write-a-drought-plan>

<http://www.ciwem.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Managing-drought-in-the-UK.pdf>

