

# LADWP Water Conservation Ordinance

effective 6/1/09

on the web at <http://ghnnc.org/pdf/newratesforwater.pdf>

There are six phases of the Emergency Water Conservation Plan of the Los Angeles Municipal Code. Before June 1, we were in Phase I, and as of June 1, we have skipped past Phase II and gone directly into Phase III.

The item that most affects single-family residential units is the 15% reduction in the allowed Tier 1 limit. It WILL NOT (OK, should not) penalize those who have been practicing good water conservation measures. Further, your water will not be cut off if you don't conserve, it'll just cost more. Each customer (there are different rules for commercial, multi-family, industrial, and agricultural users) gets a Tier 1 allocation of water. This is measured by your water meter in hcf, or Hundred Cubic Feet. One hcf is 748 gallons. Tier 1 rates are the lowest rates. Exceed your Tier 1 allowance, and the price for that additional water goes up. In Phase III, way up. Note that we're talking about the price for delivered water only—the Sewer Service Charge and Solid Resources Fee, which are not LADWP charges but are collected by LADWP on behalf of the City, are not affected. Likewise, tax rates based on the amount of water consumed are not changed (the cost of purchased water is determined quarterly and will affect your water bill). Important: Low-income and Lifeline customers of LADWP will continue to receive discounts and the amount of the discount will not change.

The Tier 1 allocation is based on these factors: Your service address ZIP Code, Temperature Zone (correlated to ZIP Code), Season (High or Low), Lot Size, and Family Size. The High Season is from 6/1 to 10/31, and the Low Season is from 11/1 through 5/31 (now you see the reason for the push to get the lower allocation limit and higher rates into effect by June 1).

Here's an example of how the allocation limits will work starting June 1, 2009. For ZIP code 91344 (a High Temperature Zone), in the High Season (starting 6/1/09), with a lot size (not house size) between 11,000 and 17,449 square feet, and 6 or fewer persons living in the house, the Tier 1 allocation is 84 hcf per billing cycle (two months). That's the baseline Tier 1 allocation for normal year water rates. Reduce that by 15% ( $84 \text{ hcf} \times 0.85$ ) for shortage year water rates, and you get 71 hcf. That's about 890 gallons per day. Seems like a lot, but landscape watering consumes about 40% of that, on average. And if you have a pool and/or spa, well...it all adds up.

So, in this example, if you were to stay below 71 hcf per bill during the High Season, the cost per hcf of water delivered to you will not change. When the commercials say you could even save money under this plan, they are presuming that you were already at your normal year Tier 1 limit (84 hcf for the High Season in this example) and you cut back by 15% to 71 hcf (the new Tier 1 limit). Well, of course if you use less water, you'd pay less! For those of us already conserving and staying below the new Tier 1 rate, the cost for Tier 1 water won't change. And we won't suffer any penalties (but see Important Water Conservation Rules below).

To see how this may affect your bill, here is an example quoted from LADWP's website (you may want to have a calculator or paper and pen handy). "As an example, effective June 1, 2009, a typical two-month billing cycle for a single-family residential customer who is allocated 28 hundred cubic feet (HCF) of water pays \$81.76, or 2.92 cents per cubic foot. After a 15% reduction, that customer's

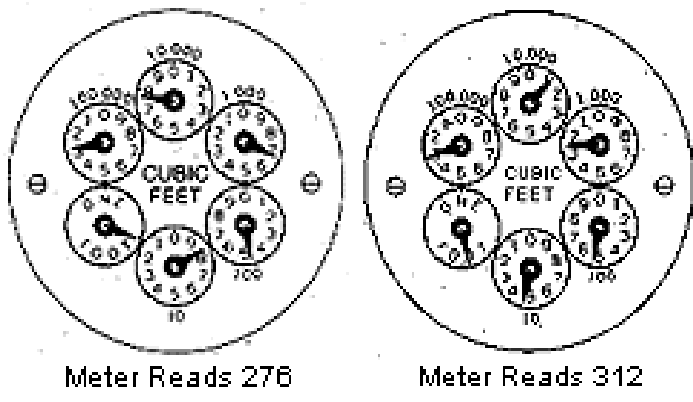
allocation allows them to purchase 24 HCF of Tier 1 water, which amounts to \$70.08. If the customer does not cut back, he/she will pay for 24 HCF at the Tier 1 rate, or \$70.08, plus 4 HCF at the Tier 2 rate, or \$5.19 per HCF, which amounts to an additional \$20.76 for a total of \$90.84. Notes: the Tier 2 rate will be \$5.48 per HCF effective July 1, 2009." Remember, this is before taxes, purchased water cost, and all that other stuff.

How do you find your new lower Tier 1 rate that goes into effect June 1? If you meet the criteria outlined above, I've just told you. If not, the easiest way is to call LADWP (1-800-342-5397) and speak to Customer Service. They have all this info on file for your address, including your lot size. You might ask them for your lot size to see how it compares with any info you may have. And if you have more than 6 people living in your house, you should ask if their records reflect that fact (you get an additional Tier 1 allocation for each person over 6, but it's capped at 13 or more persons). For example, if your household consists of 8 persons, you get an additional 8 hcf/billing cycle for your Tier 1. Assume nothing. For all the details, refer to <http://www.ladwp.com/ladwp/cms/ladwp001152.pdf>. And don't forget to reduce the amount you get from this chart by 15%.

Here is the incentive. Before June 1, Tier 2 (after Tier 1) water usage was billed at about \$3.59/hcf. After 6/1/09, that rate goes up to \$5.19/hcf. And in a kicker, after July 1, 2009 (the very next month), that rate goes up further to \$5.48/hcf, just in time for summer. Since you're unlikely to have your billing cycle exactly on these dates, the true amount you'll get billed for Tier 2 will be prorated based on your billing cycle and these rate change dates.

Since you get billed every two months, how can you track your water usage so you're not too surprised when the bill arrives? You can do what LADWP does, and read your water meter. Most meters are near the curb in a buried box, with the box lid (generally) level with your landscaping (it's dark, warm, and moist in the meter box—be careful of creatures dwelling therein). You can use a screwdriver or similar tool to open the lid. Older meters have rotating dials. Newer meters are direct-reading digital, like the odometer in your car.

How to Read a Round-Reading (6 little dials) Meter



To read your water meter correctly, begin with the 1,000 cubic-foot-value dial. Write down the number the pointer is directly on, or has last passed. (Note that the dials alternate rotation. The 1,000 dial rotates counterclockwise, the 10,000 dial rotates clockwise, and so on.) Repeat this procedure on the

10,000 and 100,000 cubic-foot-value dials, etc. Write down the numbers from right to left. (The dials that show a maximum of 1, 10, and 100 cubic feet are used for meter testing only and are to be disregarded in your calculations.) The result you obtain is your meter reading.

EXAMPLE (from LADWP website): If the meter reads 276 on January 2 and 312 on March 1, the difference of 36 between the two readings would be the number of 100-cubic-foot units of water used during the two-month billing period. The meter shows a usage of 36 hcf, or 26,928 gallons.

A good way to check for leaks is to not use any water (includes the toilet!) and monitor the 1-foot dial to see if it has moved after 10 or 15 minutes (the longer you wait, the smaller the leak you can detect). You could even leave the house for a couple of hours— just remember to check the meter before using *any* water. If the dial has moved, you have a leak!

### How to Read a Straight-Reading Meter



For the above meter, the reading is taken from the figures shown under the words CUBIC FEET. The meter reads 81,710, which is the total number of cubic feet of water recorded since the meter was installed. Because the charge is based on units of 100 cubic feet, the meter reader discards the last two numbers (the ones with the black background). So, this reading would actually be 817. The large sweep hand is used only for testing purposes.

A good way to check for leaks is to not use any water (includes the toilet!) and monitor the sweep hand to see if it has moved after 10 or 15 minutes (the longer you wait, the smaller the leak you can detect). You could even leave the house for a couple of hours— just remember to check the meter before using *any* water. If the sweep hand has moved, you have a leak!

### Important Water Conservation Rules (effective 6/1/09)

- ✓ This has sometimes been reported as starting July 1. Trust me, it's June 1.
- ✓ No landscape watering between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm *any day of the week*.
- ✓ Sprinkler use restricted to Monday and Thursday only, before 9:00 am and after 4:00 pm.
- ✓ Rotating and gear-driven sprinklers may only be run for a maximum of 15 minutes per station per day. Other irrigation systems may be run for only 10 minutes per station per day.

- ✓ If you're using very low-flow drip-type irrigation systems (no emitter produces more than 2 gallons per hour, 2 gph), the above restrictions do not apply under Phase III.
- ✓ Hand-held hose watering of vegetation is allowed any day of the week PROVIDED you use a self-closing nozzle. Must water before 9:00 am or after 4:00 pm.
- ✓ Watering during rain on any day at any time is not permitted, and includes automatic systems.
- ✓ May not use water to wash any hard surface (driveway, sidewalk, etc.) unless flushing is required to protect public health and safety. Water brooms and LADWP-approved devices are permitted.
- ✓ Must fix leaking pipes and fixtures promptly, inside and outside.
- ✓ May not wash your vehicle(s) using a hose unless the hose has a self-closing nozzle, or otherwise allow the water to run continuously while washing a vehicle.
- ✓ May not allow runoff onto streets and gutters from excessive watering.
- ✓ Penalties may be assessed if you water during restricted watering times. Actions may include warning notices, escalating fines, and water flow restricting devices installed in the service line.
- ✓ Ensure your sprinklers are in good repair (aimed properly, no broken heads, no leaky/damaged pipes, cracked plastic housings, etc.).
- ✓ A great place to start your water conservation efforts is outside the home, since a large percentage (about 40%) of water is used for landscape irrigation.
- ✓ When replacing water appliances, check the LADWP ([www.ladwp.com](http://www.ladwp.com)) website for water-efficient models and possible rebates.
- ✓ Check the gas company website ([www.socalgas.com](http://www.socalgas.com)) for rebates as well.
- ✓ Select Energy Star appliances are eligible for Federal tax credits (30%, up to \$1,500 aggregate).
- ✓ To report water waste call 1-800-342-5397 or email [waterconservationteam@ladwp.com](mailto:waterconservationteam@ladwp.com). You do not have to provide your contact information.
- ✓ And the ones we always hear: Take shorter showers, wash only full loads (clothes and dishes), cover your pool and/or spa when not in use to minimize water loss due to evaporation (watch the chlorine/sanitizer levels and water temperature!).

This information has been gleaned from several documents on the LADWP website ([www.ladwp.com](http://www.ladwp.com)). Here are some of the links in case you want to read from the source:

- <http://www.ladwp.com/ladwp/cms/ladwp011945.pdf> (FAQ on shortage year water rates)
- <http://www.ladwp.com/ladwp/cms/ladwp011946.pdf> (Another FAQ on shortage year rates)
- <http://www.ladwp.com/ladwp/cms/ladwp009868.pdf> (What you and businesses can't do with water)
- <http://www.ladwp.com/ladwp/cms/ladwp010964.pdf> (The actual ordinance, with all the legal stuff)
- <http://www.ladwp.com/ladwp/cms/ladwp001152.pdf> (Normal Year Water Rates; use to find Tier 1 limit)

#### Other Resources and Conservation Tips

- <http://www.bewaterwise.com> (Water saving tips from the Metropolitan Water District (MWD), where LADWP gets about 35% of its water)
- <http://www.lvmwd.com/index.aspx?page=129> (Las Virgenes Municipal Water District, 50 Ways to Save H<sub>2</sub>O)
- <http://socalgas.com> (The Gas Company website. Offers rebates)
- <http://www.energystar.gov/taxcredits> (Federal tax credits for energy efficiency)
- [http://www.bewaterwise.com/video\\_01.html](http://www.bewaterwise.com/video_01.html) (Video tips for water-conserving landscaping)
- <http://www.epa.gov/watersense/> (New program by EPA, WaterSense labeling for water appliances, just like EnergyStar for electrical appliances)
- <http://socalwatersmart.com/index.php> (More rebates sponsored by MWD. Requires "reservations.")

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