

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

On behalf of MEMA's Director, please see the message below.

Good afternoon,

Due to above normal temperatures throughout July and early August and more than three months of below normal rainfall, Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Kathleen Theoharides declared a Level 2 – Significant Drought in all seven regions of the Commonwealth – the Western, Connecticut River Valley, Central, Northeast, Southeast, Cape Cod, and Islands regions. *The significance of the drought levels, and the drought regions as classified by EEA, can be found in the attached Massachusetts Drought Management Plan.*

At a Level 2 – Significant Drought, as outlined in the Massachusetts Drought Management Plan, conditions are becoming significantly dry and warrant detailed monitoring of drought conditions, close coordination among state and federal agencies, emphasis on water conservation, more stringent watering restrictions, and technical outreach and assistance for the affected municipalities.

Temperatures remain well above normal, as the Commonwealth recorded the second hottest July on record last month. Rainfall was scattered across the state with only a few areas receiving above normal precipitation; most areas were in a deficit by 1 to 3 inches. Meanwhile, temperatures throughout the first two weeks of August were 2 to 4 degrees above normal throughout Massachusetts, with warmer than normal temperatures predicted in the coming weeks and months. While most regions of the Commonwealth are experiencing a classic long-term drought, the Southeast, Cape Cod, and Islands regions are experiencing conditions akin to a 'flash drought' which is a rapid onset drought with decreased precipitation, above normal temperatures, and incoming radiation resulting in abnormally high evapotranspiration all combining to increase fire danger and decrease crop moisture levels.

Wildland fire risk continues across the state. Extended drought conditions have rendered grasses, shrubs and forest fuels very dry across most of the state, and extremely dry in areas of the Southeast, resulting in increased wildfire risk and added challenges for firefighting agencies. Long term precipitation deficits have also led to extremely dry soil conditions, which results in fires burning deep into the ground, and taking multiple days to extinguish. These conditions exhaust local resources and increase risk to firefighter safety.

As part of the Commonwealth's response to the current drought situation, MEMA in coordination with EEA is proactively reaching out to local communities to; (1) request assistance in disseminating information to your municipal officials and constituents on measures they can take to reduce or eliminate outdoor water use, and to reduce indoor water use, and (2) offer technical assistance to affected communities as needed (i.e. providing information on specific water restrictions for towns/cities, offering assistance to local Boards of Health on addressing private well impacts and obtaining emergency water supplies, and hosting regional drought education workshops etc.). Additionally, to support the Commonwealth's effort to inform and educate local communities on the current drought conditions, and the measures communities can take to limit and restrict water use, we encourage you to please use and disseminate EEA's infographics that can be found both attached to this email and bulleted below.

- Outdoor water tips infographic can be found here <https://www.mass.gov/doc/tips-for-saving-water-outdoors/download>
- Indoor water tips infographic can be found here <https://www.mass.gov/doc/tips-for-saving-water-indoors/download>

Finally, for further information on drought management please visit the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' [Drought and Assistance Page](#). To see which drought region your town is in click [here](#). To check the drought level of the region your town is in click [here](#).

As always, thank you for your assistance and support.

Sincerely,

Director Samantha C. Phillips

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency



LEVEL 2 - SIGNIFICANT DROUGHT



LEVEL 1
Mild Drought

LEVEL 2
Significant Drought

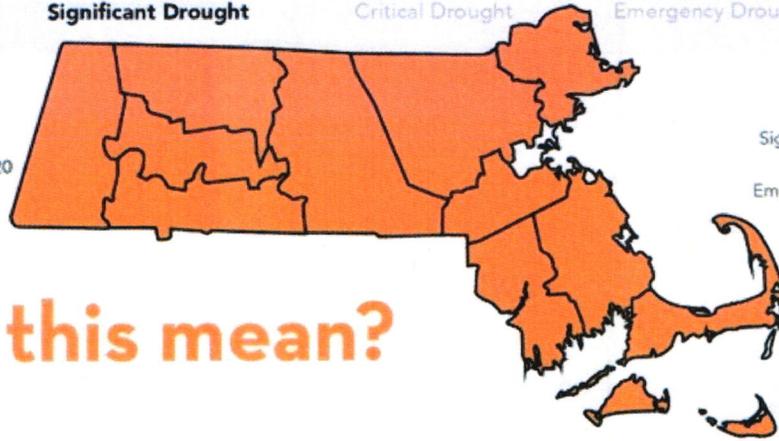
LEVEL 3
Critical Drought

LEVEL 4
Emergency Drought



MASSACHUSETTS DROUGHT STATUS

Conditions beginning July 1, 2020 effective until updated



Normal	White
Mild Drought	Yellow
Significant Drought	Orange
Critical Drought	Red
Emergency Drought	Dark Red

What does this mean?



Rain well below normal for over 2 months



Streams low, nearing extreme low flows in some areas



Fire Danger steadily increasing



Strain on some water supplies

What you can do!



Minimize overall water use



Limit outdoor watering to hand-held hoses or watering cans, to be used only after 5pm or before 9am



Temporarily Limit installation of new landscapes and plants

Learn more at www.mass.gov/ma-drought-management