



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

Drought Planning and Response Guide for Communities

This guide is to help communities adapt to drought conditions and water quantity conditions and take action to minimize negative impacts.

WHAT CAUSES DROUGHT CONDITIONS?

A drought can occur whenever there is insufficient rain or snowfall over an extended period, resulting in water shortage for communities and ecosystems.

WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF DROUGHT?

Drought conditions can affect communities and individuals by reducing the amount of water available for households and businesses. Under extreme conditions, water systems could run out of potable water and be unable to meet fire suppression requirements. Drought can also affect water quality from surface sources and can reduce the safety of treated water.



Fix leaky faucets and taps. A dripping tap can waste up to 20 litres or more per day! Fix or report any water leaks noted in your home, and around your community.



Create a low flow toilet. You can achieve a smaller volume of water per flush by adding something to the tank reservoir to displace water. A water-filled 1-litre plastic milk jug works well. Be sure to place them so that they do not interfere with the flushing mechanism.



Take shorter showers and use a water-conserving showerhead (less than 9.5 litres per minute) or a showerhead with a stop button to pause water flow during lathering. Take quick showers rather than baths, which use 80 fewer litres of water on average. Showering just one minute quicker can save a household up to 10,000 litres of water a year! If you do prefer baths, you need a maximum of nine minutes to run enough water.



Do not let water run continuously when shaving, brushing teeth, washing your face or hands, or washing the dishes. You can put the plug in and use the water that filled up in the sink.



Run the dishwasher and laundry machines only with full loads. Use the shortest wash and rinse cycles and the lowest water level setting possible. Avoid the permanent press cycle, which uses an additional 38 to 75 litres of water.



Use a bowl for washing fruits and vegetables. A running kitchen tap can use up to 20 litres of water every minute. You can reduce water waste by using a bowl to wash and prepare your fruits and vegetables. Then you can use the water to give your house or yard plants a drink.



Use soaker hoses and drip irrigation for garden watering. These are more efficient than a spraying hose. Do not water in the heat of the day. Early morning or evening watering provides the most water for your plants. Do not water lawns at all in severe drought. They are great survivors of drought and will be green again with the first heavy rain



Consider installing Aerated Taps. By mixing water with air before being emitted, aerated taps can reduce up to 30 per cent water consumption.

Under severe water restriction, use potable water for the following essential uses only:

- Drinking water
- Brushing teeth
- Cooking
- Mixing Baby Formula
- Washing

Remember that excessive water usage during a drought, especially in a community with shared water supply, is something that can affect everybody and not just your household!

Community Water Systems should have an Emergency Response Plan in place that includes a Drought Response Plan. Find additional information on the Indigenous Services Canada website at: <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1398341765198/1533667912163>

For up to date drought information for British Columbia, please see the British Columbia Drought Information Portal website: <https://governmentofbc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=838d533d8062411c820eef50b08f7ebc>

For any water-related public health issues, contact your FNHA Environmental Health Officer (EHO): www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/environmental-health