

Amendments to the Comox Valley Water Restrictions

Frequently Asked Questions

1. To whom does this water restrictions bylaw apply?

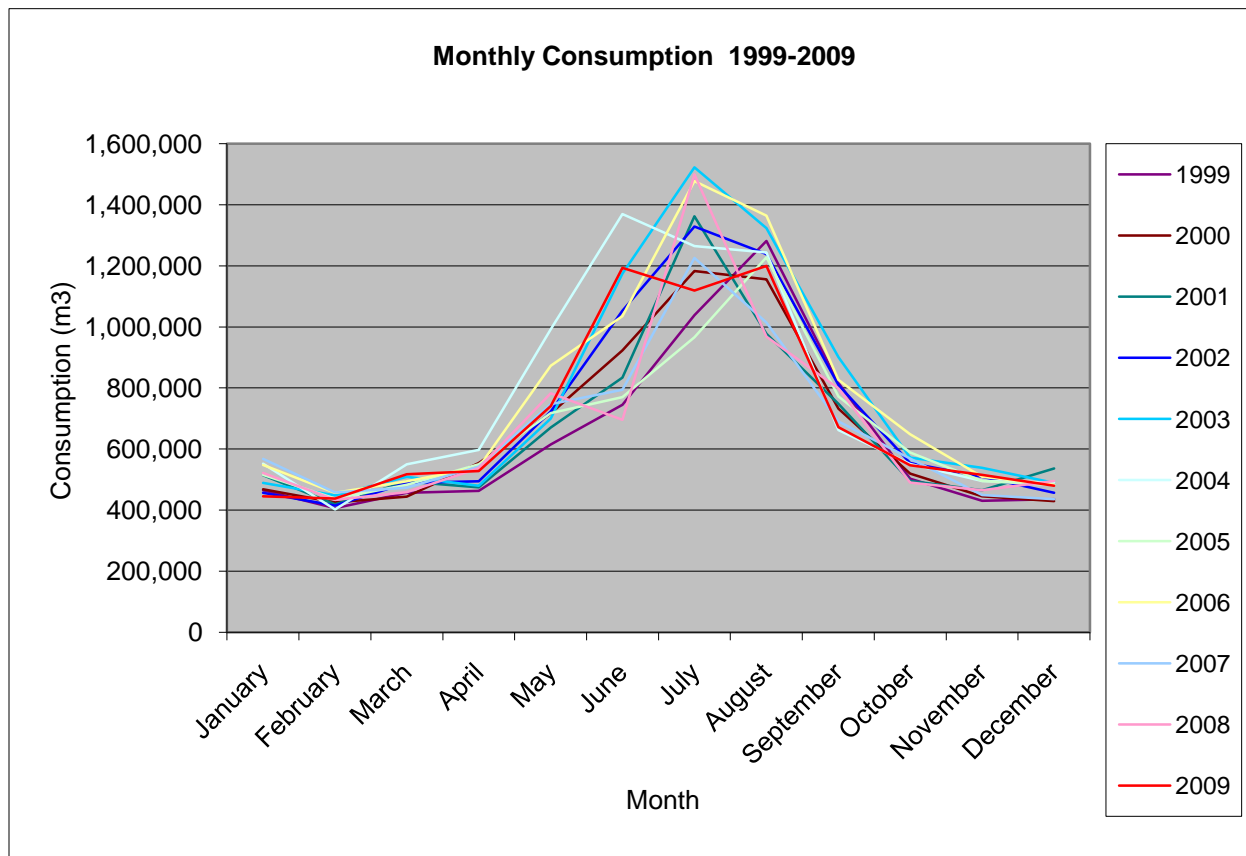
The Comox Valley water conservation bylaw applies throughout the Comox Valley water system which is supplied by Comox Lake. This includes the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox and the Comox Valley Regional District's (CVRD) water local service areas of Marsden/Camco, Greaves Crescent, Arden, Comox Valley and England Road. Maps of the CVRD water local service areas can be found at http://www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/section_propserv/content.asp?id=4122&parent=81&sub_collection=92 (or visit www.comoxvalleyrd.ca and select "water system" from the "water services" tab found under "property services" on the main page menu). This bylaw does not apply to other water systems such as the Royston and Black Creek/Oyster Bay water local service areas operated by CVRD, or to the Village of Cumberland, or to those run by improvement districts (e.g. Union Bay, Sandwick, Fanny Bay).

2. Why is the bylaw being revised?

The bylaw revision is motivated largely by the desire to reduce the scale of future infrastructure upgrades and associated costs. More effective and efficient water use will result in numerous cost savings by:

- Reducing the size of capital infrastructure upgrades required in the near future (e.g. treatment facilities, pump stations, reservoirs);
- Deferring or potentially eliminating the need to construct water supply capital infrastructure upgrades (e.g. reservoirs, pump stations);
- Avoiding source water expansion projects (e.g. raising the dam)

One of the most critical design criterion used for water system infrastructure is the maximum day demands. These peaks occur in summer due to heavy outdoor water use, primarily lawn sprinkling. The graph below shows how water consumption increases dramatically in summer months.



Additional benefits will include reduced operating costs (e.g. chlorination chemicals and electricity purchases for pumping), staying below licensed water volumes, ecological benefits and better enabling CVRD to adapt to possible climate change impacts.

3. Why do we need to reduce water use if there is lots of snow on the mountains?

While water restrictions are an important tool in managing the water supply, the proposed bylaw revisions are motivated largely by the desire to manage water demand. Regardless of how much water may be available at the source, the water system that stores, transmits, disinfects and distributes the water throughout the community is very complex and costly. In order to maximize this system and reduce the scale of future infrastructure upgrades and associated costs (as discussed in question #2), the new bylaw will shift to managing demand as well as supply.

4. What happens to people who do not follow the restrictions?

A new “three pronged approach” has been developed to help to gain compliance with the restrictions. The approach involves education, ticketing and fines. This process will be consistently applied across the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox and Comox Valley Regional District’s (CVRD) water local service areas. Additional resources have also been secured to provide patrols directly before and after restriction times to ensure that residents adhere to their allowed times. In addition, each local government will implement a tracking system to document repeat offenders.

5. How will I know what stage of the restrictions we are in?

The two local newspapers will carry an ad each week stating the current restriction in place. The information can always be found on the CVRD website (www.comoxvalleyrd.ca, by clicking on the “water drop” icon on the main page. Radio ads and strategically placed signs will also help inform residents of current restrictions.

6. What are the fines that can imposed for not following restrictions?

While the bylaw stipulates maximum fines that are applicable under the Local Government Act and the Offence Act, it is the intention of bylaw enforcement staff to utilize the CVRD municipal ticketing bylaw (MTI) bylaw which contains the following ticket amounts for water conservation offences:

Offence	Amount of fine
Wasting water at stage 1	\$50.00
Wasting water at stage 2	\$75.00
Wasting water at stage 3	\$100.00
Using water contrary to restrictions at stage 1	\$75.00
Using water contrary to restrictions at stage 2	\$150.00
Using water contrary to restrictions at stage 3	\$225.00

7. Will this bylaw make it hard to have a healthy lawn?

No. Having a healthy lawn involves a number of factors, including soil depth/type, proper maintenance and efficient watering. Research shows that less than one inch of water per week is ideal for keeping a healthy lawn. This includes rain and can be measured with simple rain gauges or even an empty tuna can. Here are some other tips:

- Water your lawn early in the morning or late in the evening to reduce evaporation.
- Use mulch as a protective ground cover that reduces evaporation, erosion, and weeds.
- Raise the blade! A higher cut (three inches) encourages grass roots to grow deeper and holds soil moisture better.
- Aerate to fix soil compaction and increase air and water movement in the soil.
- Don't over-fertilize your lawn: it increases the need for water.
- Ensure automatic irrigation systems are set properly to provide the correct amount of water.

For more detailed information on water efficient lawn and garden care check out the following document: <http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/pdf/62042.pdf?fr=1274483771663>

8. Will this bylaw make it hard to grow vegetables, shrubs, trees, and flowers?

No. In fact, the bylaw is less restrictive to sprinkling and hand held watering of vegetables, shrubs, trees and flowers, especially if using microdrip irrigation systems. Other techniques such as composting, using mulch and planting native species which are drought tolerant will result in reduced water use while still maintaining healthy plants.

For more detailed information on water efficient lawn and garden care check out the following document: <http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/pdf/62042.pdf?fr=1274483771663>

9. How much water is used in the summer?

Water consumption can double or triple in summer months depending on various factors (e.g. weather, conservation). During an average day from October to April, water use in the Comox Valley water system is about 16,000 cubic metres of water (one cubic metre of water is equivalent to 1000 litres). During an average day from May to September this jumps to approximately 33,000 cubic metres. The maximum day demand for 2009 was 50,984 cubic metres.

10. When will the new restrictions take effect?

The revised Comox Valley water conservation bylaw was approved at the May 25, 2010 board meeting and is now in effect. Stage 2 restrictions will be automatically in place beginning June 1st 2010.

11. Where can I get more information on outdoor water use?

Good information on water efficient lawn and garden care can be found in the following documents:

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation “Water-Saving Tips for Your Lawn and Garden”
<http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/pdf/62042.pdf?fr=1274483771663>

Capital Regional District’s “A Homeowner’s Guide to Outdoor Water Use”
<http://www.crd.bc.ca/water/conservation/documents/outdoorconservation.pdf>