

# Drought & Stage 4a FAQ:

## Why are we in Stage 4a?

The Governor directed the State Water Resources Control Board to implement mandatory water reduction in cities and towns across California to reduce water use. The District is required to reduce water use by 36%.

Locally, RCWD has been affected by the drought. RCWD's groundwater supplies, which is the District's lowest cost supplies have been reduced due to the extreme drought conditions. Our imported supplies have also been affected by the drought reducing the District's overall water supply.

## How does Stage 4a affect me?

Domestic and Multi-Family Water Budget Reductions:

**Tier 2 (Outdoor) Water Budgets are decreased by 30%**

**Tier 3 (Inefficient) Water Budgets are eliminated**

## Know where you stand



**Your Water Budget Has Changed!**

**Are you still within yours?** 

Landscape Customers Water Budget Reductions:

**Tier 2 (Efficient) Water Budgets are decreased by 30%**

**Tier 3 (Inefficient) Water Budgets are eliminated**

Agricultural and Commercial (CII) Water Budget Reductions:

**Tier 1 (Efficient) Water Budgets are decreased by 10%.**

The District is asking all customers to reduce outdoor water usage by **50%**.

The single greatest way to reduce outdoor water use is to reduce the amount of turf in your yard. Rebates are available for customers looking to make changes in their landscape.



**Let's Get Serious About The Drought**

Additional Restrictions:

- No washing of personal vehicles at home are allowed
- No variances or adjustments will be approved for filling swimming pools; establishing or expanding landscape area, leaks not repaired within 48 hours, and existing outdoor water budgets.

## I thought tiered rates were illegal?

The City of San Juan Capistrano rate case found that San Juan Capistrano's tiered rate structure was unconstitutional because it charged more for water than it cost the city to provide the service. Water providers must demonstrate that fees correspond to the cost of providing the service. If heavy water users cause a water provider to incur additional costs, it would then be legal to charge the users for those increases. Rancho California Water District's budget based tiered rate structure sets costs at different tiers based on the cost of the water service being provided. RCWD has groundwater as one source of water that is significantly less expensive than imported water therefore the first tier of water is charged less as it represents the cost of service for groundwater. Moving up in the tiers customers are paying for the higher imported fees that the District has to pay.

## What is a drought surcharge?

Effective July 1, 2015 Drought surcharges may be imposed if customers exceed their water budgets during times of water shortage. Excessive water use is a violation of the District's Water Shortage Contingency Plan and is subject to Drought Surcharges. Any Drought Surcharge will represent Metropolitan Water District of Southern California Allocation Surcharges imposed on the District for exceeding its allocations. The Drought Surcharge will cover the additional costs such as fines, penalties, and water conservation programs associated with the drought that are imposed on RCWD.

## How can I determine the impact to my water bill?

RCWD has a new Residential Bill Estimator for customers to look into the future regarding bill changes. The Bill Estimator incorporates several areas that will affect bills in the coming months including new proposed rates, reduced water budget factors, and Stage 4a reductions. Keep in mind that the Bill Estimator only calculates water commodity charges (water use) and does not include the monthly service charge, energy charge, or sewer charges. [www.ranchowater.com/estimator](http://www.ranchowater.com/estimator)

## How can I report water waste?

Water waste reports may be submitted through RCWD's website **[www.ranchowater.com](http://www.ranchowater.com)**. You may also download the District's Report Water Waste application for your smartphone. The free app is available for both Android and Apple phones.

