



Resilient Together FAQs

Are we in a drought emergency now?

Despite recent winter storms, California faces a third consecutive year of drought. Water years 2020 and 2021 were the driest two-year sequence on record for precipitation in the state and were characterized by high temperatures and dry soils, which resulted in low runoff from the State's snowpack. As a result, in October 2021, Governor Newsom declared a drought state of emergency for all 58 counties in California, including Orange County. California is still under a drought emergency, which calls for a voluntary 15 percent reduction in statewide water use. In addition, the State Water Resources Control Board also enacted mandatory conservation regulations to prevent wasteful water uses and promote water conservation during the current drought emergency. We must all take action to use water wisely.

Where does Moulton Niguel get its water?

Moulton Niguel imports 100% of its drinking water from MWD via the Diemer Water Treatment Plant (Diemer WTP) located in northeast Orange County. Under normal conditions, the Diemer WTP sources water from the Colorado River through the Colorado River Aqueduct and from Northern California through the State Water Project (SWP). Currently, both water sources are experiencing drought conditions. To preserve SWP water supplies, the Diemer facility has solely imported water from the Colorado River since March 2020. Imported water supply sources are subject to change as drought conditions evolve in both regions.

The District meets over 20% of its total water demands with locally produced recycled water; this resource serves dedicated irrigation accounts, such as homeowner associations, commercial shopping centers, schools, parks, and recreation centers.

What are Moulton Niguel's plans regarding the drought?

In response to the Statewide Drought Emergency, the District's Board of Director's (on December 9, 2021) adopted a Water Supply Alert for our service area. This Water Supply Alert sets actions the District will take to assist customers in reducing water waste and increasing water use efficiency. Moulton Niguel has partnered with you, our customers, to boost our drought resilience. We work to ensure a clean and reliable water supply are available to you and we are monitoring the drought conditions in our state carefully. While we can't predict how long this drought will last or future mandates the state may impose, we are confident that we will be able to provide a reliable water supply for our customers to carry out daily activities. We are asking our customers to do their part by using water efficiently and staying within their water budget. Much of our water is used outdoors. For the greatest impact, you can take actions to ensure your landscape is drought resilient. Attend one of our sustainable landscape workshops or participate in our NatureScape Turf-to-Native Garden Program (incentives are at all-time high!) to get started today!

Here are a few examples of how we've prepared and built resilience:

- Moulton Niguel promotes the use of recycled water, which meets over 20% of the District's peak supply needs;
- We've made investments to ensure reliability of the water supply and developed regional partnerships for emergency interties with neighboring water agencies;
- Implemented water-budget based rates;
- Provided education to residents, commercial customers, and HOAs on water efficiency;
- Removed nearly 6 million square feet of turf, representing more than 500 million gallons of water savings. This accounts for more than 25% of all turf removed in Orange County;
- Upgraded to smart meters, which help identify leaks; and,
- Provided customers with rebates for replacing inefficient water appliances.



Are there water restrictions now?

Governor Newsom has asked Californians to voluntarily reduce water use by 15 percent. The State Water Resources Control Board also enacted mandatory conservation regulations to prevent wasteful water uses and promote water conservation during the drought emergency. The following water wasting activities are currently prohibited by the SWRCB and/or the District's Water Shortage Contingency Plan Ordinance:

- Water waste and unreasonable water use by any person at any time;
- Watering landscapes within 48 hours of measurable rainfall (defined as ¼" in a 24-hour period);
- No watering or irrigating in a manner that allows excessive runoff of potable or recycled water;
- Washing vehicles without an automatic shutoff nozzle;
- No washing down hard or paved surfaces, except where needed for health and safety reasons; and
- All decorative fountains that utilize potable water must recirculate the water or be turned off.

The District also strongly recommends:

- To avoid watering during daylight hours, from 9 am to 5 pm, to prevent water lost to evaporation;
- Installing low-water demand plants, trees, and shrubs when renovating landscape; and,
- Installing swimming pool and spa covers to minimize water loss to evaporation.

For a full list of prohibited wastes, best practices, and recommendations, view the District's Water Shortage Contingency Plan Ordinance at mwd.com/reports-publications.

Are we going to have days when we can/can't water plants/yard? What will my watering days be during the drought?

The District does not restrict customers by limiting watering to specific days during the week. We don't know what actions the state may take in the future; however, during the last drought, the state allowed Moulton Niguel to rely on its own water efficiency methods rather than being subjected to restrictions imposed in other areas.

What stage of our Water Shortage Contingency Plan are we in?

The Water Shortage Contingency Plan has six stages. While the plan has not been activated at this time, Moulton Niguel is implementing some drought response actions identified in the WSCP to aid in the Governor's call for reduced water use.

How can I help?

Here are a few ways that you can help conserve water:

- Avoid watering between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Evaporation peaks during daylight hours, so watering when it's cool and not as bright will help your soil and plants retain moisture.
- Replace high water need vegetation, like turf, with California native and drought-tolerant plants to reduce the overall water needs of your landscape.
- Take advantage of the NatureScape Turf-to-Native Garden Program or the DIY Turf Replacement Program to update your landscape. The rebate for both programs just increased from \$2 per sq. foot to \$4 per sq. foot.
- Pair the turf removal incentive with other outdoor rebates, such as the weather-based irrigation controller rebate, to upgrade your irrigation system and start managing water according to the weather.
- Visit mnwd.com/watersavingtips to learn how to conserve
- Receive a personalized in-person or virtual home savings survey from one of our experts. These surveys take just 45 minutes to complete.

We thank you for all you have already done to help conserve water. We encourage you to stay within your water budget and heed the governor's request to cut water use where possible.

A few additional ideas:

- Use a "Smart Irrigation Controller"
- Only run your clothes and dish washer when full.
- Sign up for Leak Alerts at mywatermnd.com



How will my bill be impacted during the drought?

As of today, bills will remain the same. Moulton Niguel is proud to maintain the lowest average bill in south Orange County.

Customers who use water efficiently and stay within their water budget will continue to pay the District's lowest water rates.

Can we hose-down (power wash) our hardscape such as driveways, patios, etc.? Is this allowed during a drought period?

No. The District's water conservation best practices are in effect at all times. This is only permitted to alleviate safety or sanitary hazards. If needed for safety reasons, use

- a hand-held bucket or similar container
- a hand-held hose equipped with a functioning, positive self-closing shut-off device or
- a low-volume, high-pressure cleaning machine equipped to recycle any water used.

Can we wash our cars in our driveway? What are the restrictions? Do we have to go to a commercial car wash?

It is recommended that customers use a commercial carwash so the wash water will not run off their property and into the storm drain. Additionally, the dirty water used at carwashes is recycled and reused numerous times, making it a more efficient way to clean a dirty vehicle.

You may wash your car in your driveway provided you have a shutoff nozzle on your hose to ensure water is not running continuously. Customers should be aware of their water budget for all water use activity. Information on your water budget is available on your bill.

Will I be charged the Tier 5 (highest) rate if I go over my water budget? Is there an increased penalty for going over budget?

Right now, customers are charged at Tier 5 if they exceed 150% of their monthly water budget. Any change to that threshold must be approved at a public meeting by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

