



## **North Bend Water Conservation Ordinance Frequently Asked Questions**

**1. *What time of the year will the Water Conservation Ordinance affect my use of water?***

The WCO establishes a period starting on August 15 of each year when Phase 1 of the WCO is in effect. This phase only enforces against the water waste practices listed in Section 13.50.050.

**2. *When Phase 1 is in effect can I water my yard, orchard, garden, or other ornamental landscaping?***

Yes, watering would be allowed from 6 p.m. to 10 a.m. every night.

**3. *Would the WCO cause my plants and landscaping to die from lack of watering?***

No. If you install or already have a drip irrigation system and that is the sole source of watering, you would be exempt from the WCO. If you water at night, then all landscaping should have adequate water.

**4. *What if I don't have a drip irrigation system? Would my plants die?***

In Phase 1, you can water from 6 p.m. to 10 a.m. every night. Under Phase 2 you can water three days per week from 6 p.m. to 10 a.m. If Phase 3 is in effect, then you can water one day per week from 6 p.m. to 10 a.m. Phase 2 or Phase 3 would not go into effect until the Public Works Director issues a public declaration. This would only be done if there is a regional drought and/or drastic reduction in groundwater and river levels, such as the 2015 drought.

**5. *How can my children get relief from the heat if the WCO prohibits using a sprinkler for my yard during the day?***

Using a sprinkler, kiddie pool, water slide or other water recreational device on a lawn for short-term recreational purpose is allowed and not considered irrigation as listed in Section 13.50.050. – K (Wasteful Use of Water).

**6. *Did the City Council approve the WCO to provide water for new residential growth?***

No. Conservation of natural resources is the right thing to do. The City Council is exercising its broad police powers to protect the public health, safety and welfare by adopting this conservation ordinance in order to ensure the continued delivery of safe and reliable drinking water to existing and future water customers and to ensure the protection of water as a finite natural resource.

**7. What is the connection between the City's responsibility to provide mitigation water into the South Fork of the Snoqualmie River and the WCO?**

During periods of drought when the Snoqualmie River reaches low flows at 1 of 3 locations (in Fall City, Carnation or Monroe) during any day of the year, the City is required by Washington State Department of Ecology to provide mitigation water from specific qualified sources (e.g., Hobo Springs well near Rattlesnake Lake, other wells, or water purchased from City of Seattle) into the South Fork. This is partly because some water users are using large volumes of water in summer-to-fall months and creating citywide water usage spikes. If the City conserves water to reduce these spikes, then the need for mitigation water will be reduced.

**8. Why should water consumers care whether we must provide mitigation water?**

Water customers are paying for mitigation water in their monthly bills. Each year the City of North Bend must pay the City of Seattle for having access to mitigation water and when using mitigation water. In 2019, the City of North Bend paid City of Seattle over \$240,000 to have facility access to mitigation water and another approximate \$117,000 for the actual purchase of mitigation water. Each year, the costs fluctuate based on how much mitigation water is needed. Mitigation water is needed based on the daily flows of Snoqualmie River (at 3 downstream locations) and how much water is pumped from Centennial Well for domestic production. Mitigation costs are passed on to City customers because utility revenue accounts must meet this obligation. If customers conserve water even a little bit, then the need for another costly mitigation system moves further into the future, and customers can keep their water rates from rising as quickly.

**9. What happens if I violate the WCO?**

The goal is voluntary compliance. Penalties and citations would be issued only after initial contact and warnings are ignored. The WCO directs the City to first have personal or written contact with the party violating the ordinance. If violations continue, then the WCO directs the City to implement Step 2 and provide written notification, issuance of a notice to correct violation, and enforce a penalty of up to \$25 per day for City customers and up to \$50 per day for non-City customers. Continued violations can result in Step 3, which provides for an administrative penalty of up to \$100 per day for City customers and up to \$200 per day for non-City customers for each violation and/or other penalties as determined by the Director of Public Works.

**10. How do I know what is allowed with watering starting on August 15?**

Please see WCO Section 13.50.050 for a definition of wasteful uses of water, and to how to avoid those practices. Then look at the phases (1-3) of water conservation in effect to determine watering restrictions. Section 13.50.070 'Water Use Restrictions' explains each stage of water restrictions and what is allowed under each stage. The restrictions are clear and straightforward. View the WCO at [www.northbendwa.gov](http://www.northbendwa.gov), under Government and click on Documents, then Ordinances. For questions, please email the Public Works Department at [csmith@northbendwa.gov](mailto:csmith@northbendwa.gov).