



Water Restrictions

Level 3 water restrictions apply in NSW in Sydney, Illawarra, Blue Mountains. Many regional areas are operating under Level 3 and 4 water restrictions as well. Some regional areas do not have any water restrictions or are operating under Level 1 water restrictions. Level 3 water restrictions apply to the ACT.

For more information on water restrictions in your area, please see the environmental information guide; "Water Restriction Levels by Council".

With New South Wales facing its worst case of drought in a hundred years, it is understandable that Level 3 water restrictions have been implemented for both corporations and the public in several regions across NSW and in the ACT. Water restrictions have a worthwhile purpose – to limit the amount of water that is used so that the water reserves are preserved during the time of drought.

Level 3 water restrictions

The current Level 3 water restrictions mean that:

- Hand-held hosing of lawns and gardens and drip irrigation is now allowed only on Wednesdays and Sundays before 10 am and after 4 pm
- No other watering systems or sprinklers are to be used at any time
- No hosing of hard surfaces including vehicles at any time
- No hoses or taps to be left running unattended, except when filling pools or containers
- Fire hoses must only be used for fire fighting purposes – not for cleaning.

In regional areas, local councils may set slightly different restrictions. Please check with your local council to clarify.

Under level 3 water restrictions, the following activities are still allowed:

- Washing vehicles using a bucket
- Using water from a rainwater tank (if it is not connected to or topped up from water supplies)
- Cleaning bins using a trigger nozzle hose or a hose with an on/off switch in a designated area or on grass.

Some of these restrictions have the potential to stop businesses in the automotive industry from fulfilling their responsibility to their customers, in which case a business can apply for an exemption.

If your business needs to use water contrary to the current restrictions, you need to apply for an exemption otherwise you will be in breach of the restrictions and may be fined if caught. A business can apply for an exemption if your activities require water for health and hygiene, your activities require water for safety, there is no feasible waterless alternative or if you will experience significant financial impact.

Industry exemptions - NSW

Companies that may apply for an exemption under Type B: Exemptions from hosing hard surfaces, including vehicles in order to wash large numbers of vehicles are:

- Vehicle retailers (commercial and light)
- Vehicle detailers, including boat detailers
- Car washes
- Smash repairers
- Hire car companies
- Taxi companies
- Bus companies and
- Transport companies.

Once an application for exemption has been approved for washing vehicles that are non-display vehicles, the conditions set by Sydney Water are:

1. Vehicles are washed in a designated vehicle wash bay with a valid Sydney Water/local council Trade Waste permit or agreement (excludes moored boats)
2. Mobile vehicle detailers must use a portable car wash mat or portable bunding
3. High pressure water cleaning equipment or a device that limits the flow of water to 10 litres or less per minute must be used when cleaning hard surfaces. The device may be installed in the tap, hose or trigger nozzle
4. Hand held hoses must be fitted with a trigger nozzle or another attachment with an on/off mechanism
5. It is mandatory that hoses are not left running and unattended
6. A suitable backflow prevention containment device must be in place
7. The management of any wastewater run-off from cleaning operations that does not discharge to the sewer should comply with the requirements of the local council and the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC)
8. Any standpipe that is used must be metered and issued or approved by Sydney Water/local council.

Once an application for exemption has been approved for washing vehicles that are display vehicles, the conditions set by Sydney Water are:

1. It is mandatory that water is used for rinsing vehicles only (no detergents may be used)
2. Vehicles may only be washed one day a week (Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday mornings between 4 am and 9 am). The customer will nominate the day for cleaning
3. High pressure water cleaning equipment or a device that limits the flow of water to 10 litres or less per minute must be used when cleaning hard surfaces. The device may be installed in the tap, hose or trigger nozzle
4. Hand held hoses must be fitted with a trigger nozzle or another attachment with an on/off mechanism
5. It is mandatory that hoses are not left running and unattended
6. A suitable backflow prevention containment device must be in place
7. The management of any wastewater run-off from cleaning operations that does not discharge to the sewer should comply with the requirements of the local council and the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC)
8. Any standpipe that is used must be metered and issued or approved by Sydney Water.

If your business requires an exemption and can fulfil the listed conditions, go to <http://www.sydneywater.com.au/SavingWater/WaterRestrictions/ExemptionForm.cfm> and fill out an application form. Once your application has been granted and your business is displaying a yellow exemption sticker, the Level 3 Water Restrictions will not apply to your business for the areas that you have been exempted from however you will still have to abide by the conditions as listed above.

Industry exemptions - ACT

The following exemptions automatically apply in the ACT during Level 3 water restrictions:

- Vehicle windows, mirrors and lights
Potable water may be used to clean a vehicle's windows, mirrors and lights, and for spot removing corrosive substances, and then only with a bucket filled directly from a tap (not by means of a hose).
- Motorcycles
Motorcycles may be cleaned once per month only, and then only with a bucket or watering can.

Businesses will need to apply for an individual exemption if the general exemption does not fulfil the business' needs. If you can demonstrate that your business will suffer serious detriment then you can apply for an exemption online by going to <https://secure.actewagl.com.au/forms/actew/waterExemption.aspx> or in writing to ACTewAGL's Water Conservation Office (GPO Box 366, Canberra ACT 2601). Exemptions held in previous stages of water restrictions will need to be reapplied for.

ACTewAGL will send formal acknowledgement that the exemption has been approved. Before commencing any work that utilises water against current Stage 3 Water Restrictions, make sure that hardcopy confirmation has been received otherwise an infringement notice may be issued.

In this time of severe drought, it is worthwhile for all businesses to look seriously at its water consumption and see if your company can abide by the current water restrictions. However, if it is imperative that your business uses water in a way that currently contradicts the water restrictions please seek exemption from Sydney Water or your local council to ensure that your water usage is legal and no fines are incurred.

CONSIDER: Investing in a rainwater tank. By collecting your own water you can use it however you like. This also reduces your tap water consumption which reduces your water rates. Many local councils as well as various government departments are offering rebates on purchasing rainwater tanks, so now is the best time to look into this water-saving option.

Key contacts

MTA NSW

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www.greenstamp.mtansw.com.au

ACTewAGL (ACT)

13 11 93

www.actewagl.com.au

Department of Environment &
Climate Change (NSW)

131 555

www.environment.nsw.gov.au

Emergency Services

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Hunter Water (NSW)

1300 657 657

www.hunterwater.com.au

Local Council Contacts (NSW)

www.dlg.nsw.gov.au

Sydney Water (NSW)

13 20 92

www.sydneywater.com.au

Territory & Municipal Services (ACT)

13 22 81

www.tams.act.gov.au

Important Disclaimer

These Information Guides have been developed to assist MTA NSW and MTA ACT members to better manage their environmental impacts. However it remains the responsibility of the individual business to determine the extent to which various laws and best practice guidelines apply to them and to take appropriate steps to achieve compliance. Though every possible effort has been made, MTA NSW accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the information.