



Drought

Overview

Despite its reputation as a rainy country, England is susceptible to periods of drought. Drought is a natural event which is often characterised by some degree of rainfall shortage over a period of time, resulting in a reduction of water supplies. In order to prepare and tackle periods of drought, certain restrictions on water usage may be implemented.

Role of the DWI

The DWI is not able to deal with matters regarding drought. The Environment Agency (EA) has a duty to manage water resources in England. All enquiries should be directed to the Environment Agency, contact details can be found on their [website](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency) (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency).

Role of Environment Agency

During periods of drought, The EA implement drought plans that set out their methods to routinely monitor, measure and report on the water situation across England. This information helps with the assessment of the national and local water situation including prospects of water shortages. Drought Plans are also produced by water companies, which are a legal obligation for them, more information on these can be found on their websites.

Role of Water Companies

During drought, water companies have the authority to restrict non-essential use of water, which is often too referred to as hose-pipe bans. These restrictions are covered by the [Flood and Water Management Act 2010](#), Section 36 (www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents). This also updates section 76 of the Water Industry Act 1991, the [Water Use \(Temporary Bans\) Order 2010](#) (www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/2231/contents/made).

Water companies may apply for a drought permit or drought order, these allow for water companies to implement restrictions on water demand, maintain public water supplies and to take water from new sources. More information can be found at the GOV.UK website in the [Drought Order Direction 2011](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-drought-direction-2011) (www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-drought-direction-2011), which lists the restrictions on water under a drought order.

Further Information

The Drinking Water Inspectorate is the independent regulator of drinking water quality for public water supplies in England and Wales. Visit www.dwi.gov.uk. Contact us at dwi.enquiries@defra.gov.uk or telephone 0300 068 6400.

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