



FAQ – Reducing Outdoor Water Usage

Why is the Town of Okotoks asking us to restrict our water use?

Due to extended days of hot temperatures, the current demand for water is higher than normal and is putting stress on the Town's water system. During the week of July 3-8, Okotoks experienced record-setting days of water demand, which exceeded the Town's water production capacity and decreased the amount of water stored in the reservoirs. Okotoks residents and businesses have done their part in managing their outdoor water use by following the watering schedule. However, the prolonged hot dry weather has created new challenges and the Town is asking everyone to do a little more.

Okotoks boasts one of the lowest water consumption levels per capita in Canada. On an average day residents and businesses use approximately seven million litres, but during the week of July 3 – 8 the consumption doubled to almost 16 million litres, especially during watering days.

This exceeded the Town's water production capacity, which is approximately 12 million litres per day, and decreased the amount of water stored in the reservoirs.

This spike in demand is only a seasonal situation related to outdoor water use during the hottest periods of the summer. Environment Canada is forecasting an unusually hot, dry summer this year so the need for the entire Okotoks community to partner in managing water demand will be very important.

What can I do to help out?

We are requesting that residents practice wise water use. If there is rainfall in the area, reduce outdoor watering. If everyone in the Town of Okotoks does just a little bit, then the cumulative results are huge.

There are a number of ways the community can work together to regain the balance between water demand and available supply:

- Limit watering to no more than one hour during scheduled watering days.
- Residents and businesses with automated irrigation systems are being asked to program their systems within the 2 – 5 a.m. period on scheduled watering days.
- Refrain from any unnecessary outdoor water use such as washing vehicles, refilling Jacuzzis, or pools.
- Decrease demand for indoor water use by programming dishwashers and washing machines to run at non-peak times during the night.

Can we hand water our flowerbeds and vegetable gardens?

At any time flowerbeds and vegetable gardens may be hand watered with a watering container or a hose with a manual trigger nozzle.

Try to do your hand watering outside of the watering schedule and if possible water before 11 a.m. to decrease the amount of water evaporation.

What does the Town do to voluntarily reduce water during peak demands?

The Town is reducing its water use by only irrigating one day per week in high need areas. Any recently planted trees are also being watered using non-potable water.

How come our water reservoirs and water system is not meeting the demand?

Unusually high water demand is **specific to outdoor use during the summer months.**

While the Town's licensed water supply is sufficient to meet future planned growth, sudden increases in demand experienced during unusually hot weather stresses the Town's water system's ability to meet this high level of demand.

Environment Canada is forecasting an unusually hot, dry summer, so the need for the entire Okotoks community to collaborate in managing water demand will be necessary. When the current demand for water exceeds the capacity of the Town of Okotoks water treatment plant and reservoirs, we need everyone to reduce their water consumption.

EPCOR monitors the water treatment plant and reservoirs 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Will this affect my drinking water?

There is not affect to the treated water from your tap. When a voluntary water restriction is requested, it is because we are experiencing difficulties producing the volume of water during peak demand times. It does not indicate that your water quality has deteriorated in any way.

How much water does the EPCOR Water Plant produce?

On an average day, EPCOR's water treatment plant produces 12 ML/day of potable water. Our current demand during these hot periods has been between 14 to 15 ML/Day. Since the beginning of July (1-9), water demand has exceeded 10 ML/day, in fact on four of those days water demand was over 14 ML/D.

What happens when the water reservoir drops?

Typically, our reservoir levels sit around 75 to 100 percent. Currently, on outdoor watering days the reservoirs' levels drop below 60 percent, which may impact the ability of the system to provide fire protection in the community. This also slows the system's ability to refill the reservoirs.