

**WATER SHORTAGE RESPONSE PLAN  
TOWN OF SAWMILLS, NORTH CAROLINA  
MARCH 2023**

The procedures herein are written to reduce potable water demand and supplement existing drinking water supplies whenever existing water supply sources are inadequate to meet current demands for portable water.

**I Authorization**

The Town of Sawmills Town Manager will enact the Water Shortage Response provisions whenever the trigger conditions outlined in Section IV are met. In his or her absence, the Public Works Director will assume this role.

Chase Winebarger  
Sawmills Town Manager  
828-396-7903  
[manager@townofsawmillsnc.com](mailto:manager@townofsawmillsnc.com)

Steve Coonse  
Public Works Director  
828-396-7903  
[scoonse@townofsawmills.com](mailto:scoonse@townofsawmills.com)

**II Notification**

The following methods will be used to inform customers of a water shortage declaration, notices at Town Hall and newsletters mailed to water customers. Announcements can also be made on our local radio station and can be posted on the Town of Sawmills website.

**III Levels of Response**

Four (4) levels of Water Shortage Response are outlined in Article III of our Water Emergency Management Policy. All four (4) levels are staged water use regulations.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **WATER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT POLICY**

#### **Section 32-28 Definition of a Water Emergency**

The term “water emergency” shall be defined as a condition or situation which threatens the safety or supply of either treated or potable water within the water supply, treatment or distribution systems of the Town of Sawmills. The Town Council shall determine whether specific situations are considered to be water emergencies. Such situations shall include, but are not limited to, drought, or periods of insufficient raw water supply, and fires of a magnitude, such that system integrity is threatened.

#### **Section 32-29 Declaration of Water Emergency**

The Town Council, after consultation with the City of Lenoir, shall make the decision as to whether or not a water emergency exists. Depending on the severity of the emergency; voluntary (level I), mandatory (level II or III) or mandatory (level IV) staged water restrictions as described herein shall be imposed upon customers.

##### **A. Level I**

During a declared Level I water emergency, the following voluntary practices shall be encouraged for the public water system served by the town:

1. Watering of lawns, ornamental plants, and gardens shall be limited to the necessity of plant survival only. Which details watering only during off peak hours (9:00pm to 4:00am).
2. Planting of new ornamental plants and seeding of lawns should be deferred until the water emergency no longer exists.
3. Household water should be reutilized to the greatest possible extent.

4. Use of water for washing down of outside areas such as driveways or parking lots should be curtailed.
5. Faucets should not be left running while shaving, brushing teeth, or washing dishes.
6. The use of clothes and dishwashers should be limited, if possible, and should be operated with fill loads when used.
7. Washing of cars or other vehicles should be held to a minimum. Hoses should not be left running while washing vehicles.
8. The use of flow restrictors and other water saving devices is encouraged.
9. Showers must be used for bathing and should be limited to four (4) or five (5) minutes.
10. Filling of pools should be deferred or limited to hours between 9:00pm and 4:00pm.
11. Any practice listed above may be modified or additional practices added at the discretion of the Town Council.

## **B. Level II**

During a declared Level II water emergency, the following mandatory water use restrictions shall be in effect for the public water system by the town:

1. All voluntary practices listed in Level I restrictions shall be mandatory unless stricter measures are indicated in this section.
2. Residents will be allowed to use water for outdoor activities on Wednesday and Saturday only. They may only use handheld hoses with spring loaded nozzles. Professional and commercial landscaping, nurse and pressure

washing businesses may resume operations using handheld hoses with spring loaded nozzles.

3. Planting of new ornamental plants or seeding of lawns shall be deferred until the water emergency no longer exists.
4. Use of water for washing down exterior areas, including, but not limited to, buildings, driveways, and/or parking lots, shall be prohibited.
5. Residential washing of vehicles is prohibited.
6. Public commercial washing structures including those providing handheld washing nozzles may continue operation. However, the facility owner/operator shall ensure that waste of water does not occur.
7. Restaurants and other food serving establishments shall serve water to patrons only at the request of the patron(s).
8. Commercial, industrial and construction operations shall eliminate all possible waste of water.
9. Newly constructed or drained pools shall be filled only on Wednesday or Saturday. A permit must be obtained from the Town Hall.
10. Any practice listed above may be modified or additional practices added at the discretion of the Town Council.

### **C. Level III**

During a declared Level III water emergency, the following mandatory water use restrictions shall be in effect for the public water system served by the town:

1. All practices in Level I and Level II shall remain in effect unless stricter measures are indicated in this section.
2. Restaurants and other food serving establishments shall utilize single serving utensils and plates and serve water only at the patron(s) request.
3. Large scale commercial and industrial water customers and construction activities utilizing five thousand (5,000) or more gallons of water per day shall achieve mandatory reduction in daily water usage of twenty-five (25), fifty (50), or seventy-five (75) percent through whatever means available. The target reduction percentage shall be determined by the severity of the water emergency and shall be publicly announced as part of the emergency declaration. Variances to this restriction may be granted to designated public health facilities, including, but not limited to, hospitals and nursing homes.
4. Drinking water taps or hydrant permits shall be issues or revoked at the discretion of Town staff.
5. Any practice listed above may be modified or additional practices added at the discretion of the Town Council.

#### **D. Level IV**

During a declared Level IV water emergency, the following mandatory water use restrictions shall be in effect for the public water system served by the town:

1. All use of water for other than maintenance of public safety is prohibited.
2. Where the town system is not functional, daily per day residential water usage shall not exceed 300 gallons per day.
3. Where the town system is not functional, emergency service vehicles shall be utilized to distribute water for household use to rearranged locations within the affected area. Usage by individuals shall be limited to those amounts necessary to sustain life through drinking, food preparation, and personal hygiene.

4. Water use by industrial and commercial customers may or may not be allowed. This determination will be made by the Town Council after consultation with City of Lenoir in order to assure that supplies are adequate to protect public health and sustain fire protection.
5. Any practice listed above may be modified or additional practices added at the discretion of the Town Council.

### **Section 32-31 Penalties**

Any person violating the mandatory provisions of section 32-30 shall be issued a civil citation and a penalty not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100.00) per day for residential and five hundred dollars (\$500.00) per day for commercial and industrial users. Each occurrence shall be considered as a separate violation.

### **Section 32-32 Discontinuance of Service**

Pursuant to the provision of G.S. 160A-314 and this policy, water service may be temporarily discontinued for willful disregard of this policy. All applicable penalty fees may be applied in the event of service suspension. In the event of continued gross noncompliance with policy, removal of the meter and service will be deemed proper service will be discontinued. Tap fees and deposits will be forfeited.

### **IV. Triggers**

Sawmills is provided water solely by purchases from the City of Lenoir. When the City of Lenoir declares a water shortage Sawmills is required to do so as well. During this time Sawmills Utilities Director will stay in close contact with Lenoir and follow their triggers.

### **V. Enforcement**

The provisions of the Water Shortage Response Plan will be enforced by the Town of Sawmills Water Department. As outlined in Section 32-31, penalties of our Water Emergency Management Policy-any person violating the mandatory

provisions shall be issued a civil citation and pay a penalty not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100.00) per day for residential and five hundred dollars (\$500.00) per day for commercial and industrial users. Each occurrence shall be considered as a separate violation. Water service may be temporarily discontinued for willful disregard of this policy.

## **VI. Public Comment**

Customers will have multiple opportunities to comment on the provisions of the Water Shortage Response Plan. First, a draft plan will be available at Town Hall for customers to view. A notice will be included in customer utility bill notifying them of such. Also, a draft plan will be published in local paper. All subsequent revisions to the draft plan will be published at least thirty (30) days prior to an adopted vote by Sawmills Town Council.

## **VII. Variance Protocols**

Applications for water use variance requests are available from the Town Hall. All applications must be submitted to the Town Hall for review by the ORC or his or her designee. A decision to approve or deny individual variance requests will be determined within two (2) weeks of submittal after careful consideration of the following criteria: impact on water demand, expected duration, alternative source options, social and economic importance, purpose (i.e., necessary use of drinking water) and the prevention of structural damage.

## **VIII. Effectiveness**

The effectiveness of the Sawmills Water Shortage Response Plan will be determined by comparing the stated water conservation goals with observed water use reduction data. Other factors to be considered include frequency of plan activation, any problem periods without activation, total number of violation citations, desired reductions attained, and evaluation of demand reductions compared to the previous year's seasonal data.

## **IX. Revision**

The Water Shortage Response Plan will be reviewed and revised as needed to adapt to new circumstances affecting water supply and demand, following implementation of emergency restrictions, and at a minimum of every five (5) years in conjunction with the updating of our Local Supply Water Plan. Further, a water shortage response planning work group will review procedures following each emergency or rationing stage to recommend any necessary improvements to the plan to Sawmills Town Council. The Town of Sawmills ORC is responsible for initiating all subsequent revisions.