

Actions in an extreme drought

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You should identify and plan for actions you could implement in an extreme drought to delay the need for Level 4 severe drought restrictions (eg emergency drought orders that authorise stand pipes or water tanks).

What can be done after level 3 restrictions and before Level 4?

You should include information in your drought plans to show what actions you could take in the event of an extreme drought, after using non-essential use drought bans and before needing to implement level 4 emergency restrictions. You should present your assumptions relating to reservoir emergency storage, and show if and how you would use this in conjunction with the extreme drought actions.

Your actions should:

1. be practical to implement during an extreme drought
2. likely to be temporary
3. be technically feasible
4. generally not result in permanent increases to deployable output i.e. usually distinct from WRMP options

You should explore the full range of actions included within the ordinary drought order legislation (section 74(2) of the WRA 1991) when planning for an extreme drought. These include applying to:

- take water from any source specified subject to conditions
- prohibit or limit the use of water for any purpose specified
- discharge water to any place specified subject to restrictions
- prohibit or limit taking of water by an appropriate agency
- suspend or modify restrictions relating to abstraction, discharge, supply, filtration of water

Examples are provided in Table 1 below.

What you should include in your drought plan?

You should include a summary of the actions that are available to you up to the point of needing to apply for an emergency drought order. This should include the type of action (supply or demand), the water resource zones in which it would apply, a description of the action and the likely trigger for needing it, an indication of the likely benefit or saving, identification of significant barriers, and an

indication of the timescale for implementation. This could be presented in a table format, see Table 2 below.

You should ensure that actions are implemented in a priority order such that actions with the least environmental impact e.g. more extreme demand actions are used in preference to more environmentally damaging actions. We recommend that you discuss these 'extreme' actions during pre-consultation with the Environment Agency to help identify barriers and environmental assessment requirements at an early stage. You should also contact Natural England if your plans could affect designated sites in England, and Natural Resources Wales if they could affect any part of Wales.

Regional plans

You should engage with your regional water resources group and its members when developing a set of actions in order to look at how to save and share water resources in times of extreme drought. You should consider regional connections and collaborative actions with neighbouring companies and ensure that actions are coordinated.

Table 1: Examples of actions

	Type of action	Summary	Significant barriers
Demand	Removal of exceptions	Consideration of removal of all TUB and non-essential use ban exceptions.	
	Media & Comms	National campaigns to change culture, excessive water use seen as socially unacceptable, keeping customers aware of the current storage situation, Day Zero language, guides for customers to show how to restrict water use to 50 litres/person/day. Hard hitting messages and images.	
	Supply pipe repairs	Free and fast supply pipe repairs for customers.	
	Tariff changes	Higher tariffs for high use, reward scheme for using less water, incentive scheme e.g. bill rebate, postcode scale targets and reward for all if target met.	Metering
	Pressure management	Further reduce pressure while still maintaining essential services, night time reductions.	DWI standards, vulnerable users
	Relocations	Relocate farm stock and/or businesses	Feasibility, water availability
	Non-potable use	Set up non-potable water refill points for businesses on a community scale, use of containers in home to capture water for re-use or collection, mobile temporary treatment units to utilise water for non-potable use, temporary rainwater capture systems on buildings, temporary barriers to help capture water in fields, mass fitting of free water butts in homes.	Volume, health concerns, workforce.
Supply	Drought orders	Use full range of powers available with drought orders, temporary increases to licences that have been reduced or revoked, compensation flow reductions, abstraction from alternative sources.	Environmental impacts, WFD objectives.
	Catchment actions	Water use plans across sectors, link users to share resources, combining drought order applications.	
	Trades/transfers	Short term trades between companies/sectors. Plans to increase/decrease bulk supplies.	Water availability
	Tankering	Moving water around, sea tankering.	Availability of tankers, scale required, access.
	Supply schemes	Fast tracking of WRMP schemes.	Feasibility, time frames
	Network changes	Temporary pipelines, new supplies, speed up construction process e.g. overland pipes.	Environmental impact, distance, planning consent
	Effluent re-use	Redirecting discharge (direct to supply or relocate to other watercourses).	Environmental impact, DWI constraints
	Desalination	Mobile plants.	Connectivity to network, environmental impact, scale

Table 2: Example format for actions in extreme droughts

Type of action	Water Resource Zone	Summary of action	Trigger for action to be used	Likely benefit/saving	Barriers	Timescale	Priority Order
Supply or Demand	Identify which zones would be affected	Brief description of possible action	Brief description of the water supply situation that would trigger the action or what actions will precede this	Volume of water made available or saved	Identification of significant barriers or action required by others before implementation e.g. DWI standards, network constraints.	Indication of lead in time	