



## DROUGHT STATUS & RESPONSE – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

For Elected Officials and Chief Administrative Officers

### 1. What is the current regional drought status?

Based on current conditions and the consensus recommendation of the Drought Coordination Committee, COG issued a regional Drought Watch on June 3, 2026.

Drought conditions in the metropolitan Washington region are formally assessed and designated through a coordinated regional process led by the COG Drought Coordination Committee (DCC). The DCC evaluates conditions like rainfall, streamflow, and reservoir levels and determines whether to declare one of four stages:

- Normal
- Watch
- Warning
- Emergency

### 2. Who is responsible for managing drought response in the region?

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), in coordination with regional water utilities and partner agencies, implements the Water Supply and Drought Awareness Response Plan.

- The Drought Coordination Committee (DCC) oversees regional coordination.
- Participating agencies include local governments, utilities, and federal/state partners.

### 3. What happens when a Drought Watch (or higher stage) is declared?

Each drought stage triggers a coordinated set of actions, including:

- Enhanced public messaging on water conservation
- Increased monitoring of water supply conditions
- Coordination among utilities and jurisdictions
- Preparation for potential water use restrictions (in more severe stages)

### 4. Are there currently water restrictions in place?

- At the Watch and Warning stages, the focus is on voluntary conservation and public awareness.
- At the Emergency stage, jurisdictions and utilities may implement mandatory water use restrictions in a coordinated manner.

### 5. Is the region's water supply at risk?

The region's water supply system is designed to be resilient and is supported by:

- Multiple major suppliers and reservoirs
- Coordinated regional operations
- Continuous monitoring by utilities and partner agencies

Even during drought conditions, the system is managed to maintain a reliable supply while reducing risk through early action and conservation.

### 6. What actions are expected from local governments?

Local governments play a key role in reinforcing regional messaging and preparedness by:

- Promoting "wise water use" and conservation practices

- Supporting consistent public communication
- Coordinating with utilities and regional partners
- Preparing for potential escalation of drought conditions and response measures

### **7. What should residents and businesses be doing now?**

During drought conditions, regional messaging emphasizes:

- Reducing non-essential outdoor water use
- Using water efficiently indoors
- Following guidance from local utilities and jurisdictions

Public outreach is coordinated regionally to ensure simple, consistent, and actionable guidance.

### **8. How is communication coordinated across the region?**

COG coordinates a region-wide outreach campaign with local utilities and public information officers (PIOs), including:

- Shared messaging and conservation guidance
- Social media and public information materials
- Alignment across jurisdictions to ensure consistency

This approach supports clear, unified communication to residents and stakeholders.

### **9. What are the next steps if conditions worsen?**

If drought conditions intensify, the region may:

- Escalate to higher drought stages (Warning or Emergency)
- Expand public communication and conservation measures
- Coordinate potential restrictions across jurisdictions
- Continue monitoring and reassessing conditions through the DCC

### **10. Where can officials find more information?**

- COG regional drought resources and updates
- Utility-specific guidance and local jurisdiction communications
- Briefings from the Drought Coordination Committee

### **Key Takeaway**

The region uses a coordinated, staged approach to drought management—focused on early action, consistent communication, and regional collaboration—to maintain a reliable water supply and protect long-term system resilience.

For more information, visit: [www.mwcog.org/droughtplan](http://www.mwcog.org/droughtplan)

*June 3, 2026*