

Headline: Water in limited supply; Azusa facing usage restrictions in upcoming months

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AZUSA - Short of an unexpected rainfall, water customers will be required to clamp down even more on usage as supplies shrink.

Azusa Light and Water officials called the current drought unprecedented, declaring it a "water emergency situation."

"Our water levels are just dropping," said Paul Reid, key accounts manager for Azusa Light and Water.

Officials said Phase I conditions now in effect will be upgraded Nov. 1 to Phase II and then Phase III in December if dry weather conditions persist.

In Phase II, Azusa Light and Water customers will have to cut back on usage by 10 percent from the same time last year, officials said. Residents can only water lawns twice a week, while businesses and other institutions are limited to three times a week.

Phase III conditions mean water use must be cut by 20 percent. Residents may only water once a week while businesses are down to twice a week, officials said.

Reid said 50percent to 70percent of water used by residents is for watering lawns and landscaping.

"If they can cut back on that usage, they can probably meet the objective of saving 20percent," he said.

Light and Water representatives this month held a conference with their largest customers, urging them to cut back as much as possible. They included Miller Brewing Co., Azusa Pacific University, Covina-Valley Unified and Azusa Unified school districts.

"Our biggest consumption is on our landscaping by far, so we're really going to be aggressive about cutting back on the number of gallons we put on the grass," said Bill Asher, associated director of facility management for APU.

He said water-saving devices throughout the campus and student housing have been installed.

Reid said the 22,000-customer water company that serves Azusa, parts of Glendora, Irwindale and West Covina has staffers patrolling its service area.

Fines for residents can range from \$50 to \$200 and termination of water service for conservation violations during the drought, officials said. Commercial and public agencies can face \$100 to \$600 in fines.

"The whole objective is not to fine people, but to get them to conserve," Reid said. "If people know there's a crisis, most are willing to do their best to conserve."

For full descriptions of water shortage conservation measures, visit www.azusalw.com or call the Drought Hotline at (626) 812-5119.