

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING STAGE III WATER RESTRICTIONS

(REVISED May 20, 2008)

1. **When** may I irrigate?

Customers must adopt the following water guidelines, which limit irrigation to **one day per week anytime during the 24-hour period**. Based on your address, you may irrigate on:

- Odd numbered addresses (ending digit of your street address is an odd number) may water **ONLY** on Saturdays.
- Even and unnumbered addresses (ending digit of your street address is an even number or doesn't contain a number) may water **ONLY** on Sundays.

2. Do I qualify for an exemption if I have planted **lawns** recently?

No. Installation of new sod or other landscaping is discouraged while mandatory water restrictions are in place because irrigation using an in-ground irrigation system is prohibited. See question 3 for additional clarification.

3. May I water **shrubs, flowers and trees** with my garden hose?

Yes. However, garden hoses must not be left unattended and sprinkler devices attached to garden hoses are not permitted. In addition to watering with a garden hose, drip irrigation is also permissible for watering your flower beds, trees or shrubbery without restriction. Customers are encouraged to avoid using water for outside purposes during peak hours (see question 5).

4. What is **drip** irrigation?

Drip irrigation, also known as *trickle irrigation* or *microirrigation*, is an irrigation method which minimizes the use of water and fertilizer by allowing water to drip slowly to the roots of plants, either onto the soil surface or directly onto the root zone, through a network of valves, pipes, tubing and emitters.

Drip irrigation uses far less water than spray irrigation systems and is not designed to deliver water to large areas. For this reason drip irrigation is not

suitable for lawn watering. However this method of irrigation is recommended for bedding plants, trees and shrubs.

Please contact a landscape contractor, garden shop specialist, or other member of the Green Industry for more information on installing drip irrigation or converting your spray irrigation system to drip.

5. What are **peak demand hours**?

Peak demand hours are **5 a.m. – 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. – 9 p.m.**

6. When may I **wash my car**?

Residential car washing is **permitted** under Stage III water restrictions. Homeowners may wash cars on designated days, which are the same as permissible days for irrigating lawns (see question 1). Those days are:

- Odd numbered addresses (ending digit of your street address is an odd number) may wash cars **ONLY** on Saturdays.
- Even and unnumbered addresses (ending digit of your street address is an even number or doesn't contain a number) may wash cars **ONLY** on Sundays.

Commercial car washing is permitted anytime.

7. When will restrictions be **lifted**?

Restrictions could last indefinitely and become a routine resource management tool in our region. Water demand is largely dependant on weather patterns. UCPW's ability to provide water at sufficient pressure levels depends on system wide demand. **Reduced demand** by every water customer is the surest way to ease strain on pumps and pipes that carry water.

8. What will happen if the Stage III Mandatory Water Shortage Conditions are not sufficient to reduce water demand in the county?

The County's Water Conservation Ordinance, which may be found in its entirety at <http://www.co.union.nc.us/>, outlines the potential measures that the County Manager may enact if water consumption system wide remains unabated.

9. What should I know about a **citation** I have received?

You may receive a citation at your residence or place of business if a Union County Public Works employee determines that water usage violates existing water restrictions. Please adjust your water usage patterns as indicated on the citation. There will be a maximum of ONE violation per day, even if you receive multiple citations on one calendar day. You will receive a letter following a citation, which may indicate a penalty if you have been issued more than one citation.

10. What are the **penalties** associated with citations?

1st citation = warning

2nd citation = \$100 penalty

3rd citation = \$500 penalty

4th citation = \$500 penalty and discontinuance of water service

5th citation = \$1,000 penalty and discontinuance of water service

Subsequent citations = \$1,000 penalty, discontinuance of water service, and possible legal remedies described in Article VII of the Water Conservation Ordinance. If violations resulted from water usage associated with an irrigation meter water service will remain off until one calendar year after water restrictions are lifted.

11. What do I do if I disagree with a citation?

You may **appeal** a citation by submitting your reasons in writing to appealswater@co.union.nc.us. When appealing a citation please include your service address and all pertinent information to support your case.

If you are appealing a pending termination of water service the Water Conservation Ordinance states that your appeal must be delivered “within five (5) business days from delivery of the notice [from Public Works] of violation...” A hearing on the matter will be held within three (3) business days of Public Works’ receipt of the appeal.

12. May I **pressure wash my home**?

Yes. Under the amended Water Conservation Ordinance pressure washing from a metered connection is permissible. However, washing public (government) buildings is not permissible.

13. May I pressure wash my **sidewalks and driveway**?

No. Under Stage III restrictions sidewalks, driveways, or other paved areas may not be pressure washed.

14. May I fill and operate an **ornamental fountain** at my residence or place of business?

Yes. This water use is not strictly prohibited under Stage III restrictions. However, customers are encouraged to avoid using water for outside purposes during peak hours (see question 5).

15. May I fill my **pool**?

No. Filling new pools is illegal under Stage III water restrictions. This applies to all new pools and it also applies to filling any previously constructed pool that has been drained.

16. May I **top off my pool**?

Yes. Refilling pools or capping off is permitted. Water customers are encouraged to avoid refilling pools during peak demand hours.

17. My kids have a **water slide** that uses water. May we still use water for the slide?

Yes. Recreational uses are not prohibited under Stage III restrictions.

18. If I have a **hydrant permit**, may I use water?

Ongoing and routine **business uses** are not prohibited if you have a current permit. No additional permits will be issued until the need for restrictions has passed.

19. I see trucks filling their tanks from **hydrants**. Is this legal?

Yes. Union County Public Works issues hydrant permits, and holders of permits are authorized to draw water from hydrants that have been **designated** by the county for this purpose. Designated hydrant caps are painted blue to distinguish them from hydrants that may be used only for fire protection.

Water from hydrants may not be used for any purpose otherwise prohibited by the Water Conservation Ordinance. For instance, irrigation and pool filling may not be supplied from a tanker truck containing water from a Union County hydrant.

20. My **neighbor** isn't complying with the restrictions. What should I do?

Please take responsibility to **inform your neighbor** that penalties or discontinuance of water service may result if they are not in compliance with the restrictions. UCPW will respond to complaints received. However staff is insufficient to respond immediately to all complaints, given normal work responsibilities.

21. I live in the Town of **Wingate**. Am I restricted from using water as I normally would?

Water customers served by the Town of Wingate may only be restricted by the Town. Union County restrictions **do not apply** to Town of Wingate water customers.

22. I live in the City of **Monroe**. Am I restricted from using water as I normally would?

Water customers served by the City of Monroe may only be restricted by the City. Union County restrictions **do not apply** to City of Monroe water customers.

23. How do the restrictions apply to me if my water is supplied by a **well**?

The County has imposed **no restrictions** on well users. If ground water conditions warrant restrictions, the governor will issue restrictions.

24. I've seen sprinklers at the **entrances to subdivisions** run even while it's raining. Nearby streets are often flooded. Why does Union County allow this?

Many subdivisions irrigate from non-metered water sources, such as wells or retention ponds. Some locations have signs indicating this fact. Union County restrictions do not apply to usage from these water sources. However, subdivisions irrigating from a Union County source have been issued citations just as everyone else.

25. I am a **builder**. Do I need to adjust the irrigation schedule for spec homes I want to sell?

Builders must **comply** with residential irrigation schedules (see Question 1 above).

26. I am a **builder**. May I pressure wash brick on a new home in order to remove excess mortar?

Yes. Under the amended Water Conservation Ordinance pressure washing from a metered connection is permissible. However, washing public buildings, sidewalks and streets is not permissible.

27. I am a **builder**. May I have subcontractors using water from a metered connection?

Yes. Construction activities that use water, such as paint clean-up and brick masonry, are permissible under Stage III restrictions.

28. I am the owner of a **plant nursery or landscape business**. How do Stage III restrictions affect me?

Landscapers and nursery operators are **encouraged** to conserve water during peak demand hours of 5 a.m. – 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. – 9 p.m. In order to maintain plant inventories, these businesses may irrigate as needed to preserve their investments. However, installations are **discouraged** and are subject to the same irrigation schedules as defined in Question 1.

29. I am the owner of a **pressure washing business**. How do Stage III restrictions affect me?

If you own a pressure washing business you are **permitted** to connect to a metered source at a residence. This type of water usage is only allowed between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. (non-peak demand hours).

Under Stage III restrictions it is illegal to wash public buildings, sidewalks, and streets from a metered water source, except as required for safety and/or to maintain regulatory compliance.

Operators of commercial pressure washing equipment connected to a mobile tank must be permitted (UCPW-issued hydrant permit) if pulling from a hydrant. No additional permits will be issued until the need for restrictions has passed.

Pressure washing is permissible to **improve public safety or health**. Commercial water haulers should assist the County in meeting this objective by limiting usage. Actions taken now may help the County avoid additional restrictions that could prevent all outdoor use.

30. Is pressure washing **streets** permitted?

No, except under certain specific conditions sanctioned by NCDOT. These conditions are described below.

NCDOT requires that subdivision streets be cleaned at the time of petitioning for maintenance, not on a routine or even occasional basis otherwise.

Therefore UCPW will not permit paved streets in subdivisions to be cleaned. Subdivision entrances – the 20' – 30' apron of paving adjacent to primary roadways – may be cleaned to prevent debris from washing onto primary roadways.

Streets under construction fall under a different category. First, during construction activities water is required to wet, almost to saturation, ABC stone in order to properly compact it. Secondly road construction activity that brings dirt and debris onto an adjacent primary road may be washed off periodically as it becomes a hazard to the roadway.

31. I am the owner of a **mobile car washing business**. How do Stage III restrictions affect me?

If you own a mobile car washing business you are **NOT permitted** to connect to a metered source at a residence. Operators of commercial pressure washing equipment connected to a mobile tank must be permitted (UCPW-issued hydrant permit) if pulling from a hydrant. All business owners are strongly encouraged to conserve water if during peak demand hours of 5 a.m. – 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. – 9 p.m.

32. Are there restrictions if I want to **drill a well** so I have water for irrigation? Do I need a permit or permission from Union County Public Works?

If you are current UCPW water customer please contact us at 704-296-4210 for further information. In most instances you will be permitted to drill a well for non-domestic (irrigation) purposes. Final approval is issued by the County's Environmental Health Department.

33. I know that leaks must be repaired to conserve water. If my **landlord** will not repair a leak who can I call?

You should contact an **attorney** to learn your rights as a tenant, as well as the obligations of your landlord.

34. **To whom** should I direct my complaint about water restrictions?

Restrictions were approved by the Board of Commissioners on May 29, 2007. Please direct your concerns to the commissioners via email. Addresses may be found here:

<http://www.co.union.nc.us/Government/BoardofCommissioners/tabid/72/Default.aspx>