**Weekly Express-News Article**

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**“Drought Restrictions Are Back!”**

It was great while it lasted but we are in drought restrictions again. This time of the year, the agricultural pumpers are irrigating their corn crops at full speed so the Aquifer falls quickly when the rains stop, even for a month.

In Stage II San Antonio businesses and residences may water with sprinklers one day per week between 3:00 AM to 8:00 AM or 8:00 PM to 10:00 PM based on your address. If your address ends with a 0 or 1 your day is Monday. Addresses ending with 2 and 3 are allowed to irrigate with sprinklers on Tuesdays. Wednesday is the watering day for addresses ending with 4 and 5. Irrigate on Thursday if your address ends with a 6 or 7. Friday is your day if your address ends with an 8 or 9.

You can use drip irrigation any day but only between the hours of 3:00 AM to 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM to 10:00 PM. Hand watering is allowed any day of the week at any time.

Other key restrictions include the prohibition on letting water run down the street, and it is required that all leaks be repaired.

SAWS utilizes’ part-time certified police officers to enforce the water restrictions. Up until this week, the officers have been giving warnings but now the citation will be real, requiring the payment of a fine and/or a court appearance.

The officers find violators based on citizen complaints received at (210) 704-7283 (704-SAVE) from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM or (210) 704-7297 (704-SAWS) after hours or via SAWS website at [www.saws.org/conservation/waterwaste](http://www.saws.org/conservation/waterwaste). Although you can receive a citation for an initial offense, in most cases, the officers do not respond to the reported violation immediately but instead, the time and address is noted for investigation later. Although an officer might not give a ticket the first time someone notes the transgression, SAWS does send a letter alerting the identified water user that there has been a complaint.

Over 95 percent of violators identified respond to the alert notice by correcting the behavior that merited the complaint. In addition to the alert letter, the potential violation is noted by address, time and neighborhood. Individuals and/or neighborhoods with numerous complaints merit special attention by one or more of the patrolling officers.

The officers spend their time in neighborhoods or individual addresses where the complaints indicate that violations are occurring. They use the reports to determine what time that violations usually occur. Wet sidewalks and streets help determine if illegal sprinkler irrigation is occurring in the middle of the night.

The officer files the citation with the court and sometime in the near future the violator will receive a summons to show up in court.

Citations are not desirable. It is best for everyone concerned if individuals or businesses watering landscapes conform to the rules as they exist.

Drought management rules are designed to reduce water use across San Antonio and the region in order to protect aquifer levels and springflows. Springflows are necessary to allow several endangered species to survive and the contribution to river flow is important to downstream interests and wildlife.

In times of drought, the aquifer falls and at several trigger points SAWS loses access to a portion of water rights. At levels below 625 feet, water rights lose as much as 44 percent of their yield. Our choice as a community is to have extra supplies, or to restrict water use in times of drought. Extra supplies are hard to find and expensive, so the most effective strategy has been to temporally reduce availability of water for lawn sprinkling during dry periods. Lawns do not look as good, but based on local research, if you take advantage of your once per week opportunity, the lawn will stay green. You can also supplement the sprinkler irrigation with hand watering.

SAWS drought management rules were designed with input from its citizen advisory groups and other stakeholders. The idea is to reduce water use as required but provide access to enough water to protect a landscape. Water for inside use and job creation is not restricted.

If aquifer levels fall to 640 feet Stage III restrictions are imposed. Stage III reduces sprinkler opportunities to once every two weeks but according to the research conducted in San Antonio, lawns (even St. Augustine) will survive if you have six inches of soil under the grass and water every two weeks.

Visit the SAWS website at [www.saws.org](http://www.saws.org) to learn more about drought restrictions and incentives to select landscape options that reduce water needs and increase drought tolerance.