

# **Before you apply for a drought permit, drought order or emergency drought order**

From: Department for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Environment Agency, Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales

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Part of: Apply for a drought permit, drought order or emergency drought order

**What water companies need to do before applying for a drought permit, drought order or emergency drought order.**

## **Contents**

1. Prepare and publish a drought plan
2. Reduce demand for water
3. Write an environmental report
4. Consider applying for a winter drought permit
5. Contact

## **Prepare and publish a drought plan**

If you plan to apply for a drought permit or order you should first state this clearly in your drought plan. Your drought plan should also include an environmental assessment for the permit or order. This should:

- assess how the permit or order will affect the environment
- set out how you'll monitor the effects of the permit or order on the environment
- set out what you'll do to reduce any negative effects of the permit or order on the environment

Your environmental assessment should also include details of how the permit or order is likely to change water flow or water level regimes. It should explain how these changes could affect any features that are sensitive to them.

You will have to carry out monitoring at your own expense. In exceptional cases the Environment Agency or Natural Resources Wales can also carry out monitoring.

You must follow your drought plan at all times during a drought.

## **Reduce demand for water**

Before you apply for a drought permit or order you must limit customer demand on any affected water sources.

Do this by taking the following measures, which you should have set out in your drought plan:

- carry out a publicity campaign to let the public know what you'll do to reduce demand
- temporarily restrict water use
- control leaks
- reduce water pressure

You may not have to take each of these measures if it will:

- only result in minimal water savings
- have little beneficial effect on the environment

If you decide not to take these measures you should explain why in your drought plan and your application for the drought permit or order.

## **Write an environmental report**

Before applying for a drought permit, order or emergency order you must write an environmental report, which you'll have to send with your application. You should base this on:

- the environmental assessments in your drought plan
- your environmental monitoring plan

The content of the environmental report will depend on the circumstances of the drought. Contact the Environment Agency or Natural Resources Wales if you need advice on how to write your report.

An environmental report should generally include:

- a summary of the report in non-technical language
- a description of the proposal, including details of the site where you'll use the permit or order, its location (provide maps and plans) and how long you'll use it
- a brief statement explaining why you need the water
- details of the alternative water sources you've considered – this should provide justification for your application

It should also include:

- a description of the current environment
- a description of the likely effects of the permit or order on the current environment
- a description of what you'll do to reduce any negative effects on the environment
- any further information needed to assess the effects of the permit or order on a Habitats Directive site (a special area of conservation (SAC) or special protection area (SPA))
- any further information needed to assess the effects of the permit or order on a site of special scientific interest (SSSI), local nature reserve (LNR), national nature reserve (NNR) or marine conservation area (MCA)
- any further information about the effects of the permit or order on water users and the environment
- a monitoring plan, as mentioned in your drought plan – including details of the data you'll collect and where and when you'll collect it

Your description of the current environment should include details of:

- any features on the site
- the importance of the site
- the site's classification status under the [Water Framework Directive](#)
- surface flow and groundwater levels
- the site's sensitivity to flow or water level changes
- any current abstraction licences you hold

Your environmental report should also include:

- a conclusion summarising the case for and against your proposed use of a permit or order
- appendices (eg methods used and surveys planned)

You should carry out any preparatory work for your permit application before the drought occurs, if this is possible.

Find out more about the specific measures you need to take before you apply for:

- a drought permit
- a drought order or emergency order

## **Consider applying for a winter drought permit**

You can apply for a drought permit during the winter to:

- reduce the likelihood of having to use a permit or order the following summer
- replenish water resources that have become depleted due to drought
- protect water resources in an area affected by drought

As with ordinary drought permits you can only apply for a winter drought permit if there's a serious water shortage or the threat of one due to an exceptional shortage of rain.

You must prove that the threat to public water supplies is significantly greater than usual for the time of year (eg by proving there's been a rainfall deficit or using modelling to project future supply). You must also explain what you'll do to reduce any negative environmental effects (eg a decrease in water quality) of the winter drought permit.

Apply for a winter drought permit in the same way you'd apply for an ordinary drought permit.

## **Contact**

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National Customer Contact Centre  
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Rotherham  
S60 1BY  
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