

Metro Vancouver eases water restrictions after recent rains

BY KIM PEMBERTON, VANCOUVER SUN SEPTEMBER 22, 2015



Metro Vancouver is relaxing water restrictions even further, allowing for pressure washing and more lawn sprinkling.

Photograph by: Nick Procylo, PNG

Metro Vancouver residents can turn their water fountains back on, sprinkle their lawns three times a week on their designated mornings and go back to pressure-washing their homes and driveways.

Recent rain has eased the pressure on Metro Vancouver’s reservoirs, allowing the regional district to ease watering restrictions to Stage 1. Metro also said all watering restriction will be lifted for the winter on Oct. 15.

Metro Vancouver imposed Stage 3 water restrictions for the second time in its history on July 20 because of the long period of hot, dry weather. That was eased to Stage 2 on Sept. 9.

“When we have a summer like this, it’s a wake-up call that I can live with less water,” said Metro Vancouver chair Greg Moore.

Moore said Metro will be reviewing what went right and wrong during the water restrictions this summer. Moore said one of the issues they will be reviewing is why there was no real change in water consumption when Metro went from Stage 1 to Stage 2 water restrictions earlier this summer, one of the factors that led to the Stage 3 restrictions.

“I think the message got out there but maybe people didn’t understand the importance of Stage 2 or maybe the restrictions were confusing for people.”

Moore said although people seemed to understand Stage 3 meant no lawn watering at all, there were still infractions and it would have been up to each municipality on how they chose to enforce the rules. Statistics on how many infractions happened in the 22 municipalities that make up Metro Vancouver were not available, but will be part of the review.

He said the review will also look at how the different Metro municipalities got the message out about the water restrictions.

In Port Coquitlam, for instance, he said summer students were hired as water ambassadors to educate the public on how they could reduce their water consumption. The ambassadors would also check to see if people were watering when they were not allowed and report it to city bylaw officers.

Moore said the review will also be looking at how to involve others earlier in helping get the message out. He noted the New Car Dealers Association of B.C. ensured all its members understood they could not be cleaning cars during Stage 3, and the BC Restaurant and Food Services Association advised its members to not automatically serve tap water unless asked.

Under Stage 1 residential lawn sprinkling is allowed three days per week but only between 4 a.m. and 9 a.m. (Even-numbered houses can water Monday, Wednesday and Saturdays mornings and odd numbered houses can water Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sunday mornings). Watering lawns is not permitted in the evening when demand for domestic water use, like dish washing, laundry and showers is the highest.

The Capilano, Seymour and Coquitlam reservoirs have recovered to approximately 60 per cent of their storage capacity which is typical for this time of year. The three alpine lakes, which provides additional water to the reservoirs, were refilled by the recent rains.

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