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Despite Spring Rains The Drought Continues

Despite normal spring rains this year, New York City's Water Supply System remains in a Stage I Drought Emergency according to Commissioner Christopher O. Ward of the City's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

"It is imperative that we continue to conserve as much water as possible to avoid going into a Stage II Drought Emergency," said Commissioner Ward.

On June 1, the City's reservoirs started the new 'water year' with a supply deficit of 17.5%. The reservoirs are normally at 100% of capacity on that date, but were at only 82.5 % this year. While rainfall was slightly above normal over the last three months, it did not compensate for the severe drought conditions that developed during the previous nine months of the water year, when precipitation was 8.77 inches, or 44%, below normal. Additionally, there was virtually no snowcap in the Catskill Mountain watershed so that spring runoff to the reservoirs was much lower than usual.

"Typically, during warm weather, consumption of water goes up on an average of more than a hundred million gallons a day compared to use during winter months, and water levels at the reservoirs start to go down," Commissioner Ward said. "Conservation can go a long way towards keeping consumption low and getting us through the summer without going to the next Stage of Drought Emergency, which carries more severe restrictions on water use than does Stage I."

As of June 1, 2002, DEP had issued over 2,400 Notices of Violation for infractions of the City's water use restrictions. Some of the more frequently cited violations include illegal fire hydrant use, sidewalk washing, lawn watering, leaks and waste of water in apartment and commercial buildings, and failure to post "Save Water" signs in building entryways. Over 200 DEP inspectors issue summonses for violations of water use restrictions throughout the five boroughs.

Water use restrictions and water saving tips can be seen on the DEP Web site: nyc.gov/dep.

Water Saving Tips

MORE INFORMATION

NYC Department of Environmental Protection
Communications & Intergovernmental Affairs

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Report open fire hydrants and street leaks to DEP's 24-hour helpline, 718/DEP-HELP. An open hydrant can waste one million gallons of drinking water per day.2. Take advantage of DEP's free water survey to help save water and cut water bills in residential and commercial buildings. To apply City residents can call 718/DEP-HELP.3. Take shorter showers or fill the tub only halfway and save water.4. Don't run the tap while shaving or brushing your teeth.5. Fix leaks. Leaky faucets alone can waste over 1,000 gallons each week.6. Run the dishwasher and washing machine only when full. Or use short cycles if available.7. Don't use the toilet as a wastebasket. Each unnecessary flush can waste 1.6 to 5 gallons.8. Install water-saving fixtures including toilets, showerheads and faucet aerators.9. Sweep driveways and sidewalks clean rather than washing them down with a hose.10. For more water saving ideas visit DEP's Web site at nyc.gov/dep.
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