



# Drought and Watering Restrictions Update

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City Council – April 7, 2026

City Staff Representative:

Scott Olsen, Director of Utilities  
Austin Creswell, Water Resource Manager

Department:

Utilities

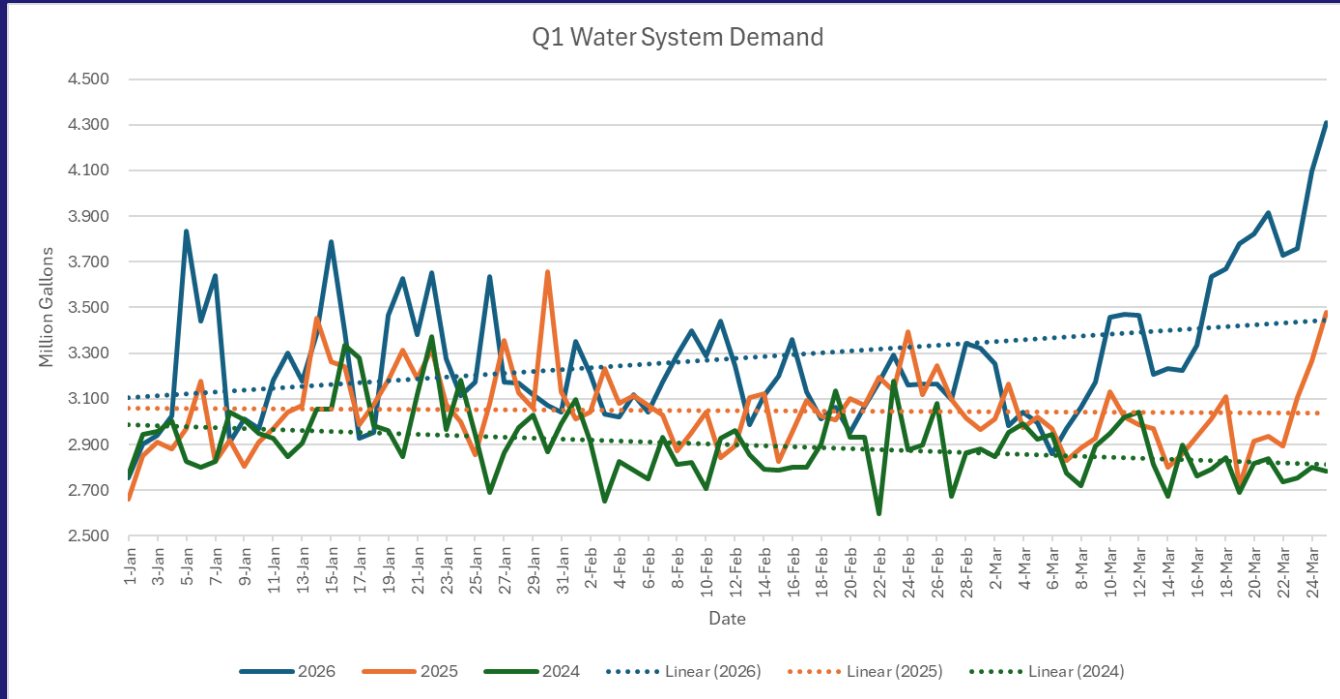


# Snowpack and Water Resource Information

- As of March 26, snowpack in the South Platte River Basin is 48% of median (zero percentile).
- As of March 26, water demand is 14.2% over monthly average since 2017.
- As of March 26, our reservoirs are 74% full. This is about typical this time of year, but we do not anticipate being able to fill with any snowmelt (free river).
- City of Thornton has approved Stage 1 drought response, with a goal of 10% reduction in usage. This reduces their deliveries to Brighton by 10% per agreement.
- Denver Water has approved Stage 1 drought restrictions, with a goal of 20% reduction in usage. This reduces their deliveries via SACWSD by 20% per agreement.
- City does not have increased capacity of new water treatment plant for this season. Drought and extremely warm conditions can increase demand.

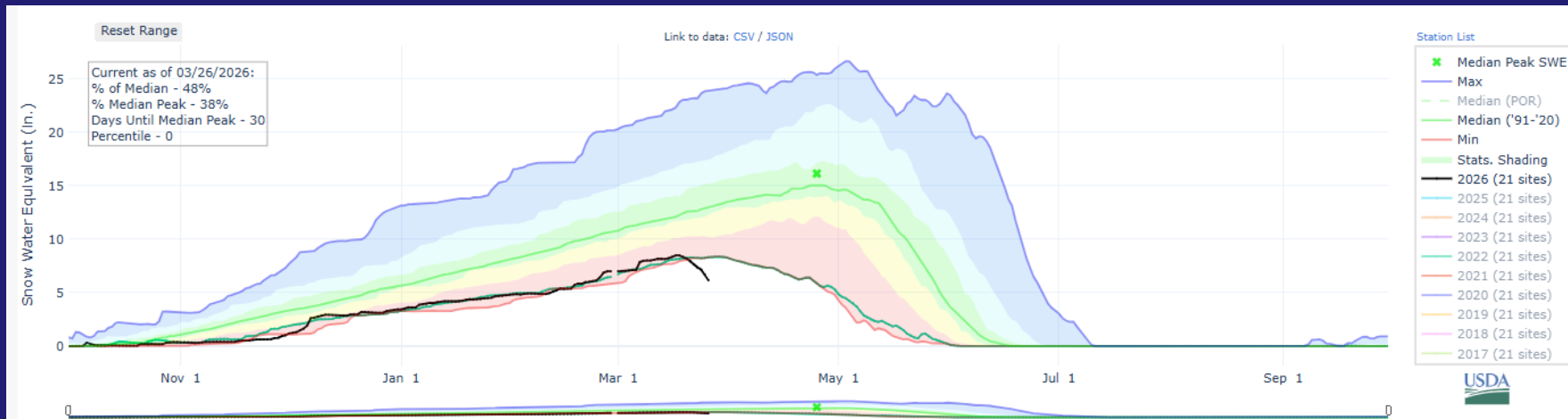


# Snowpack and Water Resource Information





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Statistical shading percentiles are calculated from period of record (POR) data, excluding the current water year. Percentile categories range from: minimum to 10th percentile, 10th - 30th, 30th - 70th, 70th - 90th, and 90th - maximum.



# Current Education and Outreach Efforts

- Staff has been providing education regarding drought on social media, Brighton Weekly, City website and other resources.

**City of Brighton, Colorado Government**  
3d · 📍

Warmer temperatures are arriving, and with the potential for continued drought, it's more important than ever to use water wisely. Please wait to turn on your sprinkler systems until the end of April, as lawns don't need regular irrigation just yet.

In the meantime, hand water trees and plants as needed, especially young trees and evergreens, to help them stay healthy while minimizing water use. March and April are also great months to clean up garden beds, and consider purchasing one of the Garden In A Box kits offered by the city through Resource Central:  
<https://www.brightonco.gov/585/Garden-In-A-Box-Program>

Being mindful now helps protect our community's water supply for the months ahead.



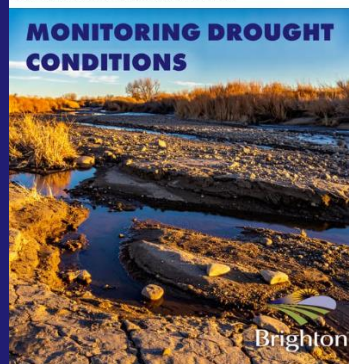
**City of Brighton, Colorado Government**  
March 9 at 2:09 PM · 📍

Colorado's reduced snowpack this year could impact water supplies and increase the risk of drought across the state.

The City of Brighton Utilities Department is closely monitoring conditions and is currently on drought watch as we track snowpack levels and regional water conditions. If needed, drought response stages may be implemented later this year.

As of today, the South Platte Basin snowpack is about 69% of what we would normally expect this time of year, putting it among the lowest levels on record. Conditions like this are why the City continues to closely monitor water supplies and encourage conservation.

Learn more about drought stages and water conservation tips at [brightonco.gov/drought](https://brightonco.gov/drought). Thank you for doing your part to conserve water and protect our community's resources!



**City of Brighton, Colorado Government**  
February 27 at 10:24 AM · 📍

❄️ Winter Watering: What Needs Water (and What Doesn't)

Most grasses are dormant right now, which means they don't need regular watering. However, your trees still need moisture to stay healthy. Focus on young trees and evergreens, and water about once per month, especially during dry spells without consistent snow.

Winter is also the perfect time to start planning your spring WaterWise garden! Explore local rebates, our popular **Garden In A Box** Program, and free webinars happening now to help you save water, time, and money.

Let's protect Colorado's water — every season.

🌿 Lawn Removal Incentive: <https://brightonco.gov/587/Lawn-Removal-Incentive>

🌻 Garden in a Box — get \$25 off!: <https://resourcecentral.org/Gardens/>

📺 Free Webinars: <https://brightonco.gov/.../Water-Efficiency-Classes-and...>



**City monitoring low snowpack; encourages conservation**

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[Learn more about drought stages and water conservation tips](#)



# Drought Stages



**STAGE 0**  
Normal  
Operations



**STAGE 1**  
Moderate  
to Severe



**STAGE 2**  
Extreme



**STAGE 3**  
Exceptional





# Drought Stages

## Stage 0: Normal Operations

- Water supplies are at or above normal levels.
- Existing City ordinance allows watering three times per week.

## Stage 1: Moderate to Severe Drought Conditions

- Initiated by predicted drought conditions and water supply limitations.
- Watering Schedule allows watering only **twice per week**.
- Municipal parks will reduce usage by 20%.
- **Goal:** 20% reduction in average outdoor water use.

## Stage 2: Extreme Drought Conditions

- Initiated by drought conditions and water supply limitations.
- Watering Schedule allows watering only **one day per week**.
- Municipal parks will reduce usage by 50%.
- **Goal:** 50% reduction in average outdoor usage.

## Stage 3: Exceptional Drought Conditions

- Initiated by drought conditions and water supply limitations.
- Emergency situation: No outdoor watering allowed, except critical areas.
- Only critical indoor water usage.
- **Goal:** 90% reduction in average outdoor usage.



## Existing Watering Restrictions (*begin May 1*)

Irrigation shall be allowed a maximum of three (3) days per week and regulated based on the street address of the property.

### Other Restrictions:

- No irrigation from 10am to 6pm
- Sod installation or replacement of sod is prohibited for areas exceeding 200 square feet
- Waste of water is prohibited, including allowing water to pool in a gutter, street, or on property



\*\*Watering by means of watering can or a hose held by a person is exempt from the restrictions above and such watering is encouraged for young trees, shrubs and flowers\*\*

# DROUGHT STATUS: STAGE 1 RESTRICTIONS



## Other Restrictions to Begin Immediately:

- No irrigation from 10am to 6pm
- Sod installation or replacement of sod is prohibited for areas exceeding 200 square feet
- Waste of water is prohibited, including allowing water to pool in a gutter, street, or on property



## What's Next?

- Staff will focus on public education and outreach to ensure public is aware of Stage 1 restrictions, if passed by Council.
- Staff will then focus on enforcement to ensure protection of water resources.



## Staff Recommendation

- City staff recommend approval of the resolution as drafted.



**Thank you for your time.**

**Questions?**

