

Drought and Shortage Preparedness Plans: A tool for managing water supplies

For decades, the ten AMWUA cities have methodically and proactively invested in their water supplies. Now, as the situation on the Colorado River continues to worsen quicker than expected, the cities are looking at what additional actions should be taken. For some, it's activating their drought and shortage management plans.

What exactly is a drought and shortage management plan? Since 2006, the state has required all Arizona water providers must adopt tiered drought preparedness plans. These plans are designed to incrementally reduce water demands during a drought, shortage, or other emergencies in which a water supply is negatively impacted. It helps ensure that the water provider can continue to meet residents' and businesses' water needs. Some cities may activate their plans to increase awareness before a supply is reduced, while some may not launch them until there is a direct impact on a water resource.



Cities activate their plans at different times because each municipality's decision is unique based on specific water supplies, infrastructure, and customer needs. Ultimately these plans ensure communities can effectively manage their water supplies when impacted by any short-term or long-term challenges.

Within these plans are criteria for actions at each stage or phase. A drought and shortage plan also has the flexibility to allow water managers to react quickly and implement appropriate measures early in each event. When these plans are initiated, the first stage typically includes actions such as:

- Monitoring water sources
- Identifying ways to increase efficiencies in city departments
- Increasing public awareness and education efforts
- Encouraging increased conservation

Additionally, a drought management or response team is mobilized when a water provider enacts its plan. This typically involves a diverse group of division and department managers and directors from across the city. Their goal is to prioritize water services and implement various actions, including increasing the city's drought and water shortage communications.

Whether or not your municipality has initiated its drought or shortage preparedness plan – a call for increased conservation remains a priority across the Valley and in our arid state as we

move forward into a future with less Colorado River water. Water conservation and efficiency are vital to drought-proofing our future here in the desert, so practical water-wise changes in lifestyle will make a difference in your community's water future.

While [Scottsdale](#), [Mesa](#), [Tempe](#), and [Phoenix](#) have initiated their plans, all of the AMWUA cities continue to take the actions needed to ensure the reliability of their water systems and continuous water delivery to homes and businesses within their community.

For over 50 years, the Arizona Municipal Water Users Association has worked to protect our member cities' ability to provide assured, safe, and sustainable water supplies to their communities. For more water information, visit www.amwua.org.