



**CITY OF CAPE TOWN
ISIXEKO SASEKAPA
STAD KAAPSTAD**

LEVEL 5 WATER RESTRICTIONS (October 2018) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CITY OF CAPE TOWN
16 October 2018

These questions and answers have been prepared to help you comply with the City of Cape Town's Level 5 water restrictions (as updated and in effect on 1 October 2018).

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Disclaimer:

This document is subject to frequent updating and should be regarded as a living document which aims to provide clarity on Level 5 Water Restrictions (October 2018).

General

1. What changed between the Level 6B restrictions and the Level 5 restrictions (October 2018)?

[Please see Level 5 Water Restriction Guidelines \(October 2018\)](#)

SUMMARY OF KEY CHANGES: LEVEL 6B to LEVEL 5:

- An increase in the personal water use limit from 50 to 70 litres per person per day
- A resetting of Cape Town's overall water usage target from 450 million to 500 million litres per day
- A relaxation of restrictions for commercial, industrial and other non-residential water users from a 45% to a 40% usage reduction
- A relaxation of restrictions for agricultural water users within the City from a 60% to a 50% usage reduction
- A lowering of tariffs to Level 5 tariffs which will bring tariff relief of between 26,6% and 70% per kilolitre of water depending on the usage and tariff category

2. Where can I find the new Level 5 guidelines?

You may visit www.capetown.gov.za/thinkwater

3. Is the City not acting too hastily to lower restrictions?

The City is following a conservative and gradual approach. The situation is being monitored on a daily basis. This is an interim relief measure pending the outcome of the assessment at the end of the hydrological year in October 2018 by the National Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS).

The relaxation of water restrictions is a moderate proposal that is based on a hydrological risk assessment. We are confident that the significant behavioural change that we've seen pertaining to water conservation will prevail to a large extent.

The future year's restrictions are typically communicated only in December by the DWS. The City believes that waiting for many more months would not be in the best interest of its consumers as that would mean that they would then have to pay an extra two months of the highest tariffs, which were specifically imposed to cater to an extreme situation which has since changed. Furthermore, a large jump in restrictions is likely to cause instability both in dam drawdown and demand as well as in revenue. It is therefore better to relax restrictions in a phased manner and not at once in December, for instance, should such a decision be made.

The City believes, with the full support of the other catchment users such as other municipalities and the agricultural sector, that an **interim** adjustment to the water savings target and also City's water restrictions is fully justified and appropriate at this stage.

4. Does the lowering of restrictions affect tariffs?

Yes, tariffs are linked to water restriction levels, restriction levels.

Cape Town's consumers are carrying the burden of high tariffs which were imposed to cater for an extreme situation. The situation has changed and consumers cannot be expected to continue paying the higher tariffs.

Tariffs have been lowered as follows:

Residential tariffs (excluding VAT)				
Step	Water usage (Kilolitres)	Level 6 Tariffs per Kℓ	Level 5 Tariffs per Kℓ	Percentage decrease
1	0 – 6 kℓ	R28,90/kℓ	R21,19/kℓ	Down 26,6%
2	6 – 10,5 kℓ	R46/kℓ	R34,43/kℓ	Down 25%
3	10 – 35 kℓ	R120,27/kℓ	R52,39/kℓ	Down 56%
4	Above 35 kℓ	R1 000/kℓ	R300/kℓ	Down 70%
Commercial and industrial tariffs				
4	Above 35 kℓ	R45,75/kℓ	R37,50/Kℓ	Down 18%

For the complete Level 5 water tariffs, please see

[Level 5 – water consumptive](#)

[Level 5 – sanitation consumptive](#)

[Most common Level 5 water and sanitation tariffs](#)

5. Why has the usage limit been set at 70 litres per person per day and not 87 litres per person per day as per the 2017 Level 5 restrictions?

In 2017 a usage target of 87 litres per person per day was incorporated into Level 4B, Level 5 and Level 6 restrictions. However, the 2018 Level 5 restrictions has a target of 70 litres per person per day, as it is believed to be a good compromise to offer some relief while at the same time sending the message that ongoing water saving measures remain important.

6. Will water management devices (WMDs) be set at 70 litres per person per day too?

No. The City will continue to identify properties with monthly water consumption above 10,5kl for enforcement. Residents who have valid reasons for higher water consumption than the stipulated quota must [apply to the City for a quota increase](#).

7. Will advanced pressure management continue now that water restrictions are being lowered?

We will continue with pressure management as it helps to reduce stress on the City's network. Lower pressure is the new normal. However, during Level 5 restrictions there will be increased pressure at critical points in the system and this will reduce the impact of pressure management in the peak hours especially.

Through our efforts thus far, we are saving 70 million litres of water per day. We have created large pressure zones which enable us to increasingly manage pressure in an automated manner.

It is essential that we continue all of our interventions to lower water usage and to prevent unnecessary leaks and bursts in our pipe infrastructure. This will be in line with the emphasis on water demand management and conservation that we have always had in place.

8. What do you mean when you say restrictions are being lowered to Level 5 in the interim?

We believe that time is of the essence for our consumers and that it is not an option to have consumers staying on the higher Level 6 tariffs. Thus, we have decided to lower restrictions conservatively to Level 5 until further assessments are made by the City and the National

Government during October or November.

If dams continue to recover at an acceptable rate, water restrictions might be lowered further, in accordance with our phased approach. We are following this approach to prevent a situation where one moment Cape Town is on Level 6 restrictions and the next moment, it is on Level 4 or 3, as an example. A more stable approach is required not only for the City's financial management but also out of behavioural considerations.

9. For how long will Level 5 restrictions be in effect?

Level 5 restrictions will be in effect as an interim measure over the short-term until it is appropriate to change this. An assessment will be made in October 2018. If the City deems it appropriate, the City may implement further interim steps.

10. Will further lowering of restrictions be considered?

Yes. The situation is being assessed.

11. When will I see a lower water charge in my municipal account?

The change to the restriction tariffs will be applicable from 1 October 2018. The lower tariff will thus be reflected for usage in municipal accounts after this date.

12. Does the fixed charge remain?

Yes, the fixed charge is unrelated to the drought. This charge, which is based on the size of the water meter, is to help bring greater certainty to the income that the City receives, namely, income that is not based on usage that goes up or down. As we recover from the drought, with further lowering of tariffs being a possibility, the cost of water will incrementally reduce and therefore the cost of performing this service and delivering safe, reliable drinking water to households and businesses needs to be responsibly safeguarded and not be dependent on revenue solely related to the quantity of water consumed – whether water usage is higher or lower.

13. How will it work when a bill reflects usage under Level 6 and Level 5 tariffs between two months?

The City will work out the daily average consumption at the property for the applicable billing period and will charge the consumption during September at Level 6 tariffs and consumption during October at Level 5 tariffs.

14. Some residents' municipal bill reflects an increase in the fixed water charges or a double billing. How does this work?

Certain accounts will reflect the monthly fixed basic charge twice due to the billing cycle variance. These accounts overlap into two calendar months (e.g. with the current scenario, this will mean a fixed basic charge billing for September and October is reflected for instance). Effectively, the billing system will bill the customer for a Fixed Basic Charge **12 times only in total** in the financial year. Therefore, affected consumers will not be charged more than what they should be paying. Note that this does not pertain to all accounts it just depends on the billing cycle.

15. Was the City just making money off its residents with the Level 6 tariff?

No. The City does not budget to make a profit but to recover the total cost to supply the service.

Level 6 tariffs were introduced to prevent the City from running out of water. It was a high tariff for an extreme situation. By having a high tariff to deter customers from using too much water, the City would still get the income necessary to deliver water services as the cost of the water is more expensive, while usage would be lower so as to preserve water in the dams.

If water costs are less, it could be expected for usage to increase slightly and therefore the City would recover the income by selling more water, at a lower price than less water at a higher price.

Early winter rainfall and rapidly increasing dam levels for nearly all winter months, except for the low rainfall in July, has changed the outlook and the City believes, as do the other water users in our water system, that water restrictions and tariffs should be lowered in the interim until the national government has made a final assessment.

16. Will you now stop the roll out of water management devices (WMDs) for contraventions of water restrictions or will it be adjusted to Level 5?

The intensity of enforcement measures for higher usage will be reduced in accordance with restriction levels. The top highest users will still be monitored and action taken.

High water users are encouraged to still either lower consumption or to [apply for a quota increase](#) if there are more than four people living on a property.

Also note that a spike in consumption could very likely occur as a result of an underground leak. Please see our [guide on how to find and fix leaks on your property](#).

17. Why are you penalising people in the lower steps of the tariff, those using less and it looks like the high users are being rewarded by getting the biggest reductions?

Note that it is not the case that there is a bigger 'discount' at the higher steps. Rather, there was a bigger increase for those steps when water restrictions were initially increased. We are unwinding from a higher level now, so that tariffs progress back to a more even spread.

At Level 6B, average households of four people should only have consumed water in Step 1 (0-6kl). At Level 5, average households should only consume water in step 1 and 2 (8,4kl for four people). Steps 3 and 4 tariffs are more theoretical at the higher restriction levels and were set so high to serve as absolute deterrents to high water use.

Businesses

1. Why the relatively small shift for commercial/ industrial businesses, from the need to reduce consumption from 45% to 40% in the new Level 5?

This is an interim relief measure pending the outcome of the assessment at the end of the hydrological year in October 2018 by the National Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS). Refer to further information in 3 and 4 above.

2. How is the 40% restriction measured?

As with the Level 6B restrictions, usage for each month will be compared to the same month in 2015 which was the 'pre-drought' period. If the usage in that month in 2015 was based on estimation, then the City will delve back further into the history of the consumer's consumption.

3. What if my business/ operation can't or doesn't achieve a 40% saving?

If you can provide the City with valid reasons and an adequate motivation to justify higher monthly water consumption, you can [apply to increase your current quota of water](#).

Accommodation establishments such as guesthouses and B&Bs can also [apply for drinking water use that exceeds restriction levels](#).

Commercial and agricultural users who do not reduce their water usage sufficiently may be fined or have water management devices installed on their properties, in line with the City's [Water By-law \(2010\)](#) and the [Amendment \(2018\)](#). Fines may be issued for every month that the 40% reduction is not achieved. However, fines will not be issued based on estimated readings (only on actual readings) or where a problem occurred with the meter.

4. If I have been granted Level 6B water restrictions exemption do I need to reapply?

Exemptions issued under levels 4b, 5, 6 and 6B restrictions still apply, subject to review with the possibility of being revoked.

5. We are introducing alternative water sources in our business/ operation now, like using rainwater, groundwater, or recycling greywater. What are the rules related to this?

All alternative water use and alternative water systems plumbed into a building (connected to a water installation) is subject to approval from the City. The abstraction and storage of groundwater and, surface water is also subject to authorisation and registration by the National Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS). Use of alternative water needs to be well managed and regulated, as alternative water systems pose potentially serious health and environmental risks, including contamination of the drinking water supply. See these links for City's website:

- Apply to sink a borehole or wellpoint – <http://cct.gov.za/99C1r>
- Register a borehole or wellpoint - <http://cct.gov.za/juF60>
- Apply to install and use an alternative water system - <http://cct.gov.za/AIBNI>
- City's Water By-law – which has recently been amended – www.capetown.gov.za/waterregulations