

Temporary hosepipe ban | Frequently asked questions

Exemptions and priority services

What about the elderly, registered disabled and blue badge holders that can't carry a watering can?

If you are a blue badge holder, on our Priority Services register, or our WaterSure tariff for medical reasons, then you will be exempted from the restrictions. However, we would still encourage you to think about how you could save and re-using water around the home as much as you can.

People should not put themselves at risk unnecessarily. If you know someone who may struggle to use a watering can, they can apply for an exemption.

I'm a Priority Services customer – would the restrictions apply to me?

No, if you are on our Priority Services register for medical reasons.

We are writing to all affected Priority Services customers proactively to tell them that we would really like their help and if they can refrain from using their hosepipe that would be great but if they do need to use them, they – along with Blue Badge holders – would be exempt.

I think I'm on the Priority Services Register but haven't received a letter

If we don't have your email address or phone number, we will have sent you a letter via post. If this hasn't arrived within ten days, please contact us on 0800 389 10 11 and we'll check your registration status.

What is a Priority Services customer and why are they exempt?

If you need a little extra help due to medical, learning, physical disabilities or financial difficulties, you can join our Priority Services Register. It means we can offer services to help support any specific needs you may have. You can find out more about it, and how to join, on our [website](#).

If you have joined our register for medical reasons, we understand that you may require the use of a hosepipe as part of this, or it prevents you from using an alternative method. This also applies to any customers holding a blue badge.

We don't want anyone to put themselves at risk unnecessarily and recognise that some customers who have specific needs may need extra support with the restrictions which will be in place. That is why they are exempt.

Are there are specific activities which are exempt?

A full list of activities that are exempt from the restrictions can be found in our official [TUB notice](#).

If you still need some further support with a specific query, you can [contact us](#) for help.

What can customers do to help?

Please use water wisely. There are lots of tips and advice on our website and you can also apply online for [free water saving devices](#).

Our top tips for saving water:

- Please don't use a hosepipe until the restriction has been lifted, we'll let you know when that is.
- Fix any dripping taps, leaky loos or pipes.
- Re-use your washing up water to water your gardens – it won't harm the plants.
- If you've got a modern toilet with dual flush, use the short flush wherever possible.
- When at the sink, use a washing up bowl instead of letting the tap run – you can reduce wasted water by up to 50%!
- Use your dishwasher. You'll save yourself a job and often they use less water than washing dishes by hand – remember to do a full load each time and run it on eco-mode as this saves energy too.
- Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth, it'll save up to six litres of water per minute! For a family of four that could be up to 48 litres a day.
- Boil only what you need when you make a cuppa, many people overfill the kettle and the water just goes up in steam.
- Water your garden with a watering can in the early morning or late evening, when less water is lost through evaporation.
- Keep a jug or a few bottles of water on the go in the fridge. This avoids needing to run the tap until the water gets cold each time you want a drink.
- Only wash full loads in your washing machine and use the eco-mode if it has one – this saves water as well as energy.
- If you do need to wash your car, use a bucket and sponge to wash your car or try some of the new waterless car washing products.

- Spend a minute less in the shower every day – if each member of a family of four spent one minute less in the shower, they could save approximately 36 litres of water a day! Saving on hot water can also help you save on energy bills.
- If you can, switch from having a bath to a shower – showers are much more refreshing in hot weather and use half the amount of water a bath does.

People can help by reporting leaks to us as soon as they see them. You can do this [online](#) or by calling 0800 389 1011.

The independent organisation Waterwise has some fantastic [free water-friendly activities](#) for you and the children in your life which can help save water.

What measures can I take in the garden to be water efficient?

- Store any rainwater in a water butt and use this to top up your pond or water your garden.
- Cut down on the number of pots/planters you have and go for one or two larger containers which don't dry out too quickly.
- If you're buying new pots/planters, go for the plastic ones with water reservoirs which store water underneath.
- If you put plastic pots inside your terracotta pots or line your terracotta pots with a recycled carrier bag, you'll cut down on water loss through evaporation.
- Use bio-degradable crystals in planters. They reduce the need for watering down to once or twice a week.

- Recycle plastic bottles. Put a tiny pin prick an inch from the bottom and fill with water. Then place the bottle among your plants or vegetable for slow release watering.
- Use mulches like bark chips or gravel to help retain moisture.
- Choose plants that like dry conditions – those with the full sun label in the garden centre, or check out the Royal Horticultural Society [website](#) which has really good advice on drought-tolerant planting.
- Don't water your lawn. Golden lawns will come back to green again very quickly when regular patterns of rain return.
- Reset your lawn mower blades to 4cm to encourage dense bushy growth which traps early morning dew and reduces evaporation. We would recommend letting the grass clippings go on the lawn every third mow.