

**ARTICLE V. WATER CONSERVATION**

**Sec. 31-195. Purpose of the Water Conservation and Drought Contingency Plan for city utilities.**

- (1) The purpose of this plan is to promote the protection and proper utilization of Laredo's only water resource, the Rio Grande River, and to ensure an uninterrupted supply of water sufficient to satisfy essential needs.
- (2) The Water Conservation and Drought Contingency Plan as a combined ordinance officially named the Water Conservation Ordinance is established in accordance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Title 30, Chapter 288 and as required by the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB).

**Sec. 31-196. - Interpretation of the Water Conservation and Drought Contingency Plan.**

- (a) The provisions of the Water Conservation and Drought Contingency Plan shall be interpreted and applied as the minimum requirements for water conservation in the city and shall control over all other landscape and water management requirements in any other ordinance in the city Code of Ordinances, if applicable.
- (b) This plan is not intended to interfere with, abrogate or annul any restrictive covenants or other agreements between individual parties. When there is a conflict between the requirements of this plan and any restrictive covenants, agreements or other requirements imposed on the property, the more stringent requirement shall apply.
- (c) Where any provision of federal or state law conflicts with any provision of this plan, the most stringent provision shall apply unless otherwise regulated by law.
- (d) The provisions of this plan shall not be interpreted as part of or in lieu of the city's drought contingency plan.

**Sec. 31-197. Definitions.**

Aesthetic water use: Water use for ornamental or decorative purposes such as fountains, reflecting pools, and water gardens.

Athletic Field: A field used for playing sports made up of turf grass and primarily used for organized sports practice, competitions or school events.

City manager: The City Manager for the City of Laredo, Texas or designee.

Commercial and institutional water use: Water use which is integral to the operations of commercial and non-profit establishments and governmental entities such as retail establishments, hotels and motels, restaurants, and office buildings.

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Conservation: Those practices, techniques, and technologies that reduce the consumption of water, reduce the loss or waste of water, improve the efficiency in the use of water or increase the recycling and reuse of water so that a supply is conserved and made available for future or alternative uses.

Customer: Any person, company, or organization using water supplied by the City of Laredo.

Designated outdoor water use day: The day prescribed by the City of Laredo irrigation schedule on which a person or business is permitted to water outdoors.

Drip irrigation: The method of low volume, low pressure water application for landscapes from a series of valves, pipes, tubes and emitters delivering water at a rate of 0.16 up to 4 gallons an hour.

Domestic water use: Water use for personal needs or for household or sanitary purposes such as drinking, bathing, heating, cooking, sanitation, or for cleaning a residence, business, industry, or institution.

Even number address: Street addresses, box numbers, or rural postal route numbers ending in 0, 2, 4, 6, or 8 and locations without addresses.

Foundation watering: An application of water to the soils directly abutting (within 2 feet) the foundation of a building, structure.

Hose-end sprinkler: An above ground water distribution device that attaches to a garden hose.

Industrial water use: The use of water in processes designed to convert materials of lower value into forms having greater usability and value.

Institutional use: The use of water by an establishment dedicated to public service, such as a school, university, church, hospital, nursing home, prison, or government facility. All facilities dedicated to public service are considered institutional regardless of ownership.

Irrigation system: A system with fixed pipes and emitter or heads used for the irrigation of grass, turf, crops, trees, and pastureland.

Large water users: Customers who consume for than 4,000 gallons per day

Landscape irrigation use: Water used for the irrigation and maintenance of landscaped areas, whether publicly or privately owned, including residential and commercial lawns, gardens, golf courses, parks, and rights-of-way and medians.

Municipal use: The use of potable water provided by a public water supplier as well as the use of sewage effluent for residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, institutional, and wholesale uses.

Non-essential water use: Water uses that are not essential nor required for the protection of public, health, safety, and welfare, including:

- (a) irrigation of landscape areas, including parks, athletic fields, and golf courses, except otherwise provided under this Plan;
- (b) use of water to wash any motor vehicle, motorbike, boat, trailer, airplane or other vehicle;

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- (c) use of water to wash down any sidewalks, walkways, driveways, parking lots, tennis courts, or other hard-surfaced areas;
  - (d) use of water to wash down buildings or structures for purposes other than immediate fire protection;
  - (e) flushing gutters or permitting water to run or accumulate in any gutter or street;
  - (f) use of water to fill, refill, or add to any indoor or outdoor swimming pools or Jacuzzi-type pools;
  - (g) use of water in a fountain or pond for aesthetic or scenic purposes except where necessary to support aquatic life;
  - (h) failure to repair a controllable leak(s) within a reasonable period after having been given notice directing the repair of such leak(s); and
  - (i) use of water from hydrants for construction purposes or any other purposes other than firefighting.

Odd numbered address: Street addresses, box numbers, or rural postal route numbers ending in 1, 3, 5, 7, or 9.

Ornamental fountain: A fountain with water feature that utilizes a jet, stream or flow of water and is not used for the preservation of aquatic life.

Residential customer: Customer who uses water that is billed to single and multi-family residences, which applies to indoor and outdoor uses.

Reclaimed water: Domestic or municipal wastewater which has been treated to a quality suitable for a beneficial use.

Residential use: The use of water that is billed to single and multi-family residences, which applies to indoor and outdoor uses.

Retail public water supplier: An individual or entity that for compensation supplies water to the public for human consumption. The term does not include an individual or entity that supplies water to itself or its employees or tenants when that water is not resold to or used by others.

Total gallons per capita per day (GPCD): The total amount of water diverted and/or pumped for potable use divided by the total permanent population divided by the days of the year. Diversion volumes of reuse as defined in this chapter shall be credited against total diversion volumes for the purposes of calculating GPCD for targets and goals.

Water conservation coordinator: The person designated by a retail public water supplier that is responsible for implementing a water conservation plan.

Xeriscape: A style of landscape design requiring little or no irrigation or other maintenance, used in arid regions.

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**Sec. 31-198. Reserved.**

**Sec. 31-198. Quantified 5-year and 10- year water conservation goals.**

In an effort to reduce long-term capital expenditures and ensure water availability for all customers, the City of Laredo instituted a water conservation program in February 2006 to implement water conservation regulations citywide in accordance with the rules of the Texas Water Development Board and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. With the help of the Water Conservation and Drought Contingency Plan, the city will continue to implement additional activities and programs, as deemed necessary, in order to meet or exceed specific and quantified water conservation goals.

**5-year target and goals:**

- Per capita reduction goal- The City of Laredo's goal is to reduce per capita water consumption from 140 GPCD (2023) to 130 GPCD by 2029.
- Residential per capita reduction goal- The City of Laredo's goal is to reduce residential per capita water consumption from 79 GPCD (2023) to 75 GPCD by 2029.
- Water loss goal- The water loss goal for 2029 is to operate at a system water loss of 13 GPCD, which is equal to 10% of GPCD.

**10-year target and goals:**

- Per capita reduction goal- The City of Laredo's goal is to reduce per capita water consumption from 140 GPCD (2023) to 120 GPCD by 2034.
- Residential per capita reduction goal- The City of Laredo's goal is to reduce residential per capita water consumption from 79 GPCD (2023) to 70 GPCD by 2034.
- Water loss goal- The water loss goal for 2034 is to operate at a system water loss of 10 GPCD, which is equal to 8% of GPCD.

**Sec. 31-200. Water conservation program.**

The city's water conservation program is designed to provide practices, techniques, and technologies that help reduce the consumption of water, reduce the loss or waste of water, improve the efficiency in the use of water, and increase the recycling and reuse of water for the ultimate purpose of making available a water supply for future or alternative uses. The program is comprised of a water conservation planner and water conservation inspectors, who are responsible for implementing water conservation requirements and enforcing all regulations established in the water conservation and drought contingency plans, also known as the water conservation ordinance.

**Sec. 31-201-202. Reserved.**

**Sec. 31-203. Fire hydrant meters and illegal connections.**

- (a) Fire hydrant meters can only be installed, repaired, or replaced by utilities department staff.

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- (b) No person shall be allowed to open or close a fire hydrant or fire hydrant meter without having a training and certificate from the utilities department for having completed a mandatory training.
  - (c) The City of Laredo Fire Department is exempt from this mandatory training only during emergency firefighting operations and when conducting firefighting trainings at the fire training facility located at Pinto Valle. The fire department is not authorized to use water from any other fire hydrant throughout the city for firefighting trainings or for washing of any units and/or fire protection equipment unless there prior request and approval from the Utilities Department. Washing of any city units and/or fire protection equipment must be done at each corresponding fire station using water from the facility's water meter.
  - (d) Water from a fire hydrant shall not be used by any city department without a fire hydrant meter. Utilities staff are also prohibited from using water from a fire hydrant for any water-related operation without a fire hydrant meter installed.
  - (e) When an illegal connection is identified, staff take pictures, remove the illegal connection and confiscate the illegal device used as a connection, send correspondence to the property owner, and document the citation. The City of Laredo will also impose a \$500 connection fee once the customer legally connects to the city's utility line. Water conservation inspectors also assist by issuing a citation for theft of water services and for having an illegal connection and also file a police report against the alleged violator. The Laredo Police Department then proceeds with an investigation, which may lead to prosecution.

**Sec. 31-204. Public education and awareness program.**

Public education is a key component of the Water Conservation Program and allows our community to become aware of our water conservation needs. The Water Conservation Program will continue to provide the public with information in English and Spanish about the Water Conservation Plan and Drought Contingency Plan, including information about the conditions under which each stage of the Plan is to be initiated or terminated and the drought response measures to be implemented in each stage.

Information promoting Water Conservation and Drought Contingency Plan will be provided by means of social media campaigns, public events, press releases, and utility bill inserts as well as education and outreach campaigns

**Sec. 31-205. Water rate and sewer rate structure.**

The city has a water rate increase plan as specified in section 31-138, Water Rates. This water rate increase plan is a strategy placed in effect to discourage excessive use of water.

In addition to an escalating water rate structure, the city adopted a sewer rate increase plan as specified in section 31-92, Rates and Charges. This escalating water rate structure is a

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strategy placed in effect to discourage excessive use of water. The more water that is used, the higher that the sewer rate will be.

**Sec. 31-206. Reserved.**

**Sec. 31-207. Implementation and enforcement of the Water Conservation and Drought Contingency Plan.**

- (1) All water conservation orders described on this plan shall be enforced by the utility's water conservation inspectors, water conservation planner and other utility personnel designated by the utilities director, such as code enforcement inspectors, code-certified personnel from other city departments, police officers, and the municipal court, as appropriate.
- (2) The alleged violator shall receive one (1) written warning before receiving the first citation. The written warning may be for violation of any section, or combination of sections, found on this water conservation plan. The citation, which shall be issued on the second offense and thereafter, shall be prepared in triplicate form and must contain the name and address of the alleged violator, if known, the offense charged, and shall direct him or her to appear at the City of Laredo Municipal Court on the date shown on the citation, which date shall be not less than five (5) days or more than ten (10) days from the date that the citation was issued. The citation must be issued to the alleged violator, an agent, manager, or employee of the violator, or to a person of age eighteen (18) years or older who is a member of the violator's immediate family or is a resident of the violator's residence. The alleged violator shall be served with a copy of the citation, and a copy must be submitted to the water conservation program for data entry and recordkeeping. Any pictures taken as proof of violation shall also be submitted to the water conservation program with a copy of the citation. The original document(s) must be delivered to the City of Laredo Municipal Court for stamping and processing. The alleged violator shall appear at the City of Laredo Municipal Court to enter a plea of guilty or not guilty for the violation of this water conservation plan. If the alleged violator fails to appear in court, a warrant for his or her arrest may be issued by the City of Laredo Municipal Court. A summons to appear in court may also be issued in lieu of an arrest warrant. Cases involving a violation of the water conservation plan shall be expedited and given preferential setting at the City of Laredo Municipal Court before all other cases.

**Sec. 31-208. Penalties for violation of the Water Conservation and Drought Contingency plan.**

- (a) After receiving one (1) written warning for any section or combination of sections, a person who violates this water conservation plan shall be issued a citation and may be guilty of a class C misdemeanor.
- (b) Upon citation and conviction, any person violating these provisions shall be subject to punishment as provided in section 31-132 and/or receive a fine not less than fifty dollars (\$50.00) and not more than one hundred dollars (\$100.00) for the first offense;

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a fine not less than two hundred dollars (\$200.00) and not more than three hundred dollars (\$300.00) for the second offense; a fine of not less than four hundred dollars (\$400.00) and not more than five hundred dollars (\$500.00) for the third and additional offenses.

- (c) Each violation of a particular section of this division shall constitute a separate offense.
- (d) All payments shall be made payable to the City of Laredo Municipal Court, as set forth in the City Code of Ordinances and approved and adopted by the city council.
- (e) The court shall transfer a total of 50% of each fine to a “Water Conservation Fund” that will be designated to the Water Conservation Program. Funds from the “Water Conservation Fund” shall be used for programs related to water conservation, which include but are not limited to, educational materials, promotional items, and water conservation programs and activities for the community.
- (f) The following violations of the water conservation ordinance will constitute an automatic citation: illegal connections, theft of water, vehicle washing for the purpose of fundraising and/or promoting a business, failure to repair a controllable leak within 5 days of discovery, ornamental fountain not recirculating, carwash facilities without a water recycling system installed or in working condition, and the unauthorized use or removal of a fire hydrant meter from a third-party other than the person or business who obtained the service agreement.
- (g) A previous violation shall not be considered if a period of one (1) year has elapsed since the violation was first incurred or the property is acquired by a new owner or tenant.

**Sec. 31-209. - Coordination with regional water planning groups.**

The service area of the City of Laredo is located within the Rio Grande planning area. The City of Laredo has provided a copy of this Plan to the Rio Grande planning group, Region M. The Water Conservation Planner will provide a copy of the updated Water Conservation and Drought Contingency Plan as required by the Texas Water Development Board and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

**Sec. 31-210. Plan review and update.**

The City of Laredo Utilities Department shall review and update its water conservation plan, as appropriate, based on an assessment of previous five-year and ten-year targets and any other new or updated information. The City of Laredo Utilities Department shall review and update the next revision of its water conservation plan not later than May 1, 2024, and every five (5) years after that date to coincide with the regional water planning group. The revised plan must also include an implementation report.

**Sec. 31-211-212. Reserved.**

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**Sec. 31-213. Conservation-oriented water rates and water rate structures.**

The utilities department instituted an increasing water block rate schedule in April 2006, for a period of thirty-one (31) years, as approved by city council, categorizing a water rate structure for each of the following block tiers: residential, multi-family, residential irrigation, commercial, commercial irrigation, and commercial hydrant. As the water consumption increases, the water rate also increases, thereby, discouraging the use of excessive water use serving as an indirect conservation-oriented water rate structure. The water rate increase plan is as specified in the Laredo Code of Ordinances, Chapter 31-Utilities, Article III.-Water, Division 3.- Rates and Charges, Section 31-138-Water Rates. The sewer rate increase plan is as specified in section 31-92, Rates and Charges.

**Sec. 31-214. Water-conserving plumbing fixtures.**

Under the Texas Health and Safety Code, § 372.002, "Water Saving Performance Standards," water-conserving plumbing fixtures are required by all local municipalities in the State of Texas for new structures and existing structures undergoing substantial modification or addition.

Water conserving fixtures are required by the city as per the 2012 edition of the International Plumbing Code as adopted and referenced in Section 25-3.

**Sec. 31-215. Reuse and recycling of wastewater.**

- (1) *Wastewater reuse program.* The City of Laredo Utilities Department has a wastewater reuse program, in which effluent is used at the wastewater treatment plant for many beneficial purposes. Effluent, which is treated wastewater that meets the requirements of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and is suitable for a beneficial use, is used by the utility for washdowns, dust control, cleaning of equipment, tank washing, and for site irrigation including the Laredo Country Club Golf Course and the Casa Blanca State Park Golf Course.
- (2) *Vehicle wash facilities. (Regardless of date of operation commencement)*
  - (a) Vehicle washing facilities using conveying, touchless, or rollover technology shall reuse a minimum of fifty percent of water from previous rinses in subsequent washes.
  - (b) Self-service spray wands shall emit no more than three gallons of water per minute.
  - (c) Vehicle car washes are expected to maintain recycling systems and equipment in good working condition and provide periodic maintenance.
- (3) *Bleeder lines from evaporative systems.* New and replacement bleeder lines from evaporative systems shall not be larger than one-eighth ( $\frac{1}{8}$ ) inch diameter inside. Lines shall be directed to discharge the effluent outdoors to irrigate landscaping or other



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vegetation, if possible, except where this would be impractical or unfeasible as determined by the utilities director.

- (4) *Single-pass cooling or heating systems.* The use of water for non-residential single-pass cooling or heating systems is strictly prohibited, unless the water is reused and recycled for other purposes such as irrigating landscaping or other vegetation.

**Sec. 31-216. Reserved.**

**Sec.31- 217. Landscape regulations applicable on and after January 1, 2025**

Except as specifically provided with alternative effective dates, persons affected by the regulations set out herein below shall comply on or after January 1, 2025. A violation of this section and subsections shall be subject to the enforcement provisions set out in section 31-208. It shall be and is hereby declared unlawful for any person to violate, refuse, prohibit or fail to implement the requirements of this division, including but not limited to homeowners' associations (HOAs), renters, and property owners.

(a) *Xeriscaping option.*

- (1) Effective January 1, 2025, homebuilders and/or developers subdividing lots and/or constructing new single-family homes will be required to offer a xeriscape option. An approved low water plant list for Laredo which lists all plants, shrubs, vines, groundcovers, perennials, ornamental grasses, trees, and turf grasses suitable for Laredo is available through the water conservation program on the City of Laredo Utilities Department website.
  - (2) Xeriscaping for existing public facilities. It will be required that landscaping on existing, municipal, county, state, and federal buildings, including public libraries, industrial parks, and commercial developments be converted to Xeriscape within ten (10) years from the effective date of this division.
- (b) *Model homes.* Effective January 1, 2025, homebuilders and/or developers who construct model homes for a designated subdivision shall have at least on model home per subdivision landscaped according to xeriscape design.
- (c) *Zonal system.* In-ground irrigation systems installed on and after January 1, 2006, shall be zonal irrigation system.
- (d) *Pop-up sprays.* Pop-up sprays and irrigation rotor heads must be directed away from any impervious surfaces and shall not be placed less than 4 inches from an impervious surface.

**Sec. 31-218. Outdoor water management applicable on and after January 1, 2025.**

The following are outdoor water management requirements:

- (a) *Hose bibb.* Every outdoor faucet in residential, commercial, or public facility shall have a hose bibb vacuum breaker installed in order to prevent water contamination to the facility and the city's water system. Effective January 2014, all hose bibb vacuum breakers shall be lead free.

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(b) *Fountains.*

- (1) All residential fountains and indoor commercial fountains can operate at any stage of drought if they have a water recycling system installed.
- (2) Outdoor commercial fountains must have a City of Laredo variance in order to operate during drought stages 1 through 4.

(c) *Swimming pools.*

- (1) All non-public swimming pools must have a minimum of 25 percent of the surface area covered with evaporation screens when not in use.
- (2) Splash parks and all other water parks shall be equipped with filtration and recirculation systems and must be maintained in good working conditions.
- (3) Pool companies offering installation and/or maintenance services under this code must give each customer written information on maintenance requirements, emphasizing preventive measures to maintain high water quality and alternatives to draining pools for water quality issues, unless draining is necessary for physical repairs.

The provisions of the water conservation plan shall not be interpreted as part of or in lieu of the city's drought contingency plan. During a more stringent drought triggering stage, the outdoor water use conditions from the drought contingency plan shall supersede this section.

**Sec. 31-219. Reserved.**

**Sec. 31-220. Other water management strategies.**

- (a) *Irrigation for parks, golf courses, and athletic fields.* City of Laredo Parks may irrigate more than three times a week (except during Stage 4) provided, an Annual Water Conservation Plan is submitted to the Water Conservation Program. Effective January 1, 2025, operators of golf courses, athletic fields, and parks that do not use effluent water must submit an Annual Water Conservation Plan no later than August 1, 2025. The water conservation plan shall include conservation goals and targets, conservation improvements from the year prior and improvements for the year ahead, and techniques and technologies that will reduce the loss of water, or increase the recycling and reuse of water. A revised plan should be submitted every year by August 1.

(b) *Mobile Vehicle Washing.*

- (1) Mobile vehicle washing businesses, which provides on-site services, will not be permitted, unless a permit is obtained from the City of Laredo. In addition, mobile vehicle washing businesses will not be permitted to operate unless all run-off water is captured and properly disposed of. Discharge of wastewater from cleaning activities to the street, gutter or storm drain is strictly prohibited. Businesses must use an eco-

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friendly vehicle washing system that features a super fine mist of 1.6 gallons of water per minute or less.

- (2) Vehicle washing for fundraising or promotion of business will no longer be permitted unless conducted at a commercial car wash.

**Sec. 31-221. Reserved.**

**Sec. 31-222. Citizen participation.**

All citizens are required to participate in water conservation and encouraged to report any violation of this division to the City of Laredo Utilities Department—Water Conservation Program at (956) 721-2020, or the 311 Call Center at 3-1-1.

**Sec. 31.223. Exempted Parties.**

Owners of water wells, owners of water rights, and effluent users are exempt from the provisions of this division, except that they are prohibited from allowing water to spray or run off in any street, gutter, ditch, or drain, or to any adjacent property.

Customers using effluent for irrigation or other purposes shall have an approved written agreement from the City of Laredo Utilities Department.

**Secs. 31-224—31-235. Reserved.**

**Sec. 31-236. Public Notification**

- (1) The City Manager, City Council, or designee, shall monitor water supply and/or demand conditions on a daily basis and shall determine that a mild, moderate, severe, critical, emergency or water shortage condition exists.
- (2) The public will be notified by means of City of Laredo website, City of Laredo Utilities website, public service announcements, social media announcements, and notice on monthly bill.

**Sec. 31-237. Criteria for Initiation and Termination of Drought Response Stages**

The triggering criteria described below are based on the average Amistad Reservoir capacity, Amistad/Falcon combined Reservoir capacity, and/or water treatment plant capacity.

**(a) *Stage 1 -- MILD Water Shortage Conditions.***

- (1) Criteria for initiation:

Water treatment plant capacity has reached or exceeded 85% of delivery capacity for 4 consecutive days;

The Amistad Reservoir is at 51% storage capacity or higher; or

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The combined capacity of the Amistad/Falcon reservoirs is 70% or higher capacity.

(2) Management measures:

Customers shall adhere to mandatory conservation measure and adhere to the prescribed restrictions on certain water uses as outlined in Sec.31-238.

(3) Criteria for termination:

Stage 1 of the drought response stages will remain in effect if no other stage is in place.

**(b) Stage 2 Triggers – MODERATE Water Shortage Conditions**

(1) Criteria for initiation:

Water treatment plant capacity has reached or exceeded 90% of delivery capacity for 3 consecutive days;

The Amistad Reservoir between 25% and 50% storage capacity; or

The combined capacity of the Amistad/Falcon reservoirs is between 21% and 69% capacity.

(2) Management measures:

Customers shall adhere to mandatory conservation measure and adhere to the prescribed restrictions on certain water uses as outlined in Sec.31-238.

(3) Criteria for termination:

Stage 2 may be rescinded when all of the conditions listed as triggering events have ceased to exist for a period of 3 consecutive days. Upon termination of Stage 2, Stage 1, or the applicable drought response stage based on the triggering criteria, becomes operative.

**(c) Stage 3 Triggers – CRITICAL Water Shortage Conditions**

(1) Criteria for initiation:

Water treatment plant capacity has reached or exceeded 95% of delivery capacity for 2 consecutive days;

The Amistad Reservoir is lower than 25% storage capacity;

The combined capacity of the Amistad/Falcon reservoirs is lower than 20% capacity;  
or

The Rio Grande's water levels are not high enough for collection through the intake

(2) Management measures:

Customers shall adhere to mandatory conservation measure and adhere to the prescribed restrictions on certain water uses as outlined in Sec.31-238.

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- (3) Stage 3 may be rescinded when all of the conditions listed as triggering events have ceased to exist for a period of 3 consecutive days. Upon termination of Stage 2, Stage 1, or the applicable drought response stage based on the triggering criteria, becomes operative.

**(d) Stage 4 Triggers – EXTREME DROUGHT OR EMERGENCY Water Shortage Conditions**

(1) Criteria for initiation (Extreme Drought):

The City Council will determine initiation of Stage 4 if any of the following criteria or combination of criteria are met;

Water treatment plant capacity has reached or exceeded 95% of delivery capacity for 5 consecutive days;

The Amistad Reservoir is lower than 20% storage capacity;

The combined capacity of the Amistad/Falcon reservoirs is lower than 15% capacity;  
or

The Rio Grande's water levels are not high enough for collection through the intake.

(2) Criteria for initiation (Emergency Water Shortage):

Major water line breaks, or pump or system failures occur, which cause unprecedented loss of capability to provide water service;

Natural or man-made contamination of the water supply source(s); or

Water from the Rio Grande is unable to be pumped into water treatment plant system due to extreme drought conditions and depletion of the Rio Grande.

(3) Management measures:

Customers shall adhere to mandatory conservation measure and adhere to the prescribed restrictions on certain water uses as outlined in Sec.31-238.

(4) Criteria for termination:

The extreme drought or emergency water shortage condition may be rescinded when the City Manager, or designee, deems appropriate.

**Sec. 31-238. Designated drought response stages and water use reduction measures.**

***Stage 1—Mild water shortage watch.***

- (1) *Triggering level.* Amistad conservation level is above fifty-one (51) percent, water treatment plant capacity is less than eighty-five (85) percent for four (4) consecutive days, or combined reservoir storage is at seventy (70) percent or higher.

- (2) *Cumulative reduction goal.* 15% In daily water demand.

- (3) *Wasting water.* The following uses of water are defined as wasting water and are prohibited:

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- (a) Allowing irrigation water to run off into a gutter, ditch or drain including the street or adjacent property;
  - (b) Failure to repair a controllable leak from a faucet, hose, sprinkler, backflow preventer, or meter within 5 days.
  - (c) Operating an irrigation system with a broken head, head that is out of adjustment or a head that is misting due to high water pressure;
  - (d) Allowing overspray and runoff during irrigation that runs, flows, or streams in a way that extends into streets, driveways, or other impervious surfaces for a distance of 30 feet or greater or that causes water to pond at a depth of 0.25 inches or greater;
  - (e) Washing sidewalks, streets, driveways, parking area, tennis courts, buildings and structures or other paved areas, except to alleviate immediate fire hazards;
  - (f) Watering during precipitation.

(4) *Irrigation schedule.* Landscape watering with an irrigation system, sprinkler or soaker hose is allowed only three times a week before 8 a.m. and after 7 p.m. on your designated watering day, as determined by the last digit of your address. Customers with an address ending in an even number (0, 2, 4, 6, 8) are only allowed to water between designated hours on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Customers with an address ending in an odd number (1, 3, 5, 7, 9) are only allowed to water between designated hours on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Landscape irrigation using a handheld hose with a positive shut-off nozzle, a faucet filled bucket or watering can of five (5) gallons or less, or drip irrigation system shall be permitted any day at any time. Leaving a water hose unattended is strictly prohibited.

Stage 1	
Addresses ending in:	Addresses ending in:
0,2,4,6,8	1,3,5,7,9
Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays only	Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays only

(5) *Mandatory Restrictions.* During Stage 1, the following restrictions shall apply to all persons.

- (a) Washing of automobiles, trucks, trailers, boats, airplanes, and other mobile equipment with hand-held hoses that are equipped with a positive shut-off nozzle or buckets is permitted on designated days and times only. Washing may be done at any time on the immediate premises of a commercial carwash or commercial service station;
  - (b) Vehicle washing may be exempted from this division if the health, safety and welfare of the public are contingent upon frequent vehicle cleaning, such as garbage trucks and vehicles used to transport food and perishables;
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- (c) Use of commercially operated cosmetic power/pressure washing equipment is not permitted unless it is fitted with a water recycling unit and a spray nozzle using no more than 3.5 gallons of water per minute and is equipped with a positive shut-off nozzle with a protective weep mechanism;
  - (d) Draining of swimming pools, hot tubs, and similar facilities is prohibited, except onto pervious surfaces;
  - (e) Filling and makeup of existing swimming pools, hot tubs, and similar facilities is permitted on designated days and times only.
  - (f) The irrigation of golf course fairway is absolutely prohibited. Utilizing wastewater effluent or well water is exempted from the provisions of this division.

(5) *Essential use:*

- (a) Use of water from hydrants shall be limited to firefighting, related activities, or other activities necessary to maintain public health, safety, and welfare, except that use of water from designated fire hydrants for construction purposes may be allowed under special permit from the City of Laredo.
- (b) Medical use by health care facilities. No restrictions.

(6) *Water utility use:*

- (a) Reduction of average system pressure to fifty (50) psi is recommended;
- (b) Leak detection and system repairs are recommended;
- (c) Stabilizing and equalizing system pressure is recommended;
- (d) Sewer line flushing: prohibited unless required for decontamination and/or public safety;
- (e) Fire hydrant flushing: prohibited unless required for decontamination and/or public safety;

***Stage 2—Moderate water shortage watch.***

- (1) *Triggering level.* Amistad conservation level between twenty-five (25) and fifty (50) percent, water treatment plant capacity is ninety (90) percent for three (3) consecutive days, or combined reservoir storage is between twenty-one (21) and sixty-nine (69) percent.
- (2) *Cumulative reduction goal.* 20% reduction in daily water demand.

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(3) *Wasting water.* The following uses of water are defined as wasting water and are prohibited:

- (a) Allowing irrigation water to run off into a gutter, ditch or drain including the street or adjacent property;
- (b) Failure to repair a controllable leak from a faucet, hose, sprinkler, backflow preventer, or meter within 5 days.
- (c) Operating an irrigation system with a broken head, head that is out of adjustment or a head that is misting due to high water pressure;
- (d) Allowing overspray and runoff during irrigation that runs, flows, or streams in a way that extends into streets, driveways, or other impervious surfaces for a distance of 30 feet or greater or that causes water to pond at a depth of 0.25 inches or greater;
- (e) Washing sidewalks, streets, driveways, parking area, tennis courts, buildings and structures or other paved areas, except to alleviate immediate fire hazards.
- (f) Watering during precipitation.

(5) *Irrigation schedule.* Landscape watering with an irrigation system, sprinkler or soaker hose is allowed only twice a week before 8 a.m. and after 7 p.m. on your designated watering day, as determined by the last digit of your address. Customers with an address ending in an even number (0, 2, 4, 6, and 8) are only allowed to water between designated hours on Mondays and Wednesdays only. Customers with an address ending in an odd number (1, 3, 5, 7, and 9) are only allowed to water between designated hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays only. Landscape irrigation using a handheld hose with a positive shut-off nozzle or drip irrigation shall be permitted any day at any time. Leaving a water hose unattended is strictly prohibited.

Stage 2	
Addresses ending in:	Addresses ending in:
0,2,4,6,8	1,3,5,7,9
Mondays and Wednesdays only	Tuesdays and Thursdays only

(5) *Mandatory restrictions.* During Stage 2, the following restrictions shall apply to all persons, commercial, and industrial users. Notice of such order shall be given by the city manager and/or mayor through appropriate circular, television, radio, newspaper and social media and include the following restrictions:

- (a) Commercial nurseries, commercial sod farms, and other similar establishments are prohibited from watering between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m.;
- (b) Washing of automobiles, trucks, trailers, boats, airplanes, and other mobile equipment with hand-held hoses that are equipped with a positive shut-off nozzle or buckets is permitted on designated days and times only. Washing may



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be done at any time on the immediate premises of a commercial carwash or commercial service station.

- (c) Vehicle washing may be exempted from this division if the health, safety and welfare of the public are contingent upon frequent vehicle cleaning, such as garbage trucks and vehicles used to transport food and perishables;
- (d) Use of commercially operated cosmetic power/pressure washing equipment is not permitted unless it is fitted with a water recycling unit and a spray nozzle using no more than 3.5 gallons of water per minute and is equipped with a positive shut-off nozzle with a protective weep mechanism;
- (e) Draining of swimming pools, hot tubs, and similar facilities is prohibited, except onto pervious surfaces;
- (f) Filling and makeup of existing swimming pools, hot tubs, and similar facilities is permitted on designated days and times only.
- (g) The irrigation of golf course fairway is absolutely prohibited. Utilizing wastewater effluent or well water is exempted from the provisions of this division.

(6) *Essential use:*

- (a) Firefighting. No restrictions;
- (b) Medical use by health care facilities. No restrictions.

(7) *Water utility use:*

- (a) Reduction of average system pressure to fifty (50) psi is recommended;
- (b) Leak detection and system repairs are recommended;
- (c) Stabilizing and equalizing system pressure is recommended;
- (d) Sewer line flushing: reduction is recommended.
- (e) Fire hydrant flushing: reduction is recommended.
- (f) Power production use: reduction of water use for power production is recommended.

***Stage 3—Critical water shortage condition.***

- (1) *Triggering level.* Amistad Dam Capacity level is below twenty-five (25) percent, water treatment plant capacity is ninety-five (90) percent for two (2) consecutive days, combined reservoir storage is below twenty (20) percent, or the Rio Grande levels are not high enough for collection through the intake.
- (2) *Cumulative reduction goal.* 25% in daily water demand.
- (3) *Wasting water.* The following uses of water are defined as wasting water and are prohibited:

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- (a) Allowing irrigation water to run off into a gutter, ditch or drain including the street or adjacent property;
  - (b) Failure to repair a controllable leak from a faucet, hose, sprinkler, backflow preventer, or meter within 5 days.
  - (c) Operating an irrigation system with a broken head, head that is out of adjustment or a head that is misting due to high water pressure;
  - (d) Allowing overspray and runoff during irrigation that runs, flows, or streams in a way that extends into streets, driveways, or other impervious surfaces for a distance of 30 feet or greater or that causes water to pond at a depth of 0.25 inches or greater;
  - (e) Washing sidewalks, streets, driveways, parking area, tennis courts, buildings and structures or other paved areas, except to alleviate immediate fire hazards.
  - (f) Watering during precipitation.

(4) *Irrigation schedule.* Landscape watering with an irrigation system, sprinkler or soaker hose is allowed only once a week before 8 a.m. and after 7 p.m. on your designated watering day, as determined by the last digit of your address. Customers with an address ending in an even number (0, 2, 4, 6, and 8) are only allowed to water between designated hours on Mondays only. Customers with an address ending in an odd number (1, 3, 5, 7, and 9) are only allowed to water between designated hours on Thursdays only. Landscape irrigation using a handheld hose with a positive shut-off nozzle or drip irrigation shall be permitted on designated days only. Leaving a water hose unattended is strictly prohibited:

- (a) The washing of automobiles, trucks, trailers, boats, airplanes and other types of mobile equipment is prohibited. Exception: Washing may be done at any time on the immediate premises of a commercial carwash or commercial service station.

Stage 3	
Addresses ending in:	Addresses ending in:
0,2,4,6,8	1,3,5,7,9
Mondays only	Thursdays only

(5) *Mandatory compliance—Water shortage alert.* During Stage 3, the following restrictions shall apply to all persons, commercial, and industrial users. Notice of such order shall be given by the city manager and/or mayor through appropriate circular, television, radio, newspaper and social media and include the following restrictions:

- (a) Washing of automobiles, trucks, trailers, boats, airplanes, and other mobile equipment with hand-held hoses that are equipped with a positive shut-off nozzle or buckets is permitted on designated days and times only. Washing may

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be done at any time on the immediate premises of a commercial carwash or commercial service station;

- (b) The maximum monthly water use allocation for residential customers will be set to 20,000 gallons and 15,000 gallons for commercial irrigation. Multifamily thresholds will be determined by multiplying the number of units by 20,000 gallons.;
- (c) Vehicle washing may be exempted from this division if the health, safety and welfare of the public are contingent upon frequent vehicle cleaning, such as garbage trucks and vehicles used to transport food and perishables;
- (d) Use of commercially operated cosmetic power/pressure washing equipment is not permitted unless it is fitted with a water recycling unit and a spray nozzle using no more than 3.5 gallons of water per minute and is equipped with a positive shut-off nozzle with a protective weep mechanism;
- (e) Draining of swimming pools, hot tubs, and similar facilities is prohibited, except onto pervious surfaces;
- (f) The makeup of new swimming pools, hot tubs is prohibited. The filling or refilling of residential swimming and/or wading pools is prohibited;
- (g) The irrigation of golf course fairway is absolutely prohibited. Utilizing wastewater effluent or well water is exempted from the provisions of this division;
- (h) No bulk water sales shall be made from the city or water points for any purpose when such water will be transported by any tanker truck or similar type vehicle outside the City of Laredo except for domestic or residential use or for livestock as approved by the utilities director;
- (i) Fire hydrant water sales shall cease. Users shall be directed to obtain effluent from the wastewater treatment plants as available. Potable water shall only be made available for direct human consumption, to maintain sanitary conditions and for livestock only with written approval from the utilities director;
- (j) A water use surcharge of ten dollars (\$10.00) per thousand gallons shall be levied against residential single family and multi-family customers that use over twenty thousand (20,000) gallons per month and commercial irrigators that use over fifteen thousand (15,000) gallons per month

(6) *Essential use.*

- (a) Firefighting. No restrictions.
- (b) Medical use by health care facilities. No restrictions.

(7) *Water utility use.*

- (a) Reduction of average system pressure to fifty (50) psi is recommended.
- (b) Leak detection and system repairs are recommended.

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- (c) Stabilizing and equalizing system pressure is recommended.
  - (d) Sewer line flushing: reduction is recommended.
  - (e) Fire hydrant flushing: reduction is recommended.
  - (f) Power production use: reduction of water use for power production is recommended.

***Stage 4—Extreme heat or Emergency water shortage condition.***

Stage 4 restrictions may be declared if the total supply of the Amistad Reservoir is insufficient to meet customer demand, even while complying with lesser restriction stages. These restrictions may be declared at the discretion of the City Manager upon completion of a 30-day monitoring period following Stage 3 declaration.

- (1) *Triggering level*, Amistad conservation level is less than twenty (20) percent, water treatment plant capacity is ninety-five (95) percent for five (5) consecutive days, combined reservoir storage is lower than fifteen (15) percent, or the Rio Grande levels are not high enough for collection through the intake.
- (2) *Cumulative reduction goal*. To be determined by the Water Conservation Program to protect human health, safety.
- (3) *Mandatory restrictions—Water shortage emergency*. During Stage 4, the following restrictions shall apply to all persons, commercial, and industrial users. Notice of such order shall be given by the city manager and/or mayor through appropriate circular, television, radio, newspaper and social media and include the following restrictions:
  - (a) No applications for new, additional, either expanded or increased in-size water service connections, meters, service lines, pipeline extensions, mains, or other water service facilities of any kind shall be allowed, approved or installed except as approved by the city utilities director;
  - (b) All locations of water use to nonessential industrial and commercial customers shall be reduced to amounts as established by the city utilities director;
  - (c) The maximum monthly water use allocation for residential customers will be set to 15,000 gallons and 10,000 gallons for commercial irrigation. Multifamily thresholds will be determined by multiplying the number of units by 20,000 gallons. Other thresholds may be established by the city council upon recommendation by the city utilities director;
  - (d) Irrigation utilizing hose-end sprinklers or automatic sprinkler systems for lawns, gardens, landscaped areas, trees, shrubs and other plants is prohibited. Irrigation of lawns, gardens, landscaped areas, trees, shrubs or other plants is not permitted at any time. During Stage 4, the use of hand-held hoses or drip irrigation systems is not allowed. Zero tolerance for outdoor water usage;

Stage 4
Zero outdoor water usage permitted

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- (e) The washing of automobiles, trucks, trailers, boats, airplanes and other types of mobile equipment is prohibited;
  - (f) No bulk water sales shall be made from the city or water points for any purpose when such water will be transported by any tanker truck or similar type vehicle outside the City of Laredo except for domestic or residential use or for livestock as approved by the utilities director;
  - (g) Fire hydrant water sales shall cease. Users shall be directed to obtain effluent from the wastewater treatment plants as available. Potable water shall only be made available for direct human consumption, to maintain sanitary conditions and for livestock only with written approval from the utilities director.
  - (h) The makeup of new swimming pools, hot tubs is prohibited. The filling of water to residential swimming and/or wading pools is prohibited;
  - (i) The operation of any ornamental fountain or other structure making similar use of water is prohibited;
  - (j) The use of water for irrigation for parks, plazas, and squares is prohibited. The irrigation of golf course fairway is absolutely prohibited;
  - (k) Irrigation for athletic fields is prohibited;
  - (l) A water use surcharge of ten dollars (\$10.00) per thousand gallons shall be levied against residential single family and multi-family customers that use over fifteen thousand (15,000) gallons per month and commercial irrigators that use over ten thousand (10,000) gallons per month;
  - (m) Any irrigation system found irrigating at any time during a Stage 4 will result in the irrigation meter to be cut off temporarily until Stage 4 is lifted or reversed to a Stage 3, Stage 2, or a Stage 1.
- (4) *Wasting water.* The following uses of water are defined as wasting water and are prohibited:
- (a) Allowing irrigation water to run off into a gutter, ditch or drain including the street or adjacent property;
  - (b) Allowing irrigation water to run off into a gutter, ditch or drain including the street or adjacent property;
  - (c) Failure to repair a controllable leak from a faucet, hose, sprinkler, backflow preventer, or meter within 5 days.
  - (d) Operating an irrigation system with a broken head, head that is out of adjustment or a head that is misting due to high water pressure;
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- (e) Allowing overspray and runoff during irrigation that runs, flows, or streams in a way that extends into streets, driveways, or other impervious surfaces for a distance of 30 feet or greater or that causes water to pond at a depth of 0.25 inches or greater;
  - (f) Washing sidewalks, streets, driveways, parking area, tennis courts, buildings and structures or other paved areas, except to alleviate immediate fire hazards.
  - (g) Watering during precipitation.

(5) *Essential use:*

- (a) Firefighting. No restrictions;
- (b) Medical use by health care facilities. No restrictions.

(6) *Water utility use:*

- (a) Reduction of average system pressure to fifty (50) psi is recommended;
- (b) Leak detection and system repairs are recommended;
- (c) Stabilizing and equalizing system pressure is recommended;
- (d) Sewer line flushing: prohibited unless required for decontamination and/or public safety;
- (e) Fire hydrant flushing: prohibited unless required for decontamination and/or public safety;
- (f) Power production use: reduction of water use for power production is recommend.

**Secs. 31-239-240. Reserved.**

**Sec. 31-241. Variances.**

The city manager, or his/her designee, including the utilities director, may in writing, grant temporary variance for existing water uses otherwise prohibited under this plan when it is determined that failure to grant such variance would cause an emergency condition adversely affecting the health, sanitation, or fire protection for the public or the person requesting such variance and if one (1) or more of the following conditions are met:

- (1) Compliance with this plan cannot be technically accomplished during the duration of the water supply shortage or other condition for which the plan is in effect.
- (2) Alternative methods can be implemented and will achieve the same level of reduction in water use.

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Persons requesting an exemption from the provisions of this division shall file a written petition for a variance with the city utilities department within five (5) days after Stage 2, Stage 3, or Stage 4 has been declared. All petitions for variances shall be reviewed by the city manager, or his/her designee, including the utilities director, and shall include the following:

- (1) Name, address, and contact information of the petitioner(s).
- (2) Purpose of water use in detail.
- (3) Specific provision(s) of the plan from which the petitioner is requesting relief.
- (4) Detailed statement as to how the specific provision of the plan adversely affects the petitioner or what damage or harm will occur to the petitioner or others if petitioner complies with this division.
- (5) Description of the relief requested.
- (6) Period of time for which the variance is sought.
- (7) Alternative water use restrictions or other measures the petitioner is taking or proposes to take to meet the intent of this plan and the compliance date.
- (8) Other pertinent information.

Variances granted by the city utilities department shall be subject to the following conditions, unless waived or modified by the city manager or his/her designee:

- (1) Variances granted shall include a timetable for compliance.
- (2) Variances granted shall expire when the plan is no longer in effect, unless the petitioner has failed to meet specified requirements.

No variances shall be retroactive or otherwise justify any violation of this plan occurring prior to the issuance of the variance.

Any petitioner requesting a variance will agree to follow certain watering conditions, as described in the approved variance, and violation of such conditions will result in a water waste fine without prior written warning(s).