

Darien BOS Declare a 'Water Supply Emergency'

Jayne Stevenson
First Selectman

David Knauf, MPH, MS, REHS
Director of Health

Due to extended drought conditions and pursuant to Section 34-21 of the Darien Town Code, on Monday, November 7, 2016, the Board of Selectmen voted to declare a "Water Supply Emergency". This action followed the issuance of Orders by the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Public Health to the Aquarion Water Company concerning the depletion of available water supplies in local reservoirs. This emergency declaration provides local officials the ability to restrict several water use activities until the State Order is rescinded. The following activities are now declared to be unlawful in Darien:

- lawn watering
- watering of shrubbery, perennial flowers and trees
- filling pools or ponds
- washing vehicles, unless at facilities that use recycled water
- failure to repair or report water leaks
- use of fire hydrants for any activity other than fire fighting
- Flushing and power washing walkways, driveways and the exterior of buildings,
- irrigation of golf courses except in accordance with a conservation plan approved by town officials.

Reasonable exceptions to the above restrictions may be made upon a review of a water conservation plan submitted to the Health Department with a decision provided by the First Selectman's office.

It is important to note that Section 1-8 of the Darien Town Code provides for the issuance of penalties and fines to those who violate the declaration after an official warning notice has been issued. Warning notices will be issued by the Darien Health Department, with any subsequent penalties being assessed by the Police Department.

Local water supplies have been severely stressed by this drought meaning businesses and residents need to adopt water conservation practices sooner rather than later. In addition to the actions listed above, the following measures are strongly encouraged:

- do not let the water run while shaving, brushing teeth, or doing dishes
- make sure washing machines and dishwashers are full before running them.
- take shorter showers; don't take baths, or if you do, don't fill the tub
- check for water leaks, especially in the bathroom; toilets are notorious for leaking
- flush toilets only when necessary.
- local restaurants have been asked to serve water to patrons only by request.

A day or two of rain will not solve this problem. Our reservoirs and groundwater supplies have been depleted since precipitation amounts received over the past two years has been about two feet below normal. Until we get significant levels of precipitation, we need to use water carefully.

If you have any questions, please call the Health Department at 203-656-7320, or the First Selectman's office at 203-656-7338.