

News from the Source

LCA Customer Newsletter - ALLENTOWN DIVISION

Información importante de su compañía de agua.

DEP drought watch declaration includes Northampton, Lehigh counties

On Sept. 6, after one of the hottest summers on record, the state Department of Environmental Protection declared a drought watch for 38 counties. The decision was prompted by low stream flows, declining groundwater levels and lack of precipitation. Locally, the drought watch affects two counties served by LCA: Lehigh and Northampton.

It's a situation we're keeping a close watch on here at LCA, so please check our website for the most current information, which may have changed since this article was written.

The drought watch declaration calls for a voluntary 5 percent reduction in non-essential water use.

There are a number of ways to cut your water use, and they're good practices any time of the year — not only will they conserve water, they'll also save you money. Here are a few from the DEP and the Delaware River Basin Commission that can save hundreds of gallons each week:

For up-to-date information on the drought and water conservation tips, check out the following sites:

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
dep.pa.gov/drought

Delaware River Basin Commission
nj.gov/drbc/hydrological/drought/

Lehigh County Authority
lehighcountyauthority.org

- Run water only when necessary. Avoid letting the faucet run while brushing your teeth or shaving, or letting the shower run for several minutes before use.

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LCA is working to make sewer system 'Rainstorm Ready'

LCA is working with communities throughout the region to make Lehigh County "Rainstorm Ready" to keep our streams and rivers cleaner.

Here's the situation: When it rains very heavily, water gets into our sanitary sewer lines, which are engineered to transport sewage from homes and businesses. Groundwater leaks in through seams and damage in the pipes, known as "inflow." Rainwater enters through manhole covers and other openings, or "infiltration." Sometimes it comes from homeowners who illegally hook up sump pumps and drains to the sanitary sewer.

When it rains, the extra flow overwhelms the pipes and the sewage treatment plant in Allentown where our

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- Take shorter showers and save 3 to 5 gallons every minute.
- Fill the bathtub just halfway and save 10-15 gallons.
- Check for household leaks. A leaking toilet can waste up to 200 gallons of water each day!
- Install water-saving toilets, shower heads, and faucet aerators. Place a brick, or a plastic bottle filled with water, in your toilet tank if you can't switch to a low-flow toilet.
- Run dishwashers and washing machines only with full loads.
- Don't let the water run while hand-washing dishes.
- Replace older appliances with high-efficiency, front-loading models that use about 30 percent less water and 40 to 50 percent less energy.
- Never use the toilet as a wastebasket and don't flush it unnecessarily.
- Position downspouts so that rain water runs onto the lawn or into the garden, not down the driveway.
- Plant drought-resistant trees and flowers and use mulch to keep the soil moist.
- Never water lawns during the heat of the day. Better yet, avoid watering them at all — by this time of year, grass should be going into a period of dormancy.
- Do not use water to clean sidewalks or driveways. Sweep them instead.

We advise all residential customers to check your water meter or bill to see how much water you are using. A good rule of thumb is 50-60 gallons per day, per person.

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sewage ultimately flows. When there's too much sewage for the plant to process, the untreated sewage is released into our waterways.

LCA is one of 12 municipalities, including the City of Allentown and all the townships and boroughs that are connected to the sewer system in our area, that are named by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in an Administrative Order to eliminate sanitary sewer overflows. LCA is collaborating with the City of Allentown and all municipalities to respond to this federal mandate to eliminate the overflows of sewage into our waterways.

During the next several years, we will be working diligently to stop the inflow and infiltration into our sanitary sewer pipes. That will reduce the flow to Allentown and help stop the overflows.

Also, starting in 2017, all communities that direct sewage to the Allentown plant will be sharing the costs of new or upgraded regional pump stations, parallel sewer interceptors and flow equalization (storage) tanks that will help prevent our sewage from overflowing.

It's a big job. There are more than 600 miles of sewer pipe in Lehigh County that are affected, and each municipality needs to conduct work within their own systems. LCA will take care of the regional system of pipes that interconnects them. The City of Allentown will be working with LCA on improvements in the City and at the wastewater plant downtown.

Altogether, it's a big job that will take approximately \$400 million to complete over the next 40 years. But it needs to be done, and LCA is leading efforts to ensure we are all working together toward the same goals.

Some communities have joined together to form a new website about this program, rainstormready.com,



RAINSTORM READY

where you will soon be able to read more about the situation, what we're doing to solve it and how you can help as a homeowner. You can even sign up for e-mail updates on the program. We want to make sure you understand how and why we're helping to make your community – and all of Lehigh County – “Rainstorm Ready.”