

Township of  
**Langley**



Est. 1873

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 23, 2018**

### **DRINKING WATER CONSERVATION PLAN STARTS MAY 1**

In the Township of Langley, we turn on the tap and have safe, clean drinking water at our disposal.

Like all other municipalities on Canada's "Wet Coast," we get a ton of rain throughout the year and are surrounded by snow-capped mountains and rushing rivers.

So why is it that restrictions are put in place throughout Metro Vancouver every spring and summer to curb the amount of water that goes into our lawns?

"Despite the abundance of water around us, it is not for drinking," said Meaghan Norton Daniel, Environmental Coordinator with the Township of Langley. "The water that goes through our sprinklers and into our lawns is, however. We don't want to waste what we drink."

Norton Daniel chairs Metro Vancouver's Water Conservation Committee and has been working closely with Metro's 22 member municipalities to develop a Drinking Water Conservation Plan. The Plan is meant to instill the public with the need to conserve drinking water - not just during times of shortage and even when it's rainy.

"There is a common misconception that we have lots of water, but rainwater is not drinking water. It is not that simple," Norton Daniel said. "The water that falls from the sky and can be seen as snow on the mountains needs to be collected, stored, treated so it is safe to drink, and distributed through hundreds of kilometres of pipes before it becomes the drinking water we get when we turn on the tap."

And of that safe, clean, municipal drinking water that is delivered to residents' homes, only about ten per cent is consumed. "The rest, the remaining 90 per cent, essentially goes down the drain when we flush the toilet, take a shower, and do the laundry or dishes," Norton Daniel said. "We need to be very careful with how we treat our drinking water, because wasting it causes more strain on our infrastructure, increased maintenance costs for our systems, and greater strain on the environment."

During the warm, dry months, Metro Vancouver's water usage increases by 50 per cent and even more precious drinking water goes straight into the ground due to excessive outdoor watering.

"Your lawn only needs one hour of water per week to stay healthy, and that includes rainwater," Norton Daniel said. "If it rains, you don't need to water that week. And if you choose not to water at all, even better. Your grass will go golden and dormant, but will be back to emerald green in the spring."

There are four stages of watering restrictions that can go into effect throughout Metro Vancouver and are escalated based on the possibility of extended drought or water supply issues. The first stage is automatically implemented each spring.

This year, the restrictions were revised to reflect the fact that lawns tend to be overwatered. Stage 1 has been moved forward two weeks; it will start May 1 and run to October 15. Other changes include reducing the number of permitted watering days to two per week, and stricter watering restrictions for playing fields.

The new regulations also reflect a change in sprinkler use for gardens, which is allowed from 4:00am to 9:00am each day. Watering by hand is allowed any time for trees, shrubs, flowers, and gardens. As well, all hoses must have an automatic shut-off device, water must not run unnecessarily from hoses and taps or onto impermeable surfaces when watering lawns and plants, and irrigation systems must not be faulty, leaking or misdirected.

Metro Vancouver's member municipalities are also working the new Drinking Water Conservation Plan into their bylaws. The Township adopted its Drinking Water Conservation Bylaw in March.

Full watering restrictions and more information can be found at **[tol.ca/waterrestrictions](http://tol.ca/waterrestrictions)**.

"We want to make water conservation a social norm, like recycling has become over the years," Norton Daniel said. "Much like you wouldn't throw a pop can in the garbage, we hope people become more aware and get in the habit of not wasting precious drinking water."

Homes and businesses with built-in sprinkler systems are encouraged to change their settings to reflect the new regulations.

Those who have wells or use other water sources not connected to the municipal supply are not subject to the bylaw, but are encouraged to be good environmental stewards and follow the water use restrictions.

To report a water restriction violation, call the Township's Engineering Division at 604.532.7300.

*For more information, contact Township of Langley Environmental Coordinator Meaghan Norton Daniel at [mnortondaniel@tol.ca](mailto:mnortondaniel@tol.ca) or 604.533.6009.*