

Record UK drinking water demand sparks water use restrictions

June 16 2023



Parts of southern England will see restrictions on non-essential use of water.

Millions of people across parts of southern Britain will be banned from using garden hoses as a hot spell sparks record demand for drinking water, authorities said on Friday.

A temporary ban for people living in the southern Kent and Sussex areas will come into force on June 26 as forecasters predict the summer will see little rainfall.

South East Water said demand in June had broken records despite the company providing an extra 120 million liters of [water](#) a day.

A lack of water for sanitary facilities on Friday forced three schools in East Sussex to partially close.

"This situation has developed much more rapidly than last year," said chief executive David Hinton.

"Despite asking for customers' help to use water for essential uses only, regrettably we've now been left with no choice but to introduce this temporary use ban restriction to protect customers' supplies across Kent and Sussex," he added.

Southern Water, which supplies areas of Kent, also issued a warning on Thursday that demand for water in the county was "outstripping supply".

The provider said demand was 15 percent higher than expected for this time of year.

High demand, low supply

Hosepipe bans—formally called temporary use bans—are used by water companies to manage supplies at times of high demand and lower supply.

They limit non-essential usage such as watering gardens, filling paddling pools or washing cars with hosepipes.

Anyone found flouting the ban can face a fine of up to £1,000 (\$1,300).

England last year had its joint hottest summer on record, tied with 2018, according to the country's meteorological agency.

Temperatures climbed to more than 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) in some part of the country—a record.

Areas of England are already seeing plummeting levels in reservoirs due to prolonged dry spells.

In Scotland, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has put every region on a water scarcity alert, with warnings of significant shortages in a third of the country by the end of the month.

"Our rivers and lochs are under immense stress and it's clear further action will be needed to protect them," said SEPA's head of water planning Nathan Critchlow-Watton.

© 2023 AFP

Citation: Record UK drinking water demand sparks water use restrictions (2023, June 16) retrieved 1 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2023-06-uk-demand-restrictions.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.