

Understanding Drought and Water Scarcity

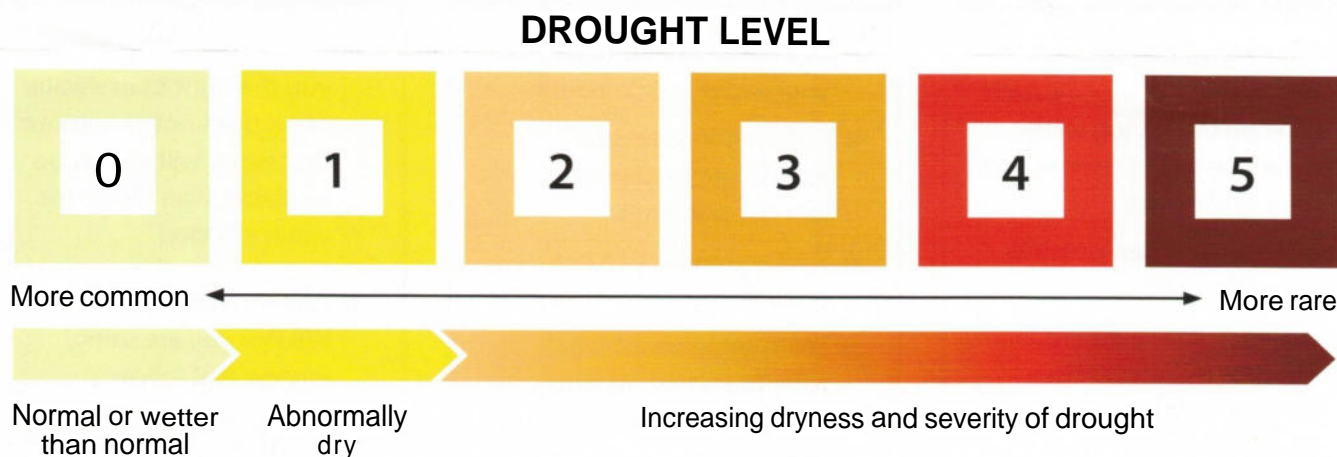
What is drought and water scarcity?

Drought is a naturally reoccurring period of abnormally dry weather that may result in water scarcity or other adverse impacts on people, aquatic ecosystems, wildlife or vegetation.

Water scarcity occurs when there is not enough water to meet the needs of people or ecosystems.

What do drought levels tell us?

Drought levels in B.C. tell us how dry it is, and how often we can expect it to be this dry.



Will I experience water scarcity?

Drought levels can help us understand our risk of experiencing water scarcity, but they don't tell the whole story. The actions you take to mitigate, prepare for, and respond to drought can help lower your risk of experiencing water scarcity, even at higher drought levels.

Understanding Groundwater

Groundwater in an aquifer can be connected to surface water. This means your well may be pulling water from a nearby river or stream.

During times of drought, this can worsen the impacts on a stream and cause long-lasting harm to fish, animals and the environment.

Keep this in mind as you plan your water use.

The type and properties of an aquifer can affect how much groundwater is available, how groundwater pumping will impact a stream, and how well we can predict these interactions.

To learn more about your aquifer, visit gov.bc.ca/Groundwater

Drought Information for Licensees 2025

Drought is becoming more frequent and severe, and it can impact our access to water. Low snowpack and less rain is bringing a high risk of drought again this year. We are getting ready for drought now and you can too.

Visit gov.bc.ca/Drought or scan the QR code for more on drought information and supports.



MITIGATE – REDUCE YOUR RISK

- Access supports to help save water and money, such as when improving water use efficiency or conducting risk assessments.
- Store water when possible, if your licence permits.
- We are working with federal and First Nations partners to reduce risks to fish during drought.

PREPARE – BE READY

- Get ready to shift or reduce your water use demands.
- Collect rainwater and recycle grey water for low-risk purposes.
- Farmers can adopt more efficient irrigation techniques.
- Learn more about what wildlife and fish in your watershed may be at risk of low flows.

FAST FACTS ON WATER RIGHTS

- 1. YOUR LICENCE** grants you the right to use water but it does not guarantee that water will always be available. Plan ahead for water scarcity!
- 2. KNOW HOW MUCH WATER** you are using. Review and follow your licence terms and conditions.
- 3. TEMPORARY ORDERS** restricting water use may be needed as a last resort to recover streamflow and protect at-risk fish from long-lasting harm that could take generations to recover.
- 4. HELP US MANAGE WATER FAIRLY.** Unauthorized water use can make low flow conditions worse during drought. To report unauthorized water use, or any other natural resource violation, call 1-877-952-7277.

KNOW WHEN TO RESPOND

- Visit the Drought Information Portal to stay up to date on drought conditions in your watershed.
- Consider scheduling water use with other licensees to reduce stress on streamflow.
- Check with your community on water restrictions as local conditions and water supply can vary.

SAVE WATER TOGETHER

- Using less water helps make sure there is enough to grow food, fight fires and for neighbours downstream.
- You may be asked to voluntarily reduce water use to help restore stream flow.
- We continue to support individuals, communities and industry to make the best use of water during drought.

EVERYONE CAN BE PREPARED AND HELP SAVE WATER.
Small changes make a big difference when we do them together.

