



# Summary of Oregon Drought Procedures, Processes and State Assistance

This document is intended to point out the actions that might be taken by Districts, Cities, Counties, State agencies and the Federal Government, if a serious drought should occur in Oregon. The report describes basic lines of authority and communications, and points out request procedures for state or federal assistance.

## Drought Operational Concepts

- The basic responsibility for initial response to provide emergency water supplies rests with the local government involved.
- When water supplies are not sufficient, the affected individual/ jurisdiction should contact the Local Emergency Management organization and request assistance.
- Local governments, in accordance with local emergency operations plans and the emergency powers granted by ORS Chapter 401, should then initiate and conduct emergency operations to the full extent of their resource capability.
- Where local resources are insufficient to cope with the situation, additional emergency assistance may be obtained from the State, in accordance with this plan.
- If both State and local resources are inadequate to cope with the emergency, the Governor will request additional assistance from the federal government.

## Implementation of Drought Emergency Plan:

**Request for Assistance:** Local governments requiring emergency assistance from State or major private resources should direct their requests to:

Oregon Emergency Management, Salem, 503-378-6377 or 1-800-452-0311. or Water Resources Department, Salem, 503-378-8455.

**Transportation:** Under the direction and control of the appropriate department head, the following State departments possess water transportation capabilities: Department of Forestry (non-potable), when not being used for firefighting, Department of Transportation, Department of Fish and Wildlife, Military Department.



## Implementation of Drought Emergency Plan (Continued):

**Storage** Emergency water storage is the responsibility of the requesting local government or political subdivision. Maximum use should be made of existing storage facilities.

**Treatment of Emergency Water Supplies-Human Consumption.** Treatment of emergency water supplies to ensure suitability for human consumption is the responsibility of the requesting local government or political subdivisions. The DHS-Health Services is responsible for evaluation of water quality for human consumption.

### Distribution of Emergency Water Supplies-Human Use.

Local governments or political subdivisions requesting emergency water supplies for human use shall:

Designate suitable delivery/distribution points where the requested water may be delivered.

Provide security for water transportation equipment/water supply as required.

The Water Resources Department shall be responsible for designation of “Water Points” where emergency water supplies may be obtained for further distribution to requesting local governments or political subdivisions.

## How the State Drought Declaration Process Works:



## How the Federal Drought Declaration Process Works:

Simplified disaster designation process in severe drought situations with a nearly automatic designation for any county reported in the U.S. Drought Monitor with level D2 for 8 consecutive weeks. Although the Governor can still initiate the process, this is no longer a requirement.



# State Agency Assistance in a Declared Drought Emergency

State agencies can supply assistance in a drought through normal agency programs. If major state agency involvement is anticipated, or if federal assistance might be needed, the Governor will declare a state “Emergency”. This declaration provides state agencies with more emergency fiscal flexibility and sets the stage for various federal disaster declarations if needed. Requests for state assistance may be to the agency directly, or, in an “Emergency”, through Oregon Emergency Management. Specific examples of state assistance by agency are:

Office of Emergency Management	Department of Agriculture	Oregon Business Development Department	Division of State Lands
<p>Coordinate actions to support counties.</p> <p>Receive requests from counties, per ORS 401.165. Counties work directly with cities to transmit emergency requests to OEM</p> <p>May coordinate direct assistance relative to emergency treatment, pipelines, and pumping of water.</p> <p>Advise the Governor on the need for a Governor’s declaration of a state/regional drought emergency</p> <p>Advise state &amp; local agencies on financial record keeping during emergency response.</p> <p>Advise the Governor, in conjunction with other state agencies, of the need for federal assistance or federal disaster declarations.</p> <p>Draft, for the Governor, requests for Presidential “Emergency” or “Major Disaster” declarations.</p> <p>Provide administrative and coordinative services related to a federal “Major Disaster” or “Emergency”.</p>	<p>May assist the Extension Service in providing estimates of the impact of the drought upon agriculture. Will work with OEM to obtain federal assistance if conditions are severe enough.</p>	<p>May provide, in conjunction with Employment Division (DHR) estimates on the projected loss of jobs due to drought.</p> <p>Assist in providing information to business and industry on water conservation.</p> <p>In a Presidential “Emergency” or “Major Disaster”, or an Agricultural Disaster, provide information to business and industry on federal loan programs available.</p>	<p>Will enforce the state’s removal-fill law ensuring that water users have appropriate permits, general authorization or emergency authorization for the altering, removal or fill of material from jurisdictional wetlands and waterways.</p> <p>May provide emergency authorizations for removal or fills within rivers and streams for such activities as “push-up dams” or excavation to allow free flow of water.</p>
	<p><b>OSU Extension Service</b></p> <p>Through the USDA Emergency Board, prepare information on agricultural drought management practices and on agricultural and domestic water conservation practices. Such information will be supplied to drought sufferers through various sources, including the news media.</p> <p>May provide, through the USDA Emergency Board and in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, estimates of drought impact on agriculture within the state.</p> <p>Provide information on federal assistance available to agricultural drought sufferers</p>		
		<p><b>Department of Energy</b></p> <p>Provide estimates of the impact of the drought upon electric power generation and expected power supplies.</p> <p>Advise the Governor on allocation of electric power which might need to be curtailed due to reduced hydroelectric generating capability.</p>	<p><b>Department of Environmental Quality</b></p> <p>May provide estimates of the impact of the drought upon water quality.</p> <p>Make recommendations concerning instream flows.</p> <p>Monitor, and, as needed, restrict the addition of pollutants into streams, lakes and estuaries.</p>



# State Agency Assistance in a Declared Drought Emergency

Water Resources Department	Oregon Health Authority	Department of Forestry
<p>Enforces the appropriate water use system, ensuring that water users having prior water rights are given preference over those having junior water rights. In so doing, an attempt is made to adjudicate disputes between water users and to ensure the conservation and greatest possible benefit from the existing water supplies.</p>	<p>Assist in water curtailment and conservation planning and require water curtailment and/or conservation plans as necessary. Coordinates dissemination of public information.</p>	<p>Inspect municipal water supplies and emergency water sources and facilities and evaluate or make appropriate recommendations concerning the safety of supplies for human consumption.</p>
<p>Protects State interests relative to instream flows for fish protection or water quality. This may require curtailment of water users having junior water rights to the date of establishment of the instream flows.</p>	<p><b>Department of Fish &amp; Wildlife</b></p> <p>May provide estimates of the impact of the drought upon fish and wildlife resources.</p>	<p>May provide advice on the sterilization of emergency water containers and transport equipment.</p>
<p>Provides information on the drought, its expected severity and its impact on water users and may assist water users in analyzing their future water supply situation and identifying alternate water sources.</p>	<p>Make recommendations for instream flows for fish protection.</p>	<p>May provide, in conjunction with the Water Resources Department, estimates of the impact of the drought on domestic or municipal water supplies.</p>
<p>Expedites issuance of temporary water right permit applications (ORS 536.750) requested for emergency water supply purposes, providing that the emergency nature of the request is specified.</p>	<p>Adjust fishing and hunting regulations as needed to compensate for the drought situation.</p>	<p><b>Department of Administrative Services</b></p> <p>Authorizes agencies to make purchase in an emergency without competitive bidding.</p>
<p>Monitors ground water conditions and estimates effects of the drought on ground water and related water users.</p>	<p>Develop procedures for providing feed and water for wildlife.</p>	<p><b>Military Department</b></p> <p>The National Guard may provide emergency water treatment and transport the treated water to augment or replace lost or depleted water supplies.</p>



# Other State Drought Assistance

**Tank trucks or trailers, or other vehicles capable of transporting, pumping or storing emergency water for human use may be provided by:**

- Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Department of Forestry (non-potable), when not being used for firefighting.
- Military Department
- Department of Transportation

**Information on railroad tank cars, usable to emergency water, and available through private industry may be provided by** the Public Utility Commission.

**Information on other equipment or services relating to emergency water, and available through private industry may be provided by:**

- Oregon Emergency Management (emergency equipment)
- Department of Administrative Services (equipment and supplies)
- Water Resources Department (well drilling, pipes, pumps)

**Assistance in the development, preparation, and presentation of public education, and public relations programs for power and water conservation may be provided by:**

- Governor's Office
- Department of Agriculture
- Economic and Community Development Department
- Oregon Educational Public Broadcast System
- Office of Energy
- Extension Service (Higher Education)
- Department of General Services (Printing Division)
- American Water Works Association
- League of Oregon Cities
- Water Resources Department
- Oregon Association of Water Utilities



# Federal Assistance in a Declared Drought Emergency

**Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)** While the Stafford Act provides the President with the latitude to provide assistance in circumstances that are warranted, implementation of the act at this time is not envisioned. Congress has expanded the programs of other federal agencies, primarily those of USDA, that the President need not enact the provisions of the Stafford Act.

**Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)** NRCS provides technical assistance through local conservation districts to farmers, ranchers, and local governments under various authorities. In drought-stricken areas, technical assistance emphasis is shifted to drought-related activities. Farmers and ranchers in drought-stricken counties should contact local NRCS or conservation offices to find out the specific technical and financial assistance available to them under NRCS programs. The Resources Inventory Division of the National Headquarters of NRCS compiles reports of short-duration natural phenomena, including droughts.

**Farm Service Agency** FSA has several programs which can alleviate drought and water shortage conditions in rural areas. The Agency's Emergency, Farm Ownership, and Operating loan programs permit loan funds to be used to enable farmers to establish wells. These programs can also be used to help farmers overcome financial difficulties. Loan guarantees available through FSA can also help agricultural lenders make loans for these purposes. An attached graphic displays FSA's loan programs and triggers in a drought.

**Rural Development (RD)** The USDA's Rural Development mission area administers Water and Sewer; Irrigation, Drainage and Soil Conservation; business and industry; and Community Facility loan programs. These loan programs may permit groups, including governmental bodies under some of these programs, to obtain loans for purposes which could contribute to alleviating water shortages in rural areas. Rural Development provides financial guidance to applicants. Technical advice is limited to accessing the feasibility and technical compliance requirements associated with a proposed loan. RD provides no technical guidance to the general public or governmental bodies, and does not have sufficient resources to provide significant help in the area.

**American Red Cross (ARC)** Red Cross activities may include 1. Providing technical consultation and guidance to local and state government agencies or officials when planning for the distribution of water from central sites to community residents. 2. Establishing and staff first-aid stations at community sites designated for the distribution of water to residents. 3. Coordinating voluntary agency activities designed to support local community response efforts. 4. Providing voluntary personnel to assist local government response actions.

If drought conditions should lead to the lack of hydrant pressure or sufficient water for fighting residential fires in a community, the Red Cross will provide its normal mass care services and individual assistance to the fire victims.

Red Cross does not provide assistance to commercial, industrial, or agricultural corporations with drought or water-shortage caused losses.



## Federal Assistance in a Declared Drought Emergency

**National Weather Service** The National Weather Service (NWS) provides information on current weather and river conditions, forecasts, and outlooks. When seasonal precipitation accumulations drop below 70 percent, biweekly statements will be issued by the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Portland, documenting the meteorological and hydrological conditions in the State of Oregon. When seasonal precipitation accumulations drop below 60 percent, weekly meteorological and hydrological conditions for the State of Oregon will be summarized. This statement will include Northwest River Forecast Center hydrologic forecasts and extended outlooks as available.

**Defense, Department of (DOD)** After all local, state and federal programs and assistance have been exhausted, the Secretary of the Army, for Civil Works, acting through the Chief of Engineers, has the authority to transport water or drill wells (for human consumption only) for communities in areas determined to be drought-distressed. The transportation of water is a temporary activity, that will be taken over by the recipients within 30 days. In addition, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has developed policy and guidance for the preparation of drought contingency plans as apart of the overall water control management system for USACE reservoirs. Permits obtained from Portland District for Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 activities, that are associated with drought relief activities, are expedited to the greatest extent possible.

**Health and Human Services, Department of (HHS)** Public Health Service personnel from the Food and Drug Administration, the Center for Disease Control, and the Health Resources and Services Administration are prepared to assist state health officials and other federal officials with health-related problems. The officials are located in the HHS Regional Offices or in the states, and can provide advice, guidance, and technical engineering assistance-related to the assessment of actual or potential health problems and provisions of appropriate medical care. Social Security Administration district offices are also located throughout the states and officials work closely with state agencies in providing whatever financial assistance and other human services may be available under existing programs.

**USGS Water Resources Division** Has the responsibility within the federal government for providing hydrologic information and appraising water resources. The objectives are to provide water information for economic development and best use of water resources, and to carry on research in hydrology. The technical information produced in the above investigations provides the physical basis for effective planning of programs for development and management of water resources, and efficient operation of interrelated projects at federal, state, and local levels.

**Small Business Administration (SBA)** Can provide disaster loans to homeowners and businesses to restore or replace their real and/or personal property damaged or destroyed in a physical disaster, when declared by the President, the Administrator of SBA, or in certain limited circumstances, by the Secretary of Agriculture. In the event of a declaration by the President, SBA assistance would be limited to providing funds for the drilling of replacement wells (or the redrilling of existing wells) in non-agriculture situations. This would include assistance to private, not public, water companies, provided that eligibility criteria are met. By statute, SBA can no longer provide disaster assistance to agricultural enterprises. Under SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loan authority, assistance could be rendered to small businesses without credit elsewhere available to cover additional expenses incurred as a result of the adverse effect on farmers/ranchers in the area, provided the applicant business can make a showing of substantial economic injury as a result of the disaster declared by the President or the Secretary of Agriculture. The SBA does not have the means to provide any technical assistance to the states to assist them in coping with this situation. SBA does not provide financial assistance to restore or replace municipal or other public water facilities.