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Lawn Watering Limited to One Day a Week for South Miami-Dade, Monroe Counties

Water supply for the area reaching critically low levels as record drought continues

West Palm Beach, FL - Due to critically low levels in wells that tap into the Biscayne Aquifer, Carol Ann Wehle, executive director of the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), has signed an emergency order implementing one-day-a-week landscape irrigation restrictions in South Miami-Dade and Monroe counties.

The [modified Phase III restrictions](#) apply to residents and businesses beginning at Southwest 216th Street, near Homestead, and extending south through the Florida Keys. The restrictions do the following for:

- **Odd-numbered addresses:** May water only on Saturdays from midnight to 10 a.m. and/or 4 p.m. to 11:59 p.m.
- **Even-numbered addresses:** May water only on Sundays from midnight to 10 a.m. and/or 4 p.m. to 11:59 p.m.
- **Systems with no street address and systems that irrigate both even and odd addresses within the same zones, including multi-family units, homeowners associations and shopping centers:** Follow the schedule for even-numbered addresses.

The emergency order creates exceptions for forms of irrigation that utilize water conservation techniques. Cisterns and low-volume systems — such as drip, bubble and micro-jet systems that apply water directly to root plant zones — may be used at any time but should be voluntarily reduced. In addition, irrigation with 100 percent reclaimed water is exempt.

The order also places restrictions on nurseries in Monroe County. Nursery owners may operate overhead irrigation systems seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. for inside or shaded plants and from 4 a.m. to 10 a.m. and/or 4 p.m. to 11:59 p.m. for outside plants.

The District is further protecting the area's water resources by:

- Requesting that the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority (FKAA) activate the Stock Island Seawater Desalination Plant on Key West. The plant can produce up to 1.5 million gallons of freshwater per day from ocean saltwater using reverse osmosis.
- Asking FKAA and other utilities to reduce water pressure in their systems where practicable.

- Urging utilities and local governments to step up enforcement of landscape irrigation restrictions.
- Sending SFWMD enforcement teams to Homestead, Florida City and Monroe County to ensure permitted water users are following restrictions.
- Requiring utilities to increase reporting of data from monitoring wells to track saltwater movement.

[Groundwater levels](#) in South Miami-Dade County — where several utilities draw water from the Biscayne Aquifer — have dropped to within the lowest 10 percent of their historical range. The aquifer typically rebounds quickly in response to persistent wet season rains, but the start of the season might not arrive for several weeks.

In response to the declining groundwater supply, Executive Director Wehle signed [another emergency order](#) earlier this week creating modified Phase I water use restrictions on agriculture, nurseries and golf courses in South Miami-Dade.

The 2008-2009 South Florida dry season so far ranks as the driest since recordkeeping began in 1932. From the beginning of November through the end of April, the 16-county District received an average of 4.47 inches of rain, creating a rainfall deficit of more than 10 inches. Water levels in monitoring wells across the District and in the primary regional storage systems — the Water Conservation Areas and Lake Okeechobee — are continuing to decline as evaporation rates increase with longer, hotter days.

The SFWMD is closely monitoring water levels across the region and is urging residents and businesses to conserve water and follow landscape irrigation restrictions to stretch available supplies. More information about irrigation limits by area is available on the District's [water restrictions](#) Web site. For water saving tips, visit www.savewaterfl.com.

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