



COMMISSION POLICY

Drought

Category: Water	Subcategory: Operations	Policy Number: 5.2.011
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Section I - Introduction

This policy was developed to be used as a guide by Grand Rapids Public Utilities (GRPU) personnel and to provide GRPU customers the greatest practicable latitude in the use of utilities services consistent with reliable, economical and safe service to all customers. The result of using this policy should be consistent, logical and fair treatment of GRPU customers in regard to water and wastewater (sanitary sewer) discussions.

Section 2 – Policy

The state of Minnesota defines drought as a period of abnormally dry and/or unusually hot weather sufficiently prolonged for the corresponding deficiency of water to cause a serious hydrologic imbalance. Drought impacts soil moisture, surface water, ground water as well as aquifers. Water usage and availability in the Grand Rapids area is critical for well-being, fire protection and life itself. In the event of drought conditions, GRPU reserves the right to be able to impart water restrictions to its customers, which includes other government public authorities.

GRPU accesses the public water supply via permitting through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Because water is determined to be a state asset, the MN DNR must carefully steward the water resources through all climate conditions. Therefore, the MN DNR has the authority to mandate water conservation measures (restrictions) through water suppliers (permittees) such as the GRPU.

Minnesota has a [statewide drought plan](#). This plan details a drought plan matrix that contains the drought phases (triggers) with the corresponding action for water users and suppliers. The phases are: non-drought, drought watch, drought warning, restrictive and emergency. The state maintains the current drought conditions through their [website](#). GRPU is part of the Mississippi Headwaters (0701) watershed.

There are actions required for water suppliers for every phase of the drought plan. Restrictions can come in many forms such as voluntary measures early on to an irrigation/sprinkling schedule all the way to limiting water usage to highest priorities defined by [Minnesota Statutes 103G.261](#).

GRPU will follow the required water suppliers' actions as dictated by the state of Minnesota and will communicate those requirements to its customers.

GRPU customers will be required to abide by said actions or face possible consequences. GRPU will use a three-step process to enforce any necessary measures. The first step will be education and communication; the second step will be education, communication and financial penalties. The third step will be education, communication, and shut-off of water services. The General Manager will approve the three-step enforcement process and can make an exception to the three-step process for unique and extraordinary valid purposes.

Tom Stanley
GRPU President

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GRPUC Secretary

POLICY HISTORY:

Adopted: August 16, 2023