

Town of New Castle

Emergency Drought Response Plan

January 2026

Introduction:

The Town of New Castle and its surrounding watershed is experiencing drought conditions of significant concern. During a drought, water supplies will be below normal, requiring all customers to reduce their water use for a period of time. This Emergency Drought Response Plan has been developed to provide the Town with a proactive, effective, and systematic approach to reduce the impacts of a water shortage. This plan focuses conservation efforts on our largest potable water user, outdoor irrigation. This plan recommends a phased response to worsening drought conditions and has two components: drought triggers and response actions.

In Addition to this document, the Town of New Castle Utility Staff has developed a detailed Standard Operating Procedure for the blending of East Elk Creek and Colorado River Water. This treatment approach will be necessary if we enter a Phase Two scenario. The scope of this internal document includes:

- Augmentation Station intake operations.
- Treatment process control procedures.
- Chemical dosing and inventory planning.
- Normal and increased production conditions

Background Data:

- The Town of New Castle's average summertime water demand is 1.8 million gallons per day, or 54 million gallons per month.
- Outdoor landscape is our single largest consumer of potable water. During the summer months, 83% of the potable water that we produce goes towards irrigating. That equates to approximately 1.5 million gallons per day, or 45 million gallons per month.
- Only 300,000 gallons per day, or 9 million gallons per month of potable water is required to provide our residents with all their indoor needs.
- Our Bulk Water sales account for 2% of our monthly total consumption, or about 1 million gallons per month.
- Our Construction Water sales account for less than 0.05% of our monthly total consumption, or about 200,000 gallons per month.

- The Town of New Castle has two water rights that can be diverted from East Elk Creek. The first is the New Castle Water Works System. This right is the #1 domestic water right, but not the overall most senior right on the creek. This water right has been “called” in the past, making it unreliable in severe drought conditions. The second water right is the Coryell Ditch. This is a senior water right and is not likely to be “called”.
- Our New Castle Water Works System water rights have the potential to provide 1.6 million gallons per day, or 48 million gallons per month.
- Our Coryell Ditch water rights have the potential to provide approximately 1.1 million gallons per day, or 33 million gallons per month.
- As an alternative supply, the Town has two water rights that it can divert from the Colorado River. The first water right is the New Castle Augmentation. The second water right is the New Castle Augmentation 1st Enlargement. Combined, both water rights can provide 6.4 million gallons of water per day, or 192 million gallons per month.
- The New Castle Augmentation water rights are not senior water rights, but they are secured with our Rudi Reservoir Water diversion rights. These water rights are nearly guaranteed to be available, even in the most severe drought conditions.
- The New Castle Augmentation water rights are conveyed from the river to the water treatment plant by way of the Augmentation Station.
- 70% of the capacity in our water storage tanks is intended for emergency fire flows. The other 30% provides volume for fluctuations in water supply verses water demand.

Phase One - Voluntary Conservation

- Triggers:
 1. During the spring season as a preventative measure.
- Response:
 1. Public Education Campaign: The Town will initiate a public information campaign to educate all water users of the Best Practices for outdoor watering. This information campaign should include multiple forms of media including the internet, electronic message boards, and paper pamphlets (door hangers).

Phase Two - Mandatory Watering Restrictions

- Triggers:

Watering restrictions shall be in effect yearly commencing at twelve a.m. on May first and continuing until twelve a.m. on October first.

- Response:

1. Public Education Campaign: The Town will initiate a public information campaign to educate all water users of the Phase Two Summer Water Restrictions. This information campaign should include multiple forms of media including the internet, electronic message boards, and paper pamphlets (door hangers) Phase Two Summer Water Restrictions are defined below:

A. Application. The watering restrictions apply to all users of the town's potable and raw water systems.

B. Irrigation Restrictions. Summer irrigation shall be limited to four hours per day, between the hours of twelve a.m. to ten a.m. or six p.m. to midnight and shall be limited to every other day based on odd and even address numbers. Addresses ending in odd numbers may irrigate on odd days, and addresses ending in even numbers may irrigate on even days. The irrigation restriction applies to the irrigation of lawns, trees, shrubs and other vegetation planted in the ground.

C. Bulk Water Sales. Town water may be purchased at a designated bulk water station with no restrictions

D. Construction Water. Town water may be used for construction purposes from a hydrant or otherwise, including but not limited to tire washing, dust suppression, and to clean construction debris from streets, only with a valid permit from the town or pursuant to an authorized sale of bulk water.

2. Enforcement: Enforcement should include monitoring and reporting. Local law enforcement will patrol neighborhoods looking for violations, or residents can report infractions.
3. Fine Schedule. The following fines shall be issued for violations of this section:

- A. First offense during a calendar year: written warning.
- B. Second offense during a calendar year: twenty-five dollar (\$25.00) fine.
- C. Third offense during a calendar year: one hundred dollar (\$100.00) fine.
- D. Additional offenses during the same calendar year: two hundred dollars (\$200.00) fine, plus the town may disconnect water service until the fine is paid and the offender has provided written assurances of future compliance. The town may assess a reconnection fee as set by the town's fee schedule.

Phase Three – Emergency Rationing

- Triggers:
 - 1. When the potable water demand exceeds potable water supply to the point that any of our water storage tanks drops below 85% of full capacity
- Response:
 - 1. Public Education Campaign: The Town will initiate a public information campaign to educate all water users of the Phase Three Summer Water Restrictions. This information campaign should include multiple forms of media including the internet, electronic message boards, and paper pamphlets (door hangers) Phase Three Summer Water Restrictions are defined below:
 - A. Application. The watering restrictions apply to all users of the town's potable and raw water systems.
 - B. Irrigation Restrictions. Phase Three irrigation shall be limited to four hours per day, between the hours of eight p.m. to midnight. Irrigation watering shall be limited to two days per week. Addresses ending in odd numbers may irrigate on Mondays and Fridays, and addresses ending in even numbers may irrigate on Wednesdays and Sundays. The irrigation restriction applies to the irrigation of lawns, trees, shrubs and other vegetation planted in the ground.
 - C. Bulk Water Sales: To prioritize local needs, bulk water sales will not be permitted
 - D. Construction Water. Town water may be used for construction purposes from a hydrant or otherwise, including but not limited to tire washing, dust suppression, and to clean construction debris

from streets, only with a valid permit from the town or pursuant to an authorized sale of bulk water.

- Enforcement: Enforcement should include monitoring and reporting. Local law enforcement will patrol neighborhoods looking for violations, or residents can report infractions.
- Fine Schedule. Same as Phase Two

Phase Four – Critical Shortage

- Triggers:
 1. When potable water demand exceeds the potable water supply capacity to the point where the storage capacity of any potable water tank drops below 70% of full.
- Response:
 1. Public Education Campaign: The Town will initiate a public information campaign to educate all water users of the Phase Four Summer Water Restrictions. This information campaign should include multiple forms of media including the internet, electronic message boards, and paper pamphlets (door hangers) Phase Four Summer Water Restrictions are defined below:
 - A. Application. The watering restrictions apply to all users of the town's potable and raw water systems.
 - B. Irrigation Restrictions. All outdoor landscape irrigation shall be prohibited. The irrigation restriction applies to the irrigation of lawns, trees, shrubs and other vegetation planted in the ground.
 - C. Construction Water. Water for construction purposes shall be prohibited.
 - D. Bulk Water Sales: Bulk water sales shall be prohibited.
- Enforcement: Enforcement should include monitoring and reporting. Local law enforcement will patrol neighborhoods looking for violations, or residents can report infractions.
- Fine Schedule. Same as Phase Two