

Summary of Proposed Drought and Conservation Changes

SAWS recently identified four areas concerning water conservation that needed improvement. The changes listed in the table below have been proposed to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and fairness of SAWS conservation rules. Please note that Section 4 and Section 5 of the Utility Service Regulations are new. Section 4 addresses Conservation and Drought and is largely a reflection of the City Code. Section 4 includes those changes proposed in City Code. Section 5 addresses customer notifications.

Area	Proposed Changes Appear in City Code Section	Proposed Changes Appear in Utility Service Regulation Section
Purpose of Proposed Change	-	1.2 was updated to reflect a broadening of purpose for the USR.
<p>Non-Compliance Charge A condition of service rule requiring all customers to follow drought rules or otherwise be subject to a Non-Compliance Charge that would appear on water bills. This would replace the municipal citation process and enable SAWS to hold all customers accountable whether they are inside or outside of City limits.</p> <p>Note: Customers receiving their first violation may avoid the charge by electing to take a water education class.</p>	Sections 34-135 and a Non-Compliance Charge Schedule at the end of Chapter 34.	4.8.9. If a customer believes a mistake was made, they could appeal the charge under the process described in section 4.9 of the Utility Service Regulations. SAWS is currently working with a highly experienced consultant to develop the charge and propose it to City Council. City Council will have to approve it and incorporate it in City Code.
<p>Drought Surcharge Implement a Stage 3 high use surcharge instead of every other week watering. Most of the community follows the rules, but during drought about 10% of the community does not. This surcharge sends high users a financial signal to reduce outdoor water use.</p>	<p>Section 34-128.2 and a Non-Compliance Charge Schedule at the end of Chapter 34.</p> <p>Stage 4 existing drought surcharge remains and every other week watering is implemented.</p>	4.8.10 of the Utility Service Regulations. Just like the Non-Compliance Charge, SAWS is currently working with a highly experienced consultant to develop the charge and propose it to City Council. City Council will have to approve it and incorporate it in City Code.
<p>Drip Irrigation Limit drip irrigation to watering one day a week on the designated watering day. Drip irrigation applies water at a rate similar to spray irrigation which is limited to one day per week. The current rules permit daily watering with drip and are viewed as a “loophole” that allows extra watering. Additionally, many people use excessive water as they mistakenly believe it needs to run longer.</p>	<p>34-271 Redefines Irrigation System to include drip system lines.</p> <p>34-273(2) eliminated drip and microspray as tools to expand irrigable area beyond the 10,000 square foot limit with a SAWS approved residential plan.</p> <p>continues on next page...</p> <p>34-323 Removed drip any time or day other than for use in vegetable gardens</p>	4.6.3 – 4.6.4 reflects the elimination of drip irrigation loophole as is proposed as a change in City Code.

	34-332 Removed drip any day or time, other than for vegetable gardens	
Irrigation System Quality Improve the quality of new home irrigation systems because data shows that inefficient, badly designed irrigation can cause unnecessarily high-water use.	-	4.4.1 introductory statement enables SAWS to engage in irrigation installations by enforcing state requirements. Provisions 4.4.1(i)-(iii) are already in City Code Section 34-273.
Alignment to EAA Stages Misalignment between the Edwards Aquifer Authority and SAWS drought stages causes customer confusion and makes it difficult to convey the true severity of drought.	Section 34-319 makes entry to Stage 3 automatic when the EAA enters drought stage 3. Aligns Stage IV to EAA stage IV.	4.6.5 and 4.6.9 reflects proposed code changes
Flow Restrictors This is a practice used by other utilities around Texas to reduce flow and thereby reduce water waste. This would be applied at locations that have repeated or continued violations, documented by trained personnel and only after the account holder has received notice and has had an opportunity to come into compliance.	-	4.8.8 of the utility service regulation would permit the installation of flow restrictors where needed.
Access to Premises Eliminates time restriction language so that SAWS trained personnel may perform all necessary maintenance, repairs, and inspections concerning conservation when necessary. Also specifically establishes that it is an automatic violation of Article IV to refuse SAWS trained personnel entry.	34-297	4.8.3 and related 4.8.2 which address the responsible party for denial of access
Turfgrass Soil Support Clarifies that the four-inch soil requirement must be met after sod is laid meaning that once the sod is settled and watered, there must be four-inch deep soil. Also adds a minimum requirement for soil organic matter as characterized in the definitions section.	34-275	4.3.3 mirrors the proposed code changes
Enforcement Provisions	Consolidated enforcement provisions to Article IV, Division II (begins at section 34-287).	4.8 and 4.9 reflect proposed code changes

Consolidated enforcement provisions to one section and broadened potential application beyond water waste.	Moved section 34-277(a) to section 34-287; modified language to refer to Article IV. Added the definition of Violation in section 34-271.	
Variances Simplified the procedural language and clarified SAWS conservation’s ability to exercise reasonable flexibility in issuing variances	Section 34-276 updated the variance process to reflect what typically occurs. Eliminated examples and other unnecessary language. Updated variance provisions for new landscapes in section 34-332 Table II – Use Restrictions.	4.6.9 and 4.7 reflect proposed code changes
Watering Times Changing watering window during Stage II and later to help manage the community’s energy needs.	34-323 and 34-322 Table B	4.6.4 and 4.6.9(ii)

Other clarifications and minor changes were made throughout both documents. These include clarifications, grammatical corrections, consistency of terminology, corrected internal references, alignment definitions across sections of Code and between the Code and the Utility Service Regulations, additional provisions to meet federal water quality requirements, and deletions of provisions ineffective provisions such as pool and hot tub use restrictions. All changes are reflected in the drafts posted to WateringRules.com even if they do not appear in this summary chart.