

## **How the Water Use Plan Works in Practice**

What does it mean when Central Iowa Water Works (CIWW) has entered a “Water Watch” or “Water Alert”?

The CIWW Water Use Plan is more than a policy, it is a coordinated, step-by-step approach to protecting our region’s water supply. Here is how it works in real time.

### **Monitoring Conditions Every Day**

CIWW and its operating partners continuously monitor:

- Water demand across the region
- Treatment plant capacity
- Source water quality
- Source water quantity
- System performance and operations

Issues such as demand approaching system limits, or conditions like water quality or supply becoming a concern, prompts CIWW prepares to take action.

### **Making the Call**

When certain thresholds are reached, such as demand nearing 90% of system capacity, CIWW leadership takes measured steps to further evaluate the situation for action.

- Technical experts assess system conditions and make recommendations to the CIWW Board of Trustees for action
- The Board determines whether to activate a stage of the Water Use Plan based on data and real-time system needs
- Actions are then communicated to the region

### **Communicating Across the Region**

Once a stage is declared, communication is immediate and coordinated:

- CIWW issues public guidance through a press release, social media channels and other available platforms
- Member agencies share consistent messaging with customers
- Updates are provided through media, social platforms, and local governments
- Emergency Management partners may assist with public notification

The goal is clear: Everyone receives the same information in an organized, time-sensitive manner.

### **What It Means for the Public**

The actions requested, or required, depend on the stage.

#### **Early Stages (Voluntary):**

- Reduce lawn watering by 25% or 50%, based on the need of the situation
- Water only when needed and on designated days
- Fix leaks and avoid unnecessary water use

#### **Later Stages (Mandatory):**

- Lawn watering is banned
- High water-use activities may be restricted
- Additional conservation measures may be required

These steps focus on reducing outdoor water use, which can make up a significant portion of peak demand.

### **Local Implementation**

While CIWW sets the regional strategy, local utilities and communities put it into action:

- Customers are notified directly by cities and water providers
- Local rules and enforcement measures may be implemented
- Agencies work with large water users to reduce demand

These steps ensure the plan works effectively at both the regional and local level.

### **When Enforcement Is Needed**

In more severe stages, enforcement may be required to protect the system:

- Warnings or notices may be issued for violations
- Continued noncompliance can result in fines or temporary service interruptions
- Member agencies are also held accountable for implementing required measures

These steps help ensure fairness and effectiveness across the region.

## **Adjusting as Conditions Change**

The Water Use Plan is designed to be flexible.

- CIWW continuously monitors conditions
- Stages can be increased, reduced, or lifted as needed
- Adjustments can be made based on real-time data and system performance

This allows CIWW to respond quickly and appropriately to changing conditions.

## **A Real-World Example**

On a hot, dry summer week, demand may rise quickly due to lawn watering. CIWW may declare a Stage I Water Watch based on technical expert recommendations and the Board's authorization to execute it. This means:

1. Residents are asked to reduce outdoor watering
2. Demand and system performance are monitored
3. Adjustments may be made as conditions improve or worsen

## **Working Together for Reliable Water**

The Water Use Plan is how CIWW ensures that safe, reliable drinking water is available – even during periods of high demand or system stress.

By working together, small changes in water use can have a big impact on the system.

It is a shared effort across communities, utilities, and residents – because when it comes to water, we are truly Stronger Together.