



What is a Drought Contingency Plan?

A drought contingency plan or DCP is a strategy or combination of strategies that a water supplier, such as a city, develops and implements to monitor and respond to a drought or other temporary water supply shortage that can severely disrupt the supply of water to customers.

What is the purpose of a DCP?

The purpose of a DCP is to conserve available water supply in times of drought and temporary water supply shortages by limiting the water available for non-essential uses, such as outdoor watering, and maintain supplies for essential uses, such as drinking water, sanitation, and fire protection, in order to protect and preserve public health, welfare, and safety.

Who is required to have a DCP?

All retail public water suppliers, wholesale water suppliers, and irrigation districts are required to have a DCP. If a public water system is a retail public water supplier, it is required to have a DCP.

How is a DCP developed?

DCPs are developed at the local level, by the water supplier, and focus on potential issues related to their water system's production capacity or water supply sources. Each DCP is unique to each water supplier's specific needs and water supply operations.

What does a DCP include?

A DCP typically includes drought stages and response measures that restrict the use of water within a water supplier's system under specific conditions. A DCP includes triggers for each drought stage, which are typically based on water supply or demand. The "triggering" criteria is information that the water supplier monitors to determine when to initiate a specific stage in the plan. The DCP also includes responses for each stage and targets for water use reductions for each stage of the plan.

How often are DCPs revised?

A DCP may be revised as often as necessary as triggers may change over time. TCEQ has information on [DCP Submittal Requirements](#)¹ on its website.

How are DCPs enforced?

Each water supplier is responsible for overseeing implementation and enforcement of their DCP. The DCP includes procedures for enforcement of mandatory water use restrictions, including penalties such as fines and water rate surcharges, for violations of water use restrictions. Water suppliers implementing water use restrictions as part of their DCPs are required to notify their customers of the restrictions. Wholesale and retail public water suppliers are required to notify TCEQ within 5 days of implementation of mandatory water use restrictions. TCEQ has information on [Public Water Systems During Drought](#)² on its website.

What is the role of TCEQ?

TCEQ does not have the authority to require water systems to implement their DCPs in times of drought. TCEQ reviews DCPs when they are submitted to ensure that the DCP meets the requirements in TCEQ's rules ([Title 30 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 288](#)).³

TCEQ provides technical support to water suppliers that are implementing or revising DCPs but does not have a role in determining what water restrictions are implemented at the local level or what restrictions should be applied.

TCEQ investigators check for DCPs as part of a TCEQ inspection. TCEQ may initiate enforcement action against a water supplier for:

- Not submitting a DCP for review when required by TCEQ's rules; or
- Not having a DCP or maintaining a DCP on-site.

For additional information

For information on preparing a DCP, including deadlines, requirements, and forms, visit TCEQ's [Drought Contingency Plans webpage](#).⁴

¹ www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/water_rights/wr_technical-resources/contingency.html

² www.tceq.texas.gov/response/drought/index.html/response/drought/drought-and-public-water-systems

³ texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac

⁴ www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/water_rights/wr_technical-resources/contingency.html