

**SUBCHAPTER A: WATER CONSERVATION PLANS**  
**§§288.1 - 288.7**  
**Effective December 6, 2012**

**§288.1. Definitions.**

The following words and terms, when used in this chapter, shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

(1) Agricultural or Agriculture--Any of the following activities:

(A) cultivating the soil to produce crops for human food, animal feed, or planting seed or for the production of fibers;

(B) the practice of floriculture, viticulture, silviculture, and horticulture, including the cultivation of plants in containers or non-soil media by a nursery grower;

(C) raising, feeding, or keeping animals for breeding purposes or for the production of food or fiber, leather, pelts, or other tangible products having a commercial value;

(D) raising or keeping equine animals;

(E) wildlife management; and

(F) planting cover crops, including cover crops cultivated for transplantation, or leaving land idle for the purpose of participating in any governmental program or normal crop or livestock rotation procedure.

(2) Agricultural use--Any use or activity involving agriculture, including irrigation.

(3) Best management practices--Voluntary efficiency measures that save a quantifiable amount of water, either directly or indirectly, and that can be implemented within a specific time frame.

(4) Conservation--Those practices, techniques, and technologies that reduce the consumption of water, reduce the loss or waste of water, improve the efficiency in the use of water, or increase the recycling and reuse of water so that a water supply is made available for future or alternative uses.

(5) Commercial use--The use of water by a place of business, such as a hotel, restaurant, or office building. This does not include multi-family residences or agricultural, industrial, or institutional users.

(6) Drought contingency plan--A strategy or combination of strategies for temporary supply and demand management responses to temporary and potentially recurring water supply shortages and other water supply emergencies. A drought contingency plan may be a separate document identified as such or may be contained within another water management document(s).

(7) Industrial use--The use of water in processes designed to convert materials of a lower order of value into forms having greater usability and commercial value, and the development of power by means other than hydroelectric, but does not include agricultural use.

(8) Institutional Use--The use of water by an establishment dedicated to public service, such as a school, university, church, hospital, nursing home, prison or government facility. All facilities dedicated to public service are considered institutional regardless of ownership.

(9) Irrigation--The agricultural use of water for the irrigation of crops, trees, and pastureland, including, but not limited to, golf courses and parks which do not receive water from a public water supplier.

(10) Irrigation water use efficiency--The percentage of that amount of irrigation water which is beneficially used by agriculture crops or other vegetation relative to the amount of water diverted from the source(s) of supply. Beneficial uses of water for irrigation purposes include, but are not limited to, evapotranspiration needs for vegetative maintenance and growth, salinity management, and leaching requirements associated with irrigation.

(11) Mining use--The use of water for mining processes including hydraulic use, drilling, washing sand and gravel, and oil field repressuring.

(12) Municipal use--The use of potable water provided by a public water supplier as well as the use of sewage effluent for residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, institutional, and wholesale uses.

(13) Nursery grower--A person engaged in the practice of floriculture, viticulture, silviculture, and horticulture, including the cultivation of plants in containers or nonsoil media, who grows more than 50% of the products that the person either sells or leases, regardless of the variety sold, leased, or grown. For the purpose of

this definition, grow means the actual cultivation or propagation of the product beyond the mere holding or maintaining of the item prior to sale or lease, and typically includes activities associated with the production or multiplying of stock such as the development of new plants from cuttings, grafts, plugs, or seedlings.

(14) Pollution--The alteration of the physical, thermal, chemical, or biological quality of, or the contamination of, any water in the state that renders the water harmful, detrimental, or injurious to humans, animal life, vegetation, or property, or to the public health, safety, or welfare, or impairs the usefulness or the public enjoyment of the water for any lawful or reasonable purpose.

(15) Public water supplier--An individual or entity that supplies water to the public for human consumption.

(16) Residential use--The use of water that is billed to single and multi-family residences, which applies to indoor and outdoor uses.

(17) Residential gallons per capita per day--The total gallons sold for residential use by a public water supplier divided by the residential population served and then divided by the number of days in the year.

(18) Regional water planning group--A group established by the Texas Water Development Board to prepare a regional water plan under Texas Water Code, §16.053.

(19) Retail public water supplier--An individual or entity that for compensation supplies water to the public for human consumption. The term does not include an individual or entity that supplies water to itself or its employees or tenants when that water is not resold to or used by others.

(20) Reuse--The authorized use for one or more beneficial purposes of use of water that remains unconsumed after the water is used for the original purpose of use and before that water is either disposed of or discharged or otherwise allowed to flow into a watercourse, lake, or other body of state-owned water.

(21) Total use--The volume of raw or potable water provided by a public water supplier to billed customer sectors or nonrevenue uses and the volume lost during conveyance, treatment, or transmission of that water.

(22) Total gallons per capita per day (GPCD)--The total amount of water diverted and/or pumped for potable use divided by the total permanent population divided by the days of the year. Diversion volumes of reuse as defined in this chapter

shall be credited against total diversion volumes for the purposes of calculating GPCD for targets and goals.

(23) Water conservation plan--A strategy or combination of strategies for reducing the volume of water withdrawn from a water supply source, for reducing the loss or waste of water, for maintaining or improving the efficiency in the use of water, for increasing the recycling and reuse of water, and for preventing the pollution of water. A water conservation plan may be a separate document identified as such or may be contained within another water management document(s).

(24) Wholesale public water supplier--An individual or entity that for compensation supplies water to another for resale to the public for human consumption. The term does not include an individual or entity that supplies water to itself or its employees or tenants as an incident of that employee service or tenancy when that water is not resold to or used by others, or an individual or entity that conveys water to another individual or entity, but does not own the right to the water which is conveyed, whether or not for a delivery fee.

(25) Wholesale use--Water sold from one entity or public water supplier to other retail water purveyors for resale to individual customers.

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Effective December 6, 2012

### **§288.2. Water Conservation Plans for Municipal Uses by Public Water Suppliers.**

(a) A water conservation plan for municipal water use by public water suppliers must provide information in response to the following. If the plan does not provide information for each requirement, the public water supplier shall include in the plan an explanation of why the requirement is not applicable.

(1) Minimum requirements. All water conservation plans for municipal uses by public water suppliers must include the following elements:

(A) a utility profile in accordance with the Texas Water Use Methodology, including, but not limited to, information regarding population and customer data, water use data (including total gallons per capita per day (GPCD) and residential GPCD), water supply system data, and wastewater system data;

(B) a record management system which allows for the classification of water sales and uses into the most detailed level of water use data currently available to it, including, if possible, the sectors listed in clauses (i) - (vi) of this subparagraph.

Any new billing system purchased by a public water supplier must be capable of reporting detailed water use data as described in clauses (i) - (vi) of this subparagraph;

(i) residential;

(I) single family;

(II) multi-family;

(ii) commercial;

(iii) institutional;

(iv) industrial;

(v) agricultural; and,

(vi) wholesale.

(C) specific, quantified five-year and ten-year targets for water savings to include goals for water loss programs and goals for municipal use in total GPCD and residential GPCD. The goals established by a public water supplier under this subparagraph are not enforceable;

(D) metering device(s), within an accuracy of plus or minus 5.0% in order to measure and account for the amount of water diverted from the source of supply;

(E) a program for universal metering of both customer and public uses of water, for meter testing and repair, and for periodic meter replacement;

(F) measures to determine and control water loss (for example, periodic visual inspections along distribution lines; annual or monthly audit of the water system to determine illegal connections; abandoned services; etc.);

(G) a program of continuing public education and information regarding water conservation;

(H) a water rate structure which is not "promotional," i.e., a rate structure which is cost-based and which does not encourage the excessive use of water;

(I) a reservoir systems operations plan, if applicable, providing for the coordinated operation of reservoirs owned by the applicant within a common watershed or river basin in order to optimize available water supplies; and

(J) a means of implementation and enforcement which shall be evidenced by:

(i) a copy of the ordinance, resolution, or tariff indicating official adoption of the water conservation plan by the water supplier; and

(ii) a description of the authority by which the water supplier will implement and enforce the conservation plan; and

(K) documentation of coordination with the regional water planning groups for the service area of the public water supplier in order to ensure consistency with the appropriate approved regional water plans.

(2) Additional content requirements. Water conservation plans for municipal uses by public drinking water suppliers serving a current population of 5,000 or more and/or a projected population of 5,000 or more within the next ten years subsequent to the effective date of the plan must include the following elements:

(A) a program of leak detection, repair, and water loss accounting for the water transmission, delivery, and distribution system;

(B) a requirement in every wholesale water supply contract entered into or renewed after official adoption of the plan (by either ordinance, resolution, or tariff), and including any contract extension, that each successive wholesale customer develop and implement a water conservation plan or water conservation measures using the applicable elements in this chapter. If the customer intends to resell the water, the contract between the initial supplier and customer must provide that the contract for the resale of the water must have water conservation requirements so that each successive customer in the resale of the water will be required to implement water conservation measures in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.

(3) Additional conservation strategies. Any combination of the following strategies shall be selected by the water supplier, in addition to the minimum requirements in paragraphs (1) and (2) of this subsection, if they are necessary to achieve the stated water conservation goals of the plan. The commission may require that any of the following strategies be implemented by the water supplier if the commission determines that the strategy is necessary to achieve the goals of the water conservation plan:

(A) conservation-oriented water rates and water rate structures such as uniform or increasing block rate schedules, and/or seasonal rates, but not flat rate or decreasing block rates;

(B) adoption of ordinances, plumbing codes, and/or rules requiring water-conserving plumbing fixtures to be installed in new structures and existing structures undergoing substantial modification or addition;

(C) a program for the replacement or retrofit of water-conserving plumbing fixtures in existing structures;

(D) reuse and/or recycling of wastewater and/or graywater;

(E) a program for pressure control and/or reduction in the distribution system and/or for customer connections;

(F) a program and/or ordinance(s) for landscape water management;

(G) a method for monitoring the effectiveness and efficiency of the water conservation plan; and

(H) any other water conservation practice, method, or technique which the water supplier shows to be appropriate for achieving the stated goal or goals of the water conservation plan.

(b) A water conservation plan prepared in accordance with 31 TAC §363.15 (relating to Required Water Conservation Plan) of the Texas Water Development Board and substantially meeting the requirements of this section and other applicable commission rules may be submitted to meet application requirements in accordance with a memorandum of understanding between the commission and the Texas Water Development Board.

(c) A public water supplier for municipal use shall review and update its water conservation plan, as appropriate, based on an assessment of previous five-year and ten-year targets and any other new or updated information. The public water supplier for municipal use shall review and update the next revision of its water conservation plan every five years to coincide with the regional water planning group.

**§288.3. Water Conservation Plans for Industrial or Mining Use.**

(a) A water conservation plan for industrial or mining uses of water must provide information in response to each of the following elements. If the plan does not provide information for each requirement, the industrial or mining water user shall include in the plan an explanation of why the requirement is not applicable.

(1) a description of the use of the water in the production process, including how the water is diverted and transported from the source(s) of supply, how the water is utilized in the production process, and the estimated quantity of water consumed in the production process and therefore unavailable for reuse, discharge, or other means of disposal;

(2) specific, quantified five-year and ten-year targets for water savings and the basis for the development of such goals. The goals established by industrial or mining water users under this paragraph are not enforceable;

(3) a description of the device(s) and/or method(s) within an accuracy of plus or minus 5.0% to be used in order to measure and account for the amount of water diverted from the source of supply;

(4) leak-detection, repair, and accounting for water loss in the water distribution system;

(5) application of state-of-the-art equipment and/or process modifications to improve water use efficiency; and

(6) any other water conservation practice, method, or technique which the user shows to be appropriate for achieving the stated goal or goals of the water conservation plan.

(b) An industrial or mining water user shall review and update its water conservation plan, as appropriate, based on an assessment of previous five-year and ten-year targets and any other new or updated information. The industrial or mining water user shall review and update the next revision of its water conservation plan every five years to coincide with the regional water planning group.

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**§288.4. Water Conservation Plans for Agricultural Use.**

(a) A water conservation plan for agricultural use of water must provide information in response to the following subsections. If the plan does not provide information for each requirement, the agricultural water user must include in the plan an explanation of why the requirement is not applicable.

(1) For an individual agricultural user other than irrigation:

(A) a description of the use of the water in the production process, including how the water is diverted and transported from the source(s) of supply, how the water is utilized in the production process, and the estimated quantity of water consumed in the production process and therefore unavailable for reuse, discharge, or other means of disposal;

(B) specific, quantified five-year and ten-year targets for water savings and the basis for the development of such goals. The goals established by agricultural water users under this subparagraph are not enforceable;

(C) a description of the device(s) and/or method(s) within an accuracy of plus or minus 5.0% to be used in order to measure and account for the amount of water diverted from the source of supply;

(D) leak-detection, repair, and accounting for water loss in the water distribution system;

(E) application of state-of-the-art equipment and/or process modifications to improve water use efficiency; and

(F) any other water conservation practice, method, or technique which the user shows to be appropriate for achieving the stated goal or goals of the water conservation plan.

(2) For an individual irrigation user:

(A) a description of the irrigation production process which shall include, but is not limited to, the type of crops and acreage of each crop to be irrigated, monthly irrigation diversions, any seasonal or annual crop rotation, and soil types of the land to be irrigated;

(B) a description of the irrigation method, or system, and equipment including pumps, flow rates, plans, and/or sketches of the system layout;

(C) a description of the device(s) and/or methods, within an accuracy of plus or minus 5.0%, to be used in order to measure and account for the amount of water diverted from the source of supply;

(D) specific, quantified five-year and ten-year targets for water savings including, where appropriate, quantitative goals for irrigation water use efficiency and a pollution abatement and prevention plan. The goals established by an individual irrigation water user under this subparagraph are not enforceable;

(E) water-conserving irrigation equipment and application system or method including, but not limited to, surge irrigation, low pressure sprinkler, drip irrigation, and nonleaking pipe;

(F) leak-detection, repair, and water-loss control;

(G) scheduling the timing and/or measuring the amount of water applied (for example, soil moisture monitoring);

(H) land improvements for retaining or reducing runoff, and increasing the infiltration of rain and irrigation water including, but not limited to, land leveling, furrow diking, terracing, and weed control;

(I) tailwater recovery and reuse; and

(J) any other water conservation practice, method, or technique which the user shows to be appropriate for preventing waste and achieving conservation.

(3) For a system providing agricultural water to more than one user:

(A) a system inventory for the supplier's:

(i) structural facilities including the supplier's water storage, conveyance, and delivery structures;

(ii) management practices, including the supplier's operating rules and regulations, water pricing policy, and a description of practices and/or devices used to account for water deliveries; and

(iii) a user profile including square miles of the service area, the number of customers taking delivery of water by the system, the types of crops, the

types of irrigation systems, the types of drainage systems, and total acreage under irrigation, both historical and projected;

(B) specific, quantified five-year and ten-year targets for water savings including maximum allowable losses for the storage and distribution system. The goals established by a system providing agricultural water to more than one user under this subparagraph are not enforceable;

(C) a description of the practice(s) and/or device(s) which will be utilized to measure and account for the amount of water diverted from the source(s) of supply;

(D) a monitoring and record management program of water deliveries, sales, and losses;

(E) a leak-detection, repair, and water loss control program;

(F) a program to assist customers in the development of on-farm water conservation and pollution prevention plans and/or measures;

(G) a requirement in every wholesale water supply contract entered into or renewed after official adoption of the plan (by either ordinance, resolution, or tariff), and including any contract extension, that each successive wholesale customer develop and implement a water conservation plan or water conservation measures using the applicable elements in this chapter. If the customer intends to resell the water, the contract between the initial supplier and customer must provide that the contract for the resale of the water must have water conservation requirements so that each successive customer in the resale of the water will be required to implement water conservation measures in accordance with applicable provisions of this chapter;

(H) official adoption of the water conservation plan and goals, by ordinance, rule, resolution, or tariff, indicating that the plan reflects official policy of the supplier;

(I) any other water conservation practice, method, or technique which the supplier shows to be appropriate for achieving conservation; and

(J) documentation of coordination with the regional water planning groups, in order to ensure consistency with appropriate approved regional water plans.

(b) A water conservation plan prepared in accordance with the rules of the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Texas

State Soil and Water Conservation Board, or other federal or state agency and substantially meeting the requirements of this section and other applicable commission rules may be submitted to meet application requirements in accordance with a memorandum of understanding between the commission and that agency.

(c) An agricultural water user shall review and update its water conservation plan, as appropriate, based on an assessment of previous five-year and ten-year targets and any other new or updated information. An agricultural water user shall review and update the next revision of its water conservation plan every five years to coincide with the regional water planning group.

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**§288.5. Water Conservation Plans for Wholesale Water Suppliers.**

A water conservation plan for a wholesale water supplier must provide information in response to each of the following paragraphs. If the plan does not provide information for each requirement, the wholesale water supplier shall include in the plan an explanation of why the requirement is not applicable.

(1) Minimum requirements. All water conservation plans for wholesale water suppliers must include the following elements:

(A) a description of the wholesaler's service area, including population and customer data, water use data, water supply system data, and wastewater data;

(B) specific, quantified five-year and ten-year targets for water savings including, where appropriate, target goals for municipal use in gallons per capita per day for the wholesaler's service area, maximum acceptable water loss, and the basis for the development of these goals. The goals established by wholesale water suppliers under this subparagraph are not enforceable;

(C) a description as to which practice(s) and/or device(s) will be utilized to measure and account for the amount of water diverted from the source(s) of supply;

(D) a monitoring and record management program for determining water deliveries, sales, and losses;

(E) a program of metering and leak detection and repair for the wholesaler's water storage, delivery, and distribution system;

(F) a requirement in every water supply contract entered into or renewed after official adoption of the water conservation plan, and including any contract extension, that each successive wholesale customer develop and implement a water conservation plan or water conservation measures using the applicable elements of this chapter. If the customer intends to resell the water, then the contract between the initial supplier and customer must provide that the contract for the resale of the water must have water conservation requirements so that each successive customer in the resale of the water will be required to implement water conservation measures in accordance with applicable provisions of this chapter;

(G) a reservoir systems operations plan, if applicable, providing for the coordinated operation of reservoirs owned by the applicant within a common watershed or river basin. The reservoir systems operations plans shall include optimization of water supplies as one of the significant goals of the plan;

(H) a means for implementation and enforcement, which shall be evidenced by a copy of the ordinance, rule, resolution, or tariff, indicating official adoption of the water conservation plan by the water supplier; and a description of the authority by which the water supplier will implement and enforce the conservation plan; and

(I) documentation of coordination with the regional water planning groups for the service area of the wholesale water supplier in order to ensure consistency with the appropriate approved regional water plans.

(2) Additional conservation strategies. Any combination of the following strategies shall be selected by the water wholesaler, in addition to the minimum requirements of paragraph (1) of this section, if they are necessary in order to achieve the stated water conservation goals of the plan. The commission may require by commission order that any of the following strategies be implemented by the water supplier if the commission determines that the strategies are necessary in order for the conservation plan to be achieved:

(A) conservation-oriented water rates and water rate structures such as uniform or increasing block rate schedules, and/or seasonal rates, but not flat rate or decreasing block rates;

(B) a program to assist agricultural customers in the development of conservation pollution prevention and abatement plans;

(C) a program for reuse and/or recycling of wastewater and/or graywater; and

(D) any other water conservation practice, method, or technique which the wholesaler shows to be appropriate for achieving the stated goal or goals of the water conservation plan.

(3) Review and update requirements. The wholesale water supplier shall review and update its water conservation plan, as appropriate, based on an assessment of previous five-year and ten-year targets and any other new or updated information. A wholesale water supplier shall review and update the next revision of its water conservation plan every five years to coincide with the regional water planning group.

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Effective December 6, 2012

**§288.6. Water Conservation Plans for Any Other Purpose or Use.**

A water conservation plan for any other purpose or use not covered in this subchapter shall provide information where applicable about those practices, techniques, and technologies that will be used to reduce the consumption of water, prevent or reduce the loss or waste of water, maintain or improve the efficiency in the use of water, increase the recycling and reuse of water, or prevent the pollution of water.

Adopted April 5, 2000

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**§288.7. Plans Submitted With a Water Right Application for New or Additional State Water.**

(a) A water conservation plan submitted with an application for a new or additional appropriation of water must include data and information which:

(1) supports the applicant's proposed use of water with consideration of the water conservation goals of the water conservation plan;

(2) evaluates conservation as an alternative to the proposed appropriation;  
and

(3) evaluates any other feasible alternative to new water development including, but not limited to, waste prevention, recycling and reuse, water transfer and marketing, regionalization, and optimum water management practices and procedures.

(b) It shall be the burden of proof of the applicant to demonstrate that no feasible alternative to the proposed appropriation exists and that the requested amount of appropriation is necessary and reasonable for the proposed use.