



Town of Vinton, Virginia  
**Utility Customer Alert**

**January 2008**

*Greetings* to all our customers in the Town and East Roanoke County and Best Wishes for the New Year!

On October 30, 2007 Governor Timothy M. Kaine issued a press release encouraging voluntary water conservation by consumers and urged all localities to update water conservation and drought response plans. In calendar year 2007, rainfall was 13-inches below normal, following right on the heels of a nearly 5-inch shortfall in 2006. The Governor, in his press release, encouraged citizens and businesses to strictly follow all calls for water conservation issued by public waterworks or local jurisdictions.

Water demand diminishes greatly in the winter months, but rises rapidly in the springtime. Long-range precipitation forecasts are not encouraging at this time, which could bring about more severe drought conditions by spring or early summer at the latest. Extreme and Exceptional drought conditions already exist in southwest Virginia. If you watch the nightly TV newscasts, reports from Georgia, Alabama, and North Carolina provide a glimpse of the drought severity our neighbors to the south are presently experiencing.

This is not a cause for alarm at this time, but all customers need to be aware of the potential for drought and the associated actions that might be required. Also, now is an excellent time to begin prudent conservations practices.

The Town is presently reviewing its drought response plan to assure it meets current state requirements. If drought conditions become more severe, then various use restrictions might become necessary such as prohibiting lawn watering; limited watering of vegetable gardens, flowers, trees, and shrubs; prohibiting private washing of vehicles; prohibiting filling of swimming pools; prohibiting use in ornamental water fountains; washing paved areas or sidewalks; limited use of water on athletic fields and golf courses; water served in restaurants only at customer request; and businesses limited to only essential uses and for human hygiene. Some or all of these kinds of restrictions may be required based upon local conditions or may be ordered statewide or regionally by the Governor.

Start water conservation practices now! Here are some good tips that have minimal impact on your quality of life, but will reduce water usage and demand.

- **Clothes Washer** – Operate only full loads and always use correct volume settings.
- **Dishwasher** – Wash only full loads. Scrape dishes without using water and don't rinse them before putting in the dishwasher.
- **Sink Faucets** – Turn off running water while brushing teeth, shaving , or washing. Catch “warm-up” water and use for plants. Install low flow restrictors/aerators on faucets. Check for leaks.
- **Showerhead** – Take shorter showers (typical shower lasts 8 minutes and uses 17 gallons; an efficient shower lasts 3 or 4 minutes and uses 7.5 gallons).
- **Toilets** – Check for and repair leaks. Consider replacing older toilets with newer models that use less water. To check for leaks, put a small amount of food coloring in the tank, wait about 15 minutes and look in the bowl. If the water in the bowl is colored, then there is a leak.
- **Irrigation Systems** – Check for leaks; do not overwater; water early in the morning, if possible, to reduce evapotranspiration; upgrade sprinkler clock; install a rain shutoff device; collect rainwater with a rain barrel or cistern system with drip lines; or convert turf low water-use landscaping such as drought resistant grass, plants, shrubs, and trees.
- **Appliances** – If you are planning to replace a clothes washer or dishwasher, look for efficient models that use less water and provide excellent cleaning.

**If you have internet access, check these website links for more information.**

The Virginia Drought Assessment and Response Plan:

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/DrinkingWater/documents/waterconservation/appendia.pdf>

Virginia Department of Health, Office of Drinking Water:

<http://www.vdh.state.va.us/drinkingwater/Owners/drought.htm>

Water Conservation Tips:

<http://www.epa.gov/watersense/>

Drought information and water conservation tips:

<http://www.deq.virginia.gov/waterresources/conservation.html>

**Have a fine Vinton Day!**