

Living with a Restricted Water Supply

This information will help residents understand some important issues regarding restricted water supplies.

A restricted water supply delivers a limited flow rate and volume of water. In periods of high demand it is critical to use water wisely and ensure sufficient on-property storage is available.

Rural supplies provide water for both domestic and stock water purposes. The minimum amount of water a property can be supplied with is 2 units per day (or 1.4 litres per minute).

Note: A unit of water is a volume of 1,000 litres delivered over a 24 hour period.

Additional units of water can be purchased if there is capacity available. A storage tank of 4,500 litres or 48 hours storage capacity (whichever is the greater) is required as a minimum, larger storage is recommended.

To irrigate more than just a house garden, additional water is required. Possible alternative sources of water are a separate tank to collect rainwater, or pumping from a well to a separate tank.

Storage tanks

There is no planning restriction or resource consent required for the number of tanks on a property. A building consent may be required if a tank sits on a stand or is over 25,000 litres capacity. Adequate water pressure inside the house can be ensured by either a small pump, a header tank or raising the storage tank. Tanks must be watertight, and have a well-fitting lid to prevent access into the tank by birds, insects and animals. This is especially important where tanks are connected to non-chlorinated water supplies.

Exposed pipework and fittings should be insulated to prevent freezing in winter. Pipes, tanks and fittings must be maintained to prevent wastage of water.



On-site pumps

If you have a pressure pump you will need to regularly maintain it to maintain the pressure in your house. The pump should also have a low level cut out (so it does not continue to run if the tank runs out of water) and a thermal cut-out fuse (so it doesn't overheat). Alarms for both of these faults are also recommended. It is the owner's responsibility to ensure that all cut-outs and alarms are installed for the pressure pump. Please note that a pump will not work during a power cut.

Water restrictors

Water restrictors control the flow of water into properties. This is necessary to ensure water is available to all users. The Council regularly checks restrictors to ensure they are working effectively.

If a restrictor is damaged or disabled through normal use, the Council will replace it free of charge. Water restrictors may only be removed by the Council. Contact the Council immediately if you have problems with your water restrictor.

Tampering with the restrictor in any way is an offence under the Council's bylaw. If there are

Please turn over

signs that the restrictor has been tampered with, the property owner will be charged for repairs or replacement, and may be prosecuted.

No supply or low pressure/flow

If you use more water than your allocated amount and your tank isn't large enough, your tank could run out of water. If this happens, you need to wait until the tank slowly refills. In more urgent cases you can ring the Council and request that your tank be refilled. The Council's Water Unit may be able to assist with this, the charge for this service will be confirmed at the time of request. Alternatively you may pay for a private company to fill your tank. If you run out of water frequently consider increasing the size of your storage tank or purchasing additional units of water, if available.

In rural fixed 13 litres per minute supplies, low pressure or low flows could be caused by using water from more than one tap on the property, high usage by several properties on the scheme, or a leaking pipe. A power cut or a badly damaged pipe would also interrupt the supply of water. If you have no flow into your tank or if your water pressure remains low for an extended period, please contact the Council's Customer Services staff.

In rural restricted supplies, low pressure/flows or "no supply" could be caused by an interruption to the flow of water into the tank (for example a damaged pipe or a power cut), or by water leaking from the tank, pipes or fittings on your property.

If your water tank is empty or low, check that water is going into the tank, and also check that the tank ballcock is working properly. A hissing sound at the restrictor means water is flowing into the tank. Check around your property for signs of leaks like puddles of water or persistent damp patches on the ground.

The flow of water can be measured by testing how long it takes to fill a container of known volume. The flow should be within 10% of the allocated flow rate. Let the Council know if the flow rate is significantly different from your allocated amount.

Changing the quantity of water supplied

You may purchase extra units of water or surrender some. To do this you should complete an application

to increase or decrease the number of units. Prior to allocating more flow, the Council will assess the capacity of the scheme. There will be a charge for additional water including development contributions, financial contributions (when applicable), changing the restrictor and rates.

If the number of units supplied is reduced, water rates will be adjusted in the following rating year but there is no refund of any Development or Financial contributions that were paid when the connection was installed. Development/Financial contributions may be payable if units are increased again.

Location of water mains

Council pipelines run along many roads and some pipelines cross private properties. These are often not covered by easements, and the Council relies on its general powers under the Local Government Act to protect the assets. The Council has the right to enter private property to repair or replace the asset, but should give advanced warning. You must not take any steps that threaten the water supply asset.

If you plan to carry out any excavations within the road reserve or on a property within a rural water supply area, please request service plans of the area in which you will be working. Contact Before U Dig via their website www.beforeudig.co.nz or call 0800 248 344 or email contactus@beforeudig.co.nz. This is a free service, however you will be charged for the cost of repairing any damage to Council services if you have not obtained plans or locations of Council services before starting work, or if you damage pipes that are clearly shown on the plans.

Emergency water supply

It is possible that, during an emergency, the public water supply could be interrupted.

As part of your general emergency planning make sure that you have a few days supply of bottled water available to meet the needs of your family. Also ensure that your storage tank, pipes and fittings, and any troughs do not leak, so that you will have sufficient water storage for any stock on your property in the event of an emergency.

Find out more at waimakariri.govt.nz, or contact Customer Services on 0800 965 468.