

WATER INDUSTRY ACT 1991
ESP WATER LIMITED

Temporary ban on water use – ESP Sites in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire

ESP Water Limited gives notice that, pursuant to sections 76 and 76A-C of the Water Industry Act 1991, the following uses of water supplied by ESP Water Limited are restricted. This notice and further details concerning the prohibitions, current drought and water efficiency advice may be found on the website of ESP Water Limited here: www.espug.com

Water use restrictions start on 00:01am on Thursday 23rd July 2026 and will continue until further notice.
The restriction applies to all ESP Water sites in:

- Buckinghamshire
- Oxfordshire
- Berkshire

If you are unsure whether your property is within the area affected, you can find out more on the ESP Water website <https://espug.com/householder/water/#where-do-we-supply>
Thank you for your support at this important time.

Prohibited Uses

The use of a hosepipe, including using sprinklers, dripper hoses, automatic irrigation systems and similar devices, is prohibited for the following:

1. Watering a garden using a hosepipe
2. Cleaning a private motor vehicle using a hosepipe
3. Watering plants on domestic or other non-commercial premises using a hosepipe.
4. Cleaning a private leisure boat using a hosepipe
5. Drawing water, using a hosepipe, for domestic recreational use
6. Filling or maintaining a domestic pond using a hosepipe.
7. Filling or maintaining a domestic swimming or paddling pool.
8. Filling or maintaining an ornamental fountain.
9. Cleaning walls, or windows, of domestic premises using a hosepipe.
10. Cleaning paths or patios using a hosepipe.
11. Cleaning other artificial outdoor surfaces using a hosepipe.

Note that customers can still undertake the above activities if they use mains water from a bucket or watering can; or use water that is not sourced from the mains such as grey water, rainwater from a water butt through a hosepipe, or private boreholes for example.

The following definitions apply:

- “Using a hosepipe” includes the drawing of water supplied by the company from a container through a hosepipe and filling a container by means of a hosepipe with water supplied by the company.
- “Garden” includes a park, gardens open to the public, a domestic garden, a lawn, a grass verge, an allotment used for non-commercial purposes and any other green space.
- “Hosepipe” includes anything designed, adapted or used to serve the same purpose as a hosepipe. The prohibitions apply whether any device is attached to the hosepipe, such as a sprinkler for example, and

- “Using a hosepipe for domestic recreational use” includes operating water slides and other recreational equipment.

These prohibited water uses are covered by the Water Industry Act 1991 section 76 as amended by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. Further definitions may be found in the Water Use (Temporary Bans) Order 2010, which is available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/Uksi/2010/2231/contents/made>

Restrictions and Exceptions

You will not need to apply for an exception, but ESP Water may question your use of an exception if reports of hosepipe usage are received or evidence of a hosepipe is detected. People who may find it hard to make adaptations and are registered with the ESP Water Priority Service Register or are a Blue Badge holder, will be granted an automatic exception to any of the restrictions. Any person who contravenes any of these prohibitions is guilty of an offence and may be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £1,000.

1. Watering a garden using a hosepipe

Watering a garden using a hosepipe; Cleaning a private leisure boat using a hosepipe; Cleaning walls, or windows of domestic premises using a hosepipe; Cleaning paths or patios using a hosepipe; Cleaning other artificial outdoor surfaces using a hosepipe.

Exceptions:

Where using a hosepipe for any of the restricted purposes is required for health or safety, such as removing or minimising any risk to human or animal health or safety or preventing or controlling the spread of causative agents of disease, this will not be restricted.

A “garden” is a private or public garden, a lawn, a park, a grass verge, an area of grass used for sport or recreation, an allotment used for non-commercial purposes, and any other green space.

A garden is not:

- agricultural land,

- land used in the course of a business for growing any crops, fruits, vegetables or other plants for sale or commercial use.
- land used for a National Plant Collection.
- a temporary garden or flower display (i.e. on show to the public for no more than 7 days); or • plants in an outdoor pot or in the ground under cover (under cover being in a greenhouse, outbuilding or under a permanent canopy).

Exceptions:

- Using a hosepipe to water a garden for health or safety reasons:

NB for clarity: in this category, the definition of “a garden” includes “an area of grass used for sport or recreation”. Therefore, it should be noted that watering areas of grass, which are used for sport or recreation, is covered by a statutory exception for health or safety only in relation to the active strip/ playing area, not the entire ground.

- A hosepipe can be used to water turf at domestic premises where this cannot be reasonably done by watering can, where the turf was laid before the onset of prohibited uses, and for a period of four weeks which starts from the date when the turf was laid and not the start of the prohibited use.
- A hosepipe can be used to water standard trees, whips, saplings and hedging planted within a three-year window of the imposition of the prohibited uses (i.e. within the last three years of the start of the prohibited uses), where this cannot be hand-watered or watered with non-potable water.

2. Cleaning a private motor vehicle (or a trailer for such a vehicle) using a hosepipe

A “private motor vehicle” does not include:

- (1) a public service vehicle, as defined in section 1 of the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981 and
- (2) a goods vehicle, as defined in section 192 of the Road Traffic Act 1988.

Or:

- Any vehicles covered by an organisation’s “Goods Vehicle Operator’s Licence”.
- Military vehicles • Snow ploughs and gritters
- Emergency service vehicles (including those used by gas, electricity, water and telephone companies)
- Hearses and accompanying funeral cars.
- Recovery vehicles (only if they are used exclusively for that purpose)
- Tractors and agricultural vehicles • Mobile exhibition vehicles
- Catering vehicles
- Mobile shops • Mobile medical screening vehicles
- Any vehicle of over 3.5 tonnes gross plated weight or (where there is no plated weight) an unladen weight of more than 1,525kg to transport goods for hire or reward or in connection with a trade or business.

Exceptions:

A hosepipe can be used in the course of a business to clean private motor vehicles where this is done as a service to customers, where this cannot be reasonably done using a bucket.

3. Watering plants on domestic or other non-commercial premises using a hosepipe

Exceptions:

The prohibited use does not apply to watering plants that are:

- (1) grown or kept for sale or commercial use, or
- (2) that are part of a National Plant Collection or temporary garden or flower display.

- A hosepipe can be used to water food crops at domestic premises or private allotments, where this cannot be reasonably done by watering can.
- A hosepipe can be used to water turf at domestic premises where this cannot be reasonably done by watering can, where the turf was laid before the onset of the prohibited uses, and for a period of four weeks, which starts from the date when the turf was laid and not the start of the prohibited uses.

4. Cleaning a private leisure boat using a hosepipe

Exceptions:

- Cleaning any area of a private leisure boat which, except for doors or windows, is enclosed by a roof and walls.
- Using a hosepipe to clean a private leisure boat for health or safety reasons.
- A hosepipe can be used for filling a water tank in a boat where the water is to be used for washing, cooking or sanitation purposes.
- A hosepipe can be used for commercial cleaning.
- A hosepipe can be used to clean vessels that are a primary residence.
- A hosepipe can be used to clean boats where fouling is causing increased fuel consumption.
- A hosepipe can be used on engines that are designed to be cleaned with a hosepipe.
- A hosepipe can be used to prevent or control the spread of non-native and/or invasive species where other means are not appropriate.

5. Filling or maintaining a domestic swimming or paddling pool

Exceptions:

- Filling or maintaining a pool where necessary in the course of its construction.
- Filling or maintaining a pool using a hand-held container which is filled with water drawn directly from a tap.
- Filling or maintaining a pool that is designed, constructed or adapted for use in the course of a programme of medical treatment.
- Filling or maintaining a pool that is used for the purpose of decontaminating animals from infections or disease.
- Filling or maintaining a pool used in the course of a programme of veterinary treatment.
- Filling or maintaining a pool in which fish or other aquatic animals are being reared or kept in captivity.
- A hosepipe can be used when filling a swimming pool, paddling pool, swim spa or exercise spa that is a fixed structure from empty after construction or significant refurbishment. In this case significant refurbishment should be treated as equivalent to construction. Once it has been refilled then a hosepipe cannot be used for any subsequent filling.
- A hosepipe can be used for pools within places of worship or community pools when they are used as part of a religious ceremony.

6. Drawing water, using a hosepipe, for domestic recreational use

Exceptions:

- A hosepipe can be used when filling a hot tub that is a fixed structure from empty after construction or significant refurbishment. In this case significant refurbishment should be treated as equivalent to construction. Once it has been refilled then a hosepipe cannot be used for any subsequent filling.

- A hosepipe can be used for filling a water tank in a caravan or motorhome where the water is to be used for washing, cooking or sanitation purposes.

7. Filling or maintaining a domestic pond (manmade or natural) using a hosepipe

Exceptions:

Filling or maintaining a domestic pond in which fish or other aquatic animals are being reared or kept in captivity.

8. Filling or maintaining an ornamental fountain (including a cascade or any other display of moving water, and includes filling by permanent plumbing)

Exceptions:

- Filling or maintaining an ornamental fountain which is in or near a fishpond and whose purpose is to supply sufficient oxygen to the water in the pond in order to keep the fish healthy.
- Ornamental fountains within places of worship or community ornamental fountains can be filled when they are used as part of a religious ceremony.

9. Cleaning walls, or windows, of domestic premises using a hosepipe

Exceptions:

- Using a hosepipe to clean the walls or windows of domestic premises for health or safety reasons.
- A hosepipe can be used where cleaning apparatus is not connected to mains supply.
- Electric pumps that are connected to water butts filled by rainwater are not covered by the restrictions. • A hosepipe can be used to clean the walls and windows of domestic premises where this is done by a business as a service to customers.

NB for clarity: the use of water-fed poles by commercial cleaners for window cleaning at height is permitted for health or safety reasons. The domestic use of water-fed poles is not permitted.

10. Cleaning paths or patios using a hosepipe

Exceptions:

- Using a hosepipe to clean paths or patios for health or safety reasons.
- A hosepipe can be used where cleaning apparatus is not connected to mains supply. Electric pumps that are connected to water butts filled by rainwater are not covered by the restrictions.
- A hosepipe can be used as part of the process of preventing or controlling the spread of non-native and/or invasive species, where it cannot reasonably be done using other preferred means.
- A hosepipe can be used to clean the paths or patios of domestic premises where this is done by a business as a service to customers.

NB for clarity: the use of water-fed poles by commercial cleaners for window cleaning at height is permitted for health or safety reasons. The domestic use of water-fed poles is not permitted.

11. Cleaning other artificial outdoor surfaces using a hosepipe

Exceptions:

- Using a hosepipe to clean an artificial outdoor surface for health or safety reasons.
- A hosepipe can be used where cleaning apparatus is not connected to mains supply. Electric pumps that are connected to water butts filled by rainwater are not covered by the restrictions.
- A hosepipe can be used as part of the process of preventing or controlling the spread of non-native and/or invasive species, where it cannot reasonably be done using other preferred means.
- A hosepipe can be used to clean artificial outdoor surfaces of domestic premises where this is done by a business as a service to customers.

NB for clarity: the use of water-fed poles by commercial cleaners for window cleaning at height is permitted for health or safety reasons. The domestic use of water-fed poles is not permitted.

Priority Services Register

Customers on the Priority Services Register subject to any of the circumstances listed below can use a hosepipe to: (a) water a garden, (b) clean a private motor vehicle, (c) water plants on domestic or other non-commercial premises, (d) fill or maintain a domestic pond, (e) clean walls or windows of domestic premises, (f) clean paths or patios or (g) clean other artificial outdoor surfaces.

This exemption applies to customers:

- on dialysis, a feeding pump or automated medication.
- who suffer from a chronic or serious illness.
- who require oxygen use.
- who require a nebuliser and apnoea monitor.
- with a condition affecting the heart, lung and/or rely on a ventilator.
- who use an oxygen concentrator.
- who need to use a stair lift, hoist, or electric bed.
- who are unable to answer the door.
- with a physical impairment.
- with dementia or a cognitive impairment.
- who are blind.
- with restricted hand movement.
- who are recovering from hospital treatment.

Representations

Representations concerning any of these prohibitions may be made in writing to ESP Water at ESP Water Limited, First Floor, Kings Court, 41-51 Kingston Road, Leatherhead, KT22 7SL or by telephone at 01372 587500. If, as a result of any representations, ESP Water decides to vary any terms of the prohibition, a further notice will be published. Subject to this, the prohibitions will have effect from the stated date and will remain in force until further notice. Further details concerning the prohibitions and actions concerning the current drought may be found on ESP Water's website at www.espug.com/water.

For more information

Any queries concerning any of these prohibitions may be made to hello@espug.com or by telephone on 01372 587500.

Any person who contravenes any of these prohibitions may be guilty of an offence, and liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding £1,000.

