

Ashland Water - Frequently Asked Questions

Click On any of these categories.

Supply

Where does our water come from and where is it stored?

Keywords: Watershed, Reservoir, Dam

Treatment

How is the water we use made safe?

Keywords: Treatment Plant,

Distribution

How does the water get from the watershed to the end user?

Keywords: Meters, Pipes,

TID - Talent Irrigation District

What is TID and how does it work?

Keywords: Ditch, Howard Prairie, Hyatt Lake,

TAP - Talent Ashland Phoenix

What is the TAP project?

Keywords: Medford Water, Intertie, Emergency Water

Parks

What impact will this have on the environment/ parks?

Keywords: Creeks, Landscape, Fish,

Conservation

What can we do to save water?

Keywords: Waterwise, Landscape, Irrigation

Fire

How will this impact the risk of fire and what can we do about it?

Keywords: Firewise, Wildfire, Weed Abatement

Billing

What will this cost and how will it effect me?

Keywords: Utility Bill, rates, allotment

Curtailment

What is curtailment, what does it mean?

Keywords: Allotment, Restriction, Usage

*More water related information is
available in the Water Master Plan on the
City Website: ashland.or.us

[Return to the contents page.](#)

Water Supply

Where does Ashlands water come from?

Most of the time, Ashlands water supply comes from the Ashland watershed. The watershed is located south of Ashland and extends up to the peak of Mt. Ashland.

Where does Ashland store the water before it gets treated?

Ashland watershed water flows into Reeder Reservoir before its sent to the treatment plant. Reeder Reservoir is located south of town where the East and West forks of Ashland Creek meet.

Can I go to Reeder Reservoir?

No. On occasion tours can be scheduled, typically as part of a school group but prior arrangements must be made with the City.

Where else does Ashland get its water?

When there is not enough water in the watershed to supply Ashland with all the water necessary, water from the [TID](#) watershed can be used to supplement Ashlands water.

Is TID water added to Reeder Reservoir?

No. When Ashland watershed water is being supplemented with TID water, the TID water is added directly to the intake of the water treatment plant. The two sources of water are blended at that location before it is treated at the water treatment plant.

What impact does temperature have on reservoir level?

As temperatures go up, water use in town goes up. Our water use in the winter is less than two million gallons per day, in the summer our usage goes up to as high as seven million gallons per day.

How does snowpack impact our water supply?

The snow hold water in the watershed until it melts. The snow itself is almost like having an additional reservoir. If all the snow melts early in the season when the reservoir is full, it just goes down the creek, we have no way of containing it.

What is our current snowpack?

This years snowpack is the lowest we've seen since they began measuring. Currently (as of 5/9/14) the snow at the top of Mt. Ashland is less than 10 inches.

What should our snowpack be this time of year?

It would not be uncommon to still have sixty inches of snow or more on Mt Ashland.

How does the recent rainfall affect the water supply?

At this time (May 9th) the rain helps to reduce the need to use water in town, which helps to conserve the water supply we have. The rain however does not help much with our long term storage, our resevoir is currently full so rain in the watershed goes down the creek, we have no way of storing it.

Contact Information:

Water Department (541) 488-5353

Mike Morrison- morrism@ashland.or.us

Distribution- Steve Walker- walkers@ashland.or.us

Treatment- Greg Hunter- Hunterm@ashland.or.us

[Return to the contents page.](#)

Water Treatment Plant

Where is the Ashland Water Treatment Plant?

The treatment plant is located above Lithia Park in the Ashland Watershed next to Ashland Creek.

Where does Ashland's water come from?

Most of the time, Ashland's water supply comes from the Ashland watershed. The watershed is located south of Ashland and extends up to the peak of Mt. Ashland.

Where else does Ashland get its water?

When there is not enough water in the watershed to supply Ashland with all the water necessary, water from the [TID](#) watershed can be used to supplement Ashland's water.

Does Ashland add fluoride to the drinking water?

No. Ashland does not, and never has, added fluoride to the drinking water.

Does Ashland use chlorine to treat the water?

Yes. Chlorine is an essential part of the treatment process, it is used to disinfect the water. Chlorine levels are continually monitored to maintain compliance with Oregon Health Authority requirements.

Does Ashland use chloramines to treat the water?

No. Chloramines are not part of the treatment process used at the Ashland Water treatment Plant.

My water has a funny taste or smell?

We will have someone from the water treatment plant get in touch with you as soon as possible. (Call the water treatment plant at (541) 488-5345).

Where can I learn more about Ashland's water?

The latest Consumer Confidence Report is available at the City's website. If you do not have internet access, Consumer Confidence Reports are available at the Public Library, City Hall or the Community Development Building.

[Link to the Consumer Confidence Report.](#)

Contact Information:

Water Department (541) 488-5353

Mike Morrison- morrism@ashland.or.us

Distribution- Steve Walker- walkers@ashland.or.us

Treatment- Greg Hunter- Hunterm@ashland.or.us

Water Distribution System

What is the water distribution system?

The distribution is what gets the water from the treatment plant to the end water users. The system includes underground pipes, storage reservoirs, pumps, valves, pressure control devices and meters. This is the system that delivers water to your house.

How can I tell how much water I've used?

Your water use is measured by your water meter. Comparing the reading on your meter from one time to another will tell you how much water you have used during that period of time.

Where is my meter?

Typically your meter is in front of your house near the street. That is not always the case though, so if you are not sure where your meter is, you can request that someone from the City verify that the meter you are looking at is actually the meter for your residents.

How do I read my meter?

Your meter has a counter on top that displays your total water use. Write down that reading and compare it to a reading taken at a later time, the difference between those two numbers will be your total water usage for the period of time between when you read your meter.

Does the meter number read in gallons?

No. Water meters read in cubic feet of water used, not gallons.

How do I convert cubic feet to gallons?

Multiply the number of cubic feet times 7.48. The result will be the number of gallons used. An example: 100 cubic feet of water used is equal to 748 gallons.

What if I can't find my meter?

If you can't find your meter, or if you are unsure if a meter is actually for your residence, someone from the Utility Billing or the Water Department can help you find it. Call Utility Billing first at (541) 488-6004.

What do I do if I notice my water looks cloudy?

Cloudy water can be caused by a variety of sources. It could be something in the plumbing of your residence or it can be caused by something in the distribution system. Try running your water for a couple minutes, typically this will clear out the cloudy water. If after a few minutes your water still looks cloudy, please contact the Water Department at (541) 488-5353.

My neighbor is using too much water, what can I do about it?

If the water use is accidental, such as a broken sprinkler, your neighbors may appreciate you letting them know. (Water use is not restricted until mandatory curtailment has been implemented) If water use is excessive, the City will be monitoring water costumers that use more that their allotted amount and will be notifying them. You do not need to tell your neighbor that they are using too much water.

What is the City doing to reduce water use?

Many City departments use water in a variety of ways as part of their daily operations. The Parks Department has reduced their annual plantings and has cut back on watering wherever possible. The Fire Department has rescheduled training that requires water to take place later in the year, when water should not be an issue. The Public Works Department is reducing activities that require water and where possible, the activities that can't be delayed will use reclaimed water rather than potable water. As conditions change through the summer, the City will be making every effort to minimize our water use.

Contact Information:

Water Department (541) 488-5353

Mike Morrison- morrism@ashland.or.us

Distribution- Steve Walker- walkers@ashland.or.us

Treatment- Greg Hunter- Hunterm@ashland.or.us

[Return to the contents page.](#)

TID - Talent Irrigation District

What is TID?

TID is the acronym for the Talent Irrigation District. Their offices are located in Talent.

What does TID do?

TID supplies water through irrigation ditches to large areas of southern Jackson County. The water is primarily used for irrigation but can also be redirected to Ashland's water treatment plant where it is treated and sent to town as potable water.

Where does TID get their water?

TID water is stored in Howard Prairie Lake and Hyatt Lake before it's sent into the irrigation ditch system.

How can I get in touch with TID?

Their phone number is (541) 535-1529

How was the decision made to not allow us to have TID water this year?

For several Months City staff has been monitoring the water situation to determine what is necessary. The snowpack is the lowest we've seen for this time of year so the concern is that we will not have enough water to last all summer without adding TID w

When the City pumped TID water to the treatment plant in the past, I still had TID water to use at my house. What's different this time?

The snowpack this year is so low that we're concerned we may not have enough water to make it through the summer. Because of this, we'll be pumping as much TID water as possible to the water treatment plant. In past years we did not need to pump as large of a volume of water as we will be pumping this year. Pumping the maximum amount of water that we can does not leave enough water in the TID ditch for other uses.

Why do some people get TID water this year and others do not? That doesn't seem fair.

The snowpack this year is so low that we're concerned we may not have enough water to make it through the summer. Because of this, we'll be pumping as much TID water as possible to the water treatment plant. In past years we did not need to pump as large of a volume of water as we will be pumping this year. Pumping the maximum amount of water that we can does not leave enough water in the TID ditch beyond the pump station for other uses.

Is TID water safe to drink?

If TID water is left untreated then no, it is not safe to drink. Before we use TID water it is pumped up to our water treatment plant where it goes through the same process as all our drinking water, at that point it is safe to drink.

How was the decision made to not allow us to have TID water this year?

The snowpack this year is so low that we're concerned we may not have enough water to make it through the summer. Because of this, we'll be pumping as much TID water as possible to the water treatment plant. In past years we did not need to pump as large of a volume of water as we will be pumping this year. Pumping the maximum amount of water that we can does not leave enough water in the TID ditch beyond the pump station for other uses.

I want to know more about TID.

You can get more information about TID at their website: Talentid.org

Contact Information:

If the person asking the questions has TID water and is billed by TID, have them contact TID at (541) 535-1529.

If the person asking the question has general TID questions not already answered, or receives a bill from the City of Ashland for their TID, have them contact:

Distribution- Steve Walker- walkers@ashland.or.us

[Return to the contents page.](#)

TAP - Talent Ashland Phoenix - Waterline

What is TAP?

TAP is the acronym for the Talent Ashland Phoenix water intertie.

What will TAP do for Ashland?

The purpose of the TAP project is to bring an additional source of water to Ashland to be used in an emergency.

What criteria is determined if the situation is an "emergency"?

Many factors have to be considered including water available from all sources including Reeder Reservoir and TID, weather, how much longer will it be until we expect a change in the weather, how has Ashland responded to curtailment and do we expect water use to increase or decrease. All these factors will be considered to determine if the water situation is an emergency.

Where does the water come from for TAP?

The TAP line will connect the Ashland water distribution system with the Medford water system. Medford gets the water from two possible sources, either the Rogue River or Big Butte Springs.

When will construction begin?

Construction is scheduled to start no later than June 1st, but could potentially start before that time.

Where will the construction be located?

The construction will start on highway 99 near Talent, at the intersection of Creel Rd. It will then go down the north shoulder of highway 99 before crossing the highway, west of Valley View Rd. It will then follow the shoulder of highway 99 to North Main St. near the railroad bridge.

When do we expect to have water coming from the TAP line?

The project is scheduled to be operational by the middle of August.

Does Medford have enough water to supply us with this summer?

Yes. The City of Ashland actually owns water rights to water stored in Lost Creek Lake.

How much water will we get from Medford?

The amount of water we get from Medford will depend on the amount of water we need. If conditions change, it's possible we will not use any water from Medford. However, if conditions continue to be much drier than normal, the City of Ashland has water rights for up to 1,000 acre feet of water from Medford. 1,000 acre feet is approximately 325 million gallons.

How much water does Ashland use in a normal year?

For the past several years, Ashland has consistently used between 900 million and 1 billion gallons of water per year.

If we get TAP, why do we still need curtailment?

TAP is an emergency source of water, not a replacement source of water. Even with TAP, we will still need to be as careful with the water we have as we can be. The decision to continue with curtailment will be made when the TAP system is operational.

Contact Information:

Project Information - Morgan Wayman - (541) 552-2414

[Return to the contents page.](#)

Parks

What level will streams be kept at to keep fish alive?

Minimum creek flows will be the same as any other year. We have a minimum amount that we're required to release into the creek.

Contact Information:

Parks Department: (541) 488-5340

[Return to the contents page.](#)

Conservation

How can I talk with someone in the Conservation Division?

For water related conservation information, contact the Conservation Division at (541) 488-5306.

To contact the Conservation Division by email:

Send an email to conserve@ashland.or.us

Where can I find out more about programs the City offers to help me conserve water?

The City's website has a complete list of programs available to assist customers in being as efficient as possible with their water. This includes new toilet and appliance rebates, free shower heads and faucet aerators, soil moisture content readers, and other general tips and tricks for being smart with your water. The website is at www.ashland.or.us/conserve

What can I do to better understand how my irrigation system works and what I can do to make sure it is operating as efficiently as possible?

How do I find out more about plants that thrive in this climate and are low water users?

The Conservation Division has developed a website that is customized for the local climate and contains photos and plant information for a variety of landscape and garden types, including native species, fire safe and deer safe plantings and more. This resource is available at www.ashlandsaveswater.org

Is there a local source for weather information that would help me in scheduling my irrigation system?

Yes, the City maintains a local weather station for its use and has also made it available to the public. The data is on the City website at www.ashland.or.us/weather

How do I know how much water I am using for my daily “regular” indoor uses?

Indoor water use varies from house to house and usually depends on the number of people living at the residence. Below is an estimate of average indoor water use for a family of four.

- i. Toilets - 30-60 gallons per day
- ii. Showers - 60-100 gallons per day
- iii. Clothes Washers – 20-50 gallons per day
- iv. Kitchen/Bathroom Faucets – 30-80 gallons per day

The variations in consumption vary greatly based on the age and model of the equipment being used. For a more precise calculation of your indoor water use, go to www.ashland.or.us/conserve for an indoor water use guide

What are some easy things I can do at my home to conserve water?

For a quick guide to water conservation tips and tricks, go to www.ashland.or.us/watertips

Contact Information:

Phone (541) 488-5306

Email: conserve@ashland.or.us

Website: ashland.or.us/conserve

[Return to the contents page.](#)

Fire

Can Waterwise landscaping also be Firewise?

Yes, Firewise landscaping practices are often in line with Waterwise recommendations.

Do I have to water my lawn all summer to meet fire department recommendations for wildfire safety around my house?

No, Firewise landscaping recommends keeping grass short, not green, to prevent rapid fire spread near homes. Maintaining all grass and weeds to 4 inches or less minimizes flame length and spread and makes fire suppression easier and safer for firefighters.

How much do I have to water my landscape to keep my landscape in Firewise condition?

Within 10 feet of a home, fire-resistant vegetation, including deciduous shrubs and trees, should be free of all dead material, and in healthy condition.

Is all “drought-tolerant” landscaping Firewise?

No, Fire prone landscaping such as juniper, cypress, arborvitae and other conifers, are not recommended near homes and should be removed or meet Firewise landscaping clearance standards, found at ashlandfirewise.org.

What is the City doing to reduce the chance of fire?

Will there be additional fireworks bans because of the drought?

What do I do if my neighbors using fireworks?

Who do I talk to about firewise landscaping?

Contact Information:

Fire Department: (541) 488-5300

[Return to the contents page.](#)

Billing

How is my usage calculated?

Your meter is read every month to determine how much water was used.

Can I read my own meter?

Yes, but remember that the number on the meter reads in cubic feet, not gallons. [\(The meter reading procedure is available on the distribution page\)](#)

How do I figure how many gallons I've used?

Multiply the cubic feet of water by 7.48.

Is anyone automatically exempted from curtailment?

No. Everyone that thinks they should be exempt needs to apply for the exemption.

Where can I get the exemption request form?

When it becomes available, it will be on the City website at ashland.or.us

Are there discounts/rebates for reducing my water use?

Contact Information:

Utility Billing: (541) 488-6004

[Return to the contents page.](#)

Curtailment

If we are in curtailment, will weed abatement increase?

Weed abatement will be very important to minimize fire danger.[\(Go to Fire tab\)](#)

Does the City really want people to stop watering and increase fire danger?

Watering can be minimized and still meet firewise guidelines.[\(Go to Fire Tab\)](#)

How do we decide what stage of curtailment we should be in?

What factors are considered when determining the need for curtailment?

How much water can I use during this stage of curtailment?

What happens if I use more water than I'm allotted?

I didn't use all my allotment, can I give it to my neighbor?

I have a bigger house than my neighbor, why can't I use more water?

I have a big yard,(or garden), why can't I use more water?

I have a visitor for a month, do I get a larger allotment?

How will curtailment effect City?

How will curtailment effect Parks?

How will curtailment effect SOU?

How will curtailment effect Ashland School District?

Contact Information:

Public Works - Water Division - (541) 488-5353