

LATEST UPDATE FROM ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER ON THE TEMPORARY HOSEPIPE BAN

3rd September 2026

Following questions about when the temporary use hosepipe ban may be lifted, we wanted to provide an update on the current drought situation and the factors that influence any future decisions.

While recent rainfall has been welcomed, significantly more sustained wet weather is needed before drought conditions ease and restrictions can be reviewed.

There is no specific amount of rainfall that triggers the removal of restrictions. Decisions are based on a range of factors, including reservoir levels, river flows, groundwater levels, soil moisture and the wider environmental impact of drought.

The region continues to experience the effects of an exceptionally dry period. Rainfall in July was just 3% of the long-term average, while August saw only 34% of normal rainfall. The Environment Agency is also reporting soil moisture levels around 30% below average.

After months of hot and dry weather, the ground is extremely dry and compacted, meaning rainfall initially replenishes soil moisture rather than rivers, groundwater sources and reservoirs. Recent rainfall has provided some benefit, but the recovery of soils, rivers, groundwater and water resources will take time. Sustained wetter weather over the coming months will be needed before a significant improvement is seen.

Drought recovery happens in stages. Rainfall first needs to restore moisture levels in the soil before water can more easily reach rivers and groundwater sources. As these recover, reservoir levels can begin to replenish, helping return water resources to more normal conditions over the autumn and winter months.

Based on current conditions, nature, rivers, groundwater and reservoirs all need additional time and sustained periods of wetter weather to recover from the prolonged dry conditions experienced this year. While recent rainfall is encouraging, restrictions will remain under review until there is clear evidence that water resources and the environment have recovered sufficiently.

Customers and businesses can continue to help protect water resources by using water wisely. Those looking for advice and practical ways to reduce their water use can visit our website and try our water saving calculator for tips on using less water every day.

We will continue to monitor conditions closely and provide further updates as the situation develops.