March 13, 2026

The City of Calgary would like to thank the construction industry for doing your part to help conserve water during the reinforcement work on the Bearspaw South Feeder Main. We recognize the essential role your industry plays in building and maintaining our city, and we appreciate the efforts you have made to adjust your operations during this period.

The Bearspaw South Feeder Main has been shut down for reinforcement work starting March 9, 2026, for approximately four weeks. During this time, Stage 4 Outdoor Water Restrictions are in effect, and indoor water conservation is also required to help keep daily water use below 500 million litres, the maximum amount the treatment plants can supply while this work is underway.

We understand these restrictions have disrupted construction activities and project timelines. Your willingness to pivot, plan ahead, and reduce water use where possible is making a meaningful difference. These collective efforts help protect the stability of the water system and ensure there is sufficient supply for essential needs such as firefighting.

To help address common questions from the construction industry, we have prepared the following set of frequently asked questions outlining what is and is not permitted under Stage 4 restrictions, as well as guidance related to construction activities.

If you have additional questions or require further clarification, please contact the H2OC Liaison Officer at H2OCLiaison@calgary.ca

Frequently Asked Questions

(Updated March 13, 2026)

General

What is the overall project schedule for these segments of rehabilitation?

Starting March 9, Stage 4 Outdoor Water Restrictions will be in effect and indoor conservation will be needed for approximately **four weeks**. This timeframe reflects the anticipated duration required to complete the reinforcement work on the Bearspaw South Feeder Main.

This timeframe includes not only the reinforcement work, but also the necessary steps to safely return the pipe to service. These steps include refilling the pipe, conducting comprehensive water quality testing, and stabilizing the system by gradually turning on pipes at the Bearspaw Water Treatment Plant. As pressure in the feeder main increases and water flow is restored throughout the full system, all restrictions can be lifted.

Information on construction progress throughout the repair period will be shared on our social media channels, web updates and through regular livestreamed media events. These updates can be watched at calgary.ca/live.

Why is The City of Calgary returning to Stage 4 Outdoor Water Restrictions and asking businesses and residents to limit indoor water use?

To conduct this reinforcement work, we have shut down the Bearspaw South Feeder Main and stopped the flow of water through it, starting March 9th for approximately four weeks. This means that during the repair period we will be relying primarily on the Glenmore Water Treatment Plant to supply most of the water to Calgary, Strathmore, Airdrie, Chestermere and the Tsuut'ina Nation.

To balance water demand with the available supply, we need a temporary return to Stage 4 Outdoor Water Restrictions, which do not allow any outdoor water use. It also means we need residents and businesses to limit their indoor water use.

How long will water restrictions be in effect?

Stage 4 Outdoor Water Restrictions went into effect on March 9, 2026, along with the need to conserve water indoors. We expect the Bearspaw South Feeder Main will be out of service for **approximately four weeks** to complete this reinforcement work. As the reinforcement work continues, we will keep Calgarians informed on the progress and the timeline for lifting water restrictions.

Understanding Stage 4 Outdoor Water Restrictions

During Stage 4 Outdoor Water Restrictions, most outdoor potable water use is banned, including the following:

- **Outdoor water use for construction & renovation**, including flushing mains
- **Outdoor watering** of new and established lawns, gardens, trees, shrubs, sod and grass seed
- **Irrigation activities** including system testing and auditing
- **General outdoor cleaning & outdoor washing** of sidewalks, walkways and driveways; building exteriors including windows; and vehicles, unless subject to health and safety regulations and in accordance with the Stormwater Bylaw 37M2005

Exemptions to the above restrictions on outdoor potable water use include:

- Businesses using water to **deliver a life-sustaining product or service**
- Businesses using water outdoors to **meet health and safety regulations**, including washing down sidewalks, walkways, driveways, exterior building surfaces or other outdoor surfaces to remove bodily fluids like urine, excrement and vomit (subject to the Stormwater Bylaw 37M2005) and washing required to meet Occupational Health and Safety legislation and regulations
- Watering plants for **commercial sale or donation**
- Watering of **edible food crops** is only allowed when using spring-loaded nozzles with automatic shut off connected to a hose or hand-held containers (otherwise not permitted).

Can we get an exemption from Stage 4 Outdoor Water Restrictions?

No, this is not possible under the Water Utility Bylaw due to current system constraints. It remains critical that we balance demand with the available water supply to ensure we have water available to meet essential needs such as water for firefighting. To achieve the demand reduction needed, we need a temporary return to Stage 4 Outdoor Water Restrictions, as well as indoor water reduction measures.

What is required of The City of Calgary's regional (municipal) customers during the water restrictions?

The Master Servicing Agreement indicates that regional (municipal) customers are expected to achieve the same proportional water reduction as Calgary in the case of a water outage. Most regional customers mimic Calgary's water restrictions and guidance; however, the implementation of such measures is at the regional customers' discretion. We communicate frequently with our regional customers and share with them the actions and interpretations we are applying with our restrictions so that they can use this information to inform their own interpretations.

What will be the frequency of updates to this industry group?

We will be updating Calgarians through various channels every step of the way. This includes daily news releases and media availabilities. At this time, we are also planning to share weekly updates with our industry partners.

Are there any future restrictions we should expect for the remainder of 2026?

We anticipate restrictions will be needed again in the fall when we tie in the new parallel pipe. Outside of the reinforcement work planned, other scenarios outside of The City's control, including another break in the feeder main or weather-related conditions such as drought or heat waves, may necessitate outdoor water restrictions and/or indoor water conservation as well. However, we are not planning any additional water restrictions this summer that would impact the construction and building industry. You can stay up to date on the conditions we're monitoring on calgary.ca/drought.

Operational Questions

How do Stage 4 Outdoor Water Restrictions apply to concrete mixing?

Onsite concrete mixing
On-site concrete mixing refers to the process of mixing concrete directly at the construction site and is characterized as outdoor water use.

- On-site mixing of concrete **with a City potable water source** is **not permitted** during Stage 4 Outdoor Water Use Restrictions.

- On-site mixing is **only permitted with non-potable water**.

Batched concrete from a plant
Batched concrete from a plant would be characterized as indoor water use and **is permitted.** We acknowledge that not all the concrete plant activities are enclosed in a building, but most are.

When the plant mixed concrete is delivered, any water-related activities (e.g. washing out of trucks, finishing, curing, exposing aggregate finish) must use non-potable water. If potable water is used, it must be sourced from a non-City of Calgary supply.

Can potable water be used for creating an exposed-aggregate finish?

No. Under the Water Utility Bylaw, using City potable water for construction purposes is not permitted. Furthermore, using potable water for the washing down of surfaces sidewalks, walkways, driveways, exterior building surfaces or other outdoor surfaces is not permitted for any reason other than those permitted by section 20(6) (where necessary to comply with health and safety requirements). Using non-potable water for these activities is an alternative.

We recommend alternative methods, such as air-sandblasting, be used to create exposed aggregate finishes.

Non- Potable water

Is The City of Calgary going to provide access to non-potable water stations?
What are my alternative options to accessing non potable water?

Business operations using non-potable water sources are allowed to continue, for example, using stormwater for outdoor irrigation. The City will not be opening non-potable fill stations during the March feeder main reinforcement period.

Industry has a few options for accessing non-potable water:

- Businesses may be able to get non-potable water or potable water from other regional towns, not serviced by Calgary's water system (e.g. Cochrane, Okotoks or High River).

- ***Temporary Diversion Licences (TDLs):*** As the resource of water is managed by the province of Alberta, there is an opportunity for a business to apply for a TDL (temporary diversion licence) that would allow them to withdraw water from the river. Temporary Diversion Licence | Alberta.ca

- ***Storm Ponds Under Developer Control:*** Storm ponds still under developer control can be used for pumping at the developer's discretion. Using non-potable water in parks accessible to the public requires signage stating it, as water from rivers and storm ponds can be contaminated. Signs were provided to Contractors by the Inspectors in 2024, and there are a handful available if needed, for both installation on site and being affixed to water trucks.

Can I access a City of Calgary stormwater pond as a non-potable water source?

No. Access to City stormwater ponds is not permitted due to health and safety concerns, including water quality issues, traffic safety risks and potential hazards associated with storm ponds.

Will The City coordinate and offer water truck delivery of non-potable to industry?

No. The City is unable to coordinate and offer direct water truck delivery services at this time.

Potable Water and Commissioning

Will the use of potable water be permitted during the Stage 4 Outdoor Water Restrictions for new water line commissioning?

Pressure testing newly constructed water mains is permitted; however, chlorination and flushing will ***not be*** permitted. This should not delay home building but will alter the sequencing of when a service connection is made.

Once Stage 4 Outdoor Water Restrictions are lifted and direction has been provided by The City of Calgary, any impacted watermains are to be chlorinated, flushed and sampled as per City of Calgary specifications. Scheduling for flushing and sampling will need to be coordinated with the assigned area Utility Inspector to ensure their availability.

The following framework applies to permit pressure testing; however, flushing is not permitted.

- *The City of Calgary will allow potable water from the system to be used for pressure testing only - chlorination and flushing will not be permitted.*
- *Once Stage 4 Outdoor Water Restrictions are lifted and direction has been provided by The City of Calgary - any impacted watermains are to be chlorinated, flushed and sampled as per City of Calgary specifications.*
    - *Scheduling for flushing and sampling will need to be coordinated with the assigned area Utility Inspector to ensure their availability.*
- *Lot Servicing:*
    - *Installation of services may be completed without initial chlorination.*
    - *Service pigtails will not be required to be brought to the surface.*
    - *Services cannot be connected to a dwelling until the watermain has been chlorinated, flushed and sampled as per City of Calgary specifications.*
    - *If you are working in a municipality on the Calgary regional water system, you must work with them directly to confirm their reservoirs, and system can manage the water draw.*
    - *The City of Calgary will allow potable water to be used to keep positive pressure on watermains during tapping of new services as per City of Calgary Standard Specifications Waterworks Construction.*

Will the City of Calgary permit watermain service connections to new housing units, given that chlorination and flushing for new water line commissioning are not allowed during Stage 4 Outdoor Water Restrictions?

No. The City will not permit water service connection to any dwellings if the watermain has not been fully commissioned (chlorinated, flushed and sampled). If the watermain has been fully commissioned, the dwelling can tie into the service as per standard requirements. Please refer to the framework above. This framework does not delay home building, rather it alters the sequencing of when a service connection is made.

In the event that a water main must be shut off due to construction near an existing building, will The City of Calgary allow a temporary water supply to that building via a backflow water meter assembly connected to a hydrant during Stage 4 water restrictions?

Yes. This would be deemed indoor water use and therefore would be permitted.

Home Renovation Projects

Will The City of Calgary allow washing of exterior surfaces to prepare for paving/sealing, or washing a home prior to painting?

No. Under the Water Utility Bylaw, using potable water for renovation purposes, including washing down sidewalks, walkways, driveways, exterior building surfaces or other outdoor surfaces is not permitted during Stage 4 Outdoor Water Restrictions; however, non-potable water may be used for these purposes.

New Home Warranty Diagnostic Testing

Is new home warranty diagnostic testing exempt from the Stage 4 Outdoor Water Restrictions?

No. Diagnostic testing of building assemblies using a water spray testing method is not permitted during Stage 4 Outdoor Water Restrictions. It is recommended to use an alternate method or reschedule testing until restrictions are lifted.

Life Safety Systems and Hot works

Will there be a fire ban or a hot works ban?

At this time, the Calgary Fire Department does not anticipate issuing a fire ban or hot works ban during the reinforcement work; however, if conditions change due to weather or unanticipated water supply limitations, this could be reconsidered.