



OAKDALE IRRIGATION DISTRICT

Miscellaneous Policies and Procedures

Title
2 – OPERATIONS

Chapter
1

Section
2.109 Surface Water
Shortage Policy

Adopted: December 2, 2008

Revised: March 1, 2016, June 2,
2020

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PURPOSE

The Board of Directors of the Oakdale Irrigation District (“District”) adopted a Surface Water Shortage Policy to provide a guide to the District and its Board during periods of water shortages. Adoption of this policy was and is a critical component of water resource management.

SCOPE

When the Oakdale Irrigation District (OID) was formed in 1909 its’ specific purpose and charge was and still is as trustee of the surface water rights of the District’s constituents. The control and distribution of that water is controlled by the reasonable and beneficial standards under the California Water Code. With respect to those Codes and to the senior water rights of OID, the District is committed to managing this right to the mutual benefit of all lands within the District’s service boundaries first and foremost. There will be times however where the quantity of the water right available to the District is insufficient to meet the water demands of the crops grown. In those instances, this Surface Water Shortage Policy (Policy) has been developed to address such shortages.

This Policy is to be used as a guide to the District and its Board during periods of water shortages within the OID service area. Water shortages can occur for a variety of reasons due both to single and multiple events that may include; drought, a lack of spring rains, unseasonably high evapotranspiration, contractual obligations, canal failures on either the North or South Main, etc.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles presented below are intended to illustrate the basic assumptions that were used to develop the plan. The guiding principles are as follows:

- A. The District’s obligation under the California Water Code is to manage and deliver surface water resources under its charge for reasonable and beneficial purposes.
- B. All lands within the District boundaries have an equal right to the availability of surface water, irrespective of crop(s) grown.
- C. District policy with regard to rotational deliveries of water is to make surface water available when soil moisture depletion levels reach 2.4 inches.



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- D. Balancing the needs of agriculture to the financial needs of OID, in a time of water shortage, is a Board discretionary decision based on the facts at the time.
- E. The District will permit intra-district water transfers between and among landowners within the District's service area upon approval of a Farmer-to-Farmer Transfer Agreement. The District shall provide administrative and operation services to facilitate these transactions.
- F. OID will make its conveyance facilities available for the movement of water intra-district water, when able to do so without impacting OID operations and maintenance, upon approval of a Temporary Permit for Conveyance Channel Use.
- G. Once the surface water resources of the District as outlined under the 1988 Stipulation Agreement are exhausted, the District will suspend all water deliveries to its constituents. At that time, the District will make its groundwater resources available on an at-cost-basis when able to do so without impacting OID operations and maintenance.
- H. During times of diminished or suspended drain water availability, all lands within the District boundaries that rely solely on drain water must secure a direct connection to a surface water conveyance facility or secure other opportunities for water delivery from landowners with groundwater resources.

2. LEVELS OF SURFACE WATER SHORTAGES AND OID'S RESPONSE

Under the 1988 Stipulation Agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation, OID can expect water shortages when the annual inflow into New Melones is less than 600,000 acre feet. The shortage levels and the subsequent OID actions to be taken for that shortage level are identified below:

- A. Level One – The District allocation is less than 235,000 acre feet. As soon as the shortage is known or discovered the District will take any or all of the following actions depending on the shortage:
 - a. Suspension of Out of District Agreements
 - b. Partial utilization of District Deep Wells as required
 - c. Extended rotation intervals (i.e. 18, 20 or 22 day rotations). Non-rotational deliveries that do not negatively impact the District's ability to deliver irrigation water equitably, economically and efficiently will continue to be accommodated upon request.



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- B. Level Two – The District allocation is less than 220,000 acre feet. As soon as the shortage is known or discovered the District will take the following actions in the following order:
- a. All of Level One elements
 - b. Increased utilization of District Deep Wells
 - c. Diminished allocation to Tier 2 constituents as may be necessary
 - d. Facilitation of a Farmer to Farmer Transfer Program as described in Section 5 below
 - e. Fines for unauthorized use or theft of water and lock-out for the remainder of the season after a second offense
 - f. Fines for unreasonable tail water runoff as described in Section 3 below
- C. Level Three – The District allocation is below 190,000 acre feet. As soon as the shortage is known or discovered the District will take the following actions in the following order:
- a. All of Level One and Level Two elements
 - b. Full utilization of District Deep Wells
 - c. Suspension of deliveries to Tier 2 constituents
 - d. Implementation of a Water Allocation Program as described in Section 4 below
 - e. Irrigation water availability limited to agricultural purposes only (no water to ornamental ponds, etc.)

3. TAIL WATER DISCHARGE POLICY & SUBSEQUENT FINES

Under a Level Two water shortage it will be incumbent upon all lands receiving surface irrigation water to ensure that little-to-no water leaves their property. A water user notice will be mailed out after a water shortage declaration has been made by the Board of Directors informing each water user of the discharge restrictions. Should a landowner be found in violation of this rule they will be issued a notice and fined accordingly. If the landowner is found to be in violation of the rule a second time they will be fined again and lose all rights to future irrigations for the remainder of the irrigation season.

Fines for violations shall be set and approved by the Board of Directors annually as may be necessary.



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4. WATER ALLOCATION PROGRAM

The Water Allocation Program consists of taking the year's net surface water available in acre feet and dividing it equally amongst the assessed Tier I acreage within the District. The resultant number would be the maximum quantity of water allocated in inches per acre to each Tier I water user. It would be incumbent upon the water users to determine when they wanted to use the water available to them.

5. FARMER TO FARMER TRANSFER PROGRAM:

The Farmer to Farmer Transfer Program allows farmers to work together to fully utilize available surface water supplies when supply is not expected to be adequate to meet the normal demand of irrigators. Tier I water users may transfer their allocation, as determined by OID through the Water Allocation Program, to other OID Tier I or Tier II lands. Upon execution of a Farmer to Farmer Transfer Program Application Agreement by both the contributing landowner(s) and the receiving landowner(s), OID would facilitate the delivery. The water rate assessed by OID for all water transferred and delivered through the Farmer to Farmer Transfer Program will remain consistent with the OID water rate then in effect for the recipient's lands (Tier I or Tier II) regardless of the OID volumetric water rate (Tier I or Tier II) associated with the lands of the contributing landowner(s).