

Temporary Water Right Permits Information and Guidance



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

MATTHEW RODRIGUEZ
SECRETARY FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

State Water Resources Control Board

Overview

The State Water Board Division of Water Rights is committed to working cooperatively and diligently with water users throughout the state to find appropriate and timely solutions to their urgent, drought-related water needs. If you have identified a new source of water that could help you meet your drought needs, the first step is to determine if you need a water right permit. For more information, see ["Do I need a Water Right?"](#) Temporary permits may be obtained regardless of whether or not you currently have a water right. Temporary permits issued by the State Water Board authorize permit holders to temporarily divert and use water to provide relief from drought conditions. Temporary permits last *up to 180 days* and are renewable. You may request a temporary permit and concurrently submit an application to obtain a standard water right permit (to obtain a long-term supply of water).

Eligible Parties

Any person who has an urgent need to divert and use water may apply to for a temporary water right permit.

What is a water right?

A water right is legal permission to use a reasonable amount of water for a beneficial purpose such as domestic use in a home or irrigation use on fields. The State Water Board authorizes most new surface water diversions. Details can be found [here](#).

How do I determine if I have a water right?

The quickest way to find out if you currently hold a water right is to search the State Water Board Division of Water Right's [eWRIMS database](#).

How do I apply for a temporary permit?

Determine your proposed point of diversion, place of use, and purpose of use; complete an [Application to Appropriate Water](#); and mail the completed application to the State Water Resources Control Board's Division of Water Rights at PO Box 2000, Sacramento, CA 95812-2000. If you are facing an imminent threat to public health due to drought, notify staff by writing a note at the top of your application form "Imminent threat to public health".

How much will it cost?

The cost to apply for a temporary water right permit varies depending on the amount of water being diverted. Initial filing fees typically start at \$2,000. See the [Division of Water Rights Fee Schedule](#) for more information. Certain temporary permits to divert high flows to underground storage during Fiscal Year 2015-2016 may be subject to [different fees](#).

What does the State Water Board need in order to issue a temporary water right permit?

The State Water Board must be able to make the following findings in order to issue a temporary water right permit: (i) the applicant has an urgent need for the water proposed to be diverted and used; (ii) the water may be diverted and used without injury to any lawful water user; (iii) the water may be diverted and used without unreasonable effect on fish, wildlife, or other instream resources, (iv) the proposed diversion and use are in the public interest. An applicant should submit evidence to support the above findings, including permit conditions to ensure that the water is diverted and used in the public interest, without injury to any lawful user of water, and without unreasonable effect upon fish, wildlife, and other instream beneficial uses.

How long will it take?

The State Water Board will make every effort to process drought-related, temporary permit applications as quickly and efficiently as possible. Processing time will vary by the complexity of the request, the completeness and accuracy of information provided in the application package, and the potential for adverse effects on other water users and public trust resources such as fish and wildlife. The Division of Water Right's goal is a 30-day processing time for initial action on drought-related temporary permits. A flow chart showing the water right permitting process is shown below.

What if I have questions?

If you would like to discuss your particular situation with a staff person who works in your geographic area, see the permitting and licensing staff contact information provided [here](#)

FELICIA MARCUS, CHAIR | THOMAS HOWARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 | Mailing Address: P.O. Box 100, Sacramento, Ca 95812-0100 | www.waterboards.ca.gov

What is the process for a Temporary Permit?

