



News Release

South Tahoe Public Utility District
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Conserve Water During Power Outages

South Lake Tahoe, CA (August 12, 2019) – When risk of catastrophic wildfire becomes too great, local electric utilities may turn off the power for extended periods of time. While your first thought might be eating all the ice cream in your freezer, don't forget to think about your water use. South Tahoe Public Utility District (District) urges customers to conserve water during power outages to make sure there is enough water to fight a fire.

Water and wastewater operations are energy intensive. Before you wash the dishes or take a shower, water is pumped out of the ground, treated and then pumped through a 253 mile distribution system to reach your home. The same thing applies on the wastewater side. Every drop of water that flows down your drain is pumped to the wastewater treatment plant where it is cleaned and pumped 26 miles up and over Luther Pass to Alpine County where it is used by farmers for irrigation. All that pumping takes a lot of power.

When the lights go out in South Lake Tahoe, the District's infrastructure relies on emergency generators. "This back-up power supply keeps the system running, but is not designed to handle peak demand," says Chris Stanley, Manager of Field Operations. "With outages projected to occur during high fire risk, the District needs to keep water tanks and diesel tanks full in case a fire occurs."

Just like you would avoid taking a long road trip on a spare tire, avoid excess water use when the power goes out. Consider turning off your irrigation system, taking shorter showers, flushing the toilet only as needed, and using a wash tub when washing dishes.

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