

Water conservation now mandatory for Atchison and Atchison County Rural Water District # 1 (KAIR)--The call for voluntary water conservation by City of Atchison water customers now becomes mandatory.

According to a release from the City of Atchison, the mandatory water conservation measures are being implemented “due to record low [Missouri River] levels which have limited [the City-] ability to draw a sufficient amount of water to meet the normal demand from domestic, commercial, industrial, and agricultural customers.”

Among the customers affected are those in Atchison County Rural Water District #1.

The release explains that the City “is requiring all industrial and agricultural customers to limit the use of water to only what is necessary to maintain the health and personal hygiene of employees on duty,” while commercial/business customers, including restaurants and stores, are required “to limit the use of water to what is necessary to conduct normal operations including what is necessary to maintain the health and hygiene of employees and customers.”

All residential households, meanwhile, are being required “to limit use of water to what is necessary to maintain health and hygiene,” with the City clarifying that cooking, bathing, and doing laundry are acceptable uses of water. “Medical facilities are not being required to limit water usage but are encouraged to conserve water where possible and safe to do so.”

The City, on Tuesday, said the Missouri River level is expected to stay at record low levels for 2 to 3 days as a second ice jam makes its way downstream from Nebraska. The primary intake cannot currently pump any water due to the river level, so the City is utilizing an auxiliary pump which does not have the capacity to move as much water as the primary intake.

The release calls this “a critical time because any complication...can have a tremendous impact on [the City-] ability to supply and store water at this reduced capacity.” Forecasts show that “normal low” river levels will resume by the middle of next week, allowing the City to fully switch back to the primary intake and lift the water conservation measures.