

As our water availability dwindles, conservation becomes an important issue in our daily lives. The Utilities Department [in all cities in South Florida] is only allowed to withdraw a specific quantity of water per day, month, etc. Utilities have also been encouraged by the South Florida Water Management District to enact Conservation-based, *tiered* water rates based on the idea that the more you use the more you pay – per 1,000 gallons. When SFWMD determines that drought conditions exist, they issue a Phase 1, 2, 3 or 4 Restriction. This Restriction triggers a change in Plantation's normal rate structure.

On June 20, 2002, after two "readings" of the new rate structure, an ***Automatic Water Restriction Surcharge*** was enacted into City Ordinances. This authorizes a *surcharge* that coincides with the specific SFWMD Phase Restriction, but only charged on water that is used over and above the first consumption block of up to 6,000 gallons each month or charged on sprinkler accounts. This surcharge is meant not only to encourage customers to conserve but also enable Utilities to recapture some of the revenue "lost" when users do conserve water use. The surcharge is tied to a specific Phase Restriction. A Phase 1 or Moderate Water Shortage Restriction is aimed at obtaining a 15% conservation effort and carries a 15% surcharge; Phase 2 or a Severe Water Shortage Restriction encourages 30%; Phase 3 or Extreme Water Shortage encourages 45%; and Phase 4 or Critical Water Shortage encourages 60% conservation -- all with surcharges of like amounts.

Unfortunately, often the amount of time between a Water Restriction being imposed and when a customer gets their bill does not allow the Utilities Department to give advance notice. We hope that advanced notice would be forthcoming from the Plantation Information Radio – 1620 on your AM radio dial – or through the various local Radio and Television Stations and Newspapers. Additionally, Plantation's Web Site www.plantation.org and the South Florida Water Management District Website www.sfwmd.gov will have information.

Finally, we do place a notice on the Utilities Invoice, but we understand that by the time you get your bill, you aren't able to take additional steps to conserve. We can, however, assure you that when a Restriction is reduced or lifted, the surcharge is reduced or lifted in a similar manner and timeframe.