



**St Helena  
Government**



# WATER RESOURCES MEDIA STRATEGY

**St Helena Resilience Forum Warning & Informing Sub-group  
29 May 2020**

## **Introduction**

This Water Resources Media Strategy ('the Strategy') forms part of St Helena Government's (SHG) Drought Management Plan. It sets out the key objectives and approach to communications during the various stages of a drought situation being declared on St Helena.

This strategy takes into account all major stakeholders that have a role in any drought event on the Island including the Media, Councillors, SHG and Connect Saint Helena Ltd (CSH) employees, businesses and young people, and sets out how we should tailor our communications for our different audiences.

It is a plan for how the Warning & Informing (WIG) subgroup of the St Helena Resilience Forum (SHRF) will handle communications around a drought situation on St Helena in order to manage the crisis until such time business returns to normal.

The Strategy will be implemented as required by the WIG in conjunction with CSH's Drought Management Plan and SHG's Drought Management Plan.

Implementation of the Strategy will be monitored by the WIG Chairperson.

The Strategy will be reviewed after each drought event and amended if necessary to take into account lessons learnt.

## **Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this Strategy is to coordinate communications and media handling activities to warn and inform the public in any drought event.

The Strategy will be activated when certain triggers are met in the Drought Management Plan. Our overarching objectives are to:

- Warn and inform the public of any water shortage within an appropriate timeframe and as per the Drought Management Plans including during any incident and recovery
- Keep the public engaged throughout any drought incident using a mixed media approach and all communication channels at our disposal
- Change people's mind sets about personal water use and ensure the public have a better understanding of water conservation
- Raise awareness on conserving water being everyone's responsibility and educating people on responsible water use
- Increase the public's trust in SHG/CSH that water resources on St Helena are being managed appropriately but we cannot control the weather
- To ensure consistent messaging from all parties around any drought incident
- Continuously gather feedback from customers/consumers to be able to improve communication going forward

- Gain support from stakeholders including Elected Members, local media colleagues, local businesses and non-Government Organisations.

### **Audience/Stakeholders**

Our key audiences/stakeholders are:

- St Helena residents (customers)
- Young people & schools on St Helena (for onward distribution of messages to parents/peers)
- SHG and CSH staff
- St Helena businesses
- Non-Government Organisations
- Elected Members
- Local media
- Visitors
- Overseas Saints

Each of these groups will influence the type of communications we must provide.

### **Persons responsible for communicating during different stages of Drought**

<b>Drought Stage</b>	<b>Communication Lead</b>
Stage 1 – Minor Water Shortage	CSH
Stage 2 – Moderate Water Shortage	CSH /WIG to reinforce message, reassure public where appropriate
Stage 3 – Serious Water Shortage	WIG
Stage 4 – Severe Water Shortage	WIG
Stage 5 – Critical Water Shortage Emergency	WIG acting on any changes to the Strategy set by the Gold Group
Recovery	WIG

### **Key Messages**

Our key messages are what we will say at each stage of the Drought. However noting that we cannot predict what time of the year a Drought stage will be activated our messages will need to be dynamic to account for other factors that might affect what we should be telling our stakeholders.

The key messages below can therefore be adapted as appropriate to the current situation. For example if the Island is experiencing a Stage 3 Drought in the Summer month of December, key messages will be different to a Stage 3 Drought in June when we expect our Winter rains. In this instance we might need to draw on key messages from Stage 4.

Key messages will be published via a mixed media approach and will therefore be included in press releases, posters, radio interviews, leaflets and on local TV. The WIG will decide what channel is appropriate to use at what time and who will take the lead.

Communication responsibilities will be shared by all WIG members and each member will have a role in generating content/collating/designing/issuing agreed material.

### **Stage 1**

SHG Drought Management Plan activated.

No public announcement needed. Emergency Planning Department will notify the Governor and Elected Members if necessary.

### **Stage 2**

CSH to place notifications in the media, advising the general populace of the water situation and requesting them to reduce their water consumption. At this stage we should stress the need to prevent the water situation from escalating any further and advise residents about potential restrictions later on if the situation worsens.

Key messages to include:

- CSH and the SHRF have activated their Drought Management Plans in order to deal with the crisis
- The quantity of water we have available must be balanced against the amount we use. Specifically, we need to use less than we put into the system (either through rainfall or water distribution). At the moment we are using more
- Residents should look to reduce water consumption and use water responsibly
- St Helena residents are reminded that we are experiencing an Island-wide water shortage and it is everyone's responsibility to take great care in using this precious resource
- At the moment, reservoir levels are getting lower. This is because we are consuming more water than we are collecting coupled with the lack of consistent rainfall which is needed to recover the reservoir levels
- CSH monitors water and collection daily and will continue to keep the public updated of the situation on a regular basis
- Preserving water stock is everyone's responsibility and therefore everyone has a part to play
- If water levels continue to decline CSH will introduce Island-wide water restrictions

The WIG will reinforce these messages and reassure the public that measures are in place to control the situation.

### **Stage 3**

CSH to formally introduce water restrictions in the areas affected by the drought event by placing a Legal Notice 'limiting the use of water' in the newspapers and on radio.

The WIG will place further relevant information on the water shortage in the media on a weekly basis to ensure the general populace remain informed about the water situation across the Island.

Reinforce key messages of Stage 2 and also to include:

- Water restrictions have been implemented
- With the lack of rainfall over the previous months, reservoirs are at dangerously low levels. Even with the recent rainfall, reservoirs remain low and we are reliant on water catchment from bore holes, springs, and transferring of water supplies around the Island
- CSH and SHRF have activated their Drought Management Plans in order to deal with the crisis
- The quantity of water we have available must be balanced against the amount we use. Specifically, we need to use less than we put into the system (either through rainfall or water distribution). At the moment we are using more
- This is an Island-wide issue and until the situation improves and the reservoirs are back to normal capacity we all have to restrict our water usage to essential use only
- If the situation escalates further CSH will have no choice to enforce stronger water restrictions.

### **Stage 4**

Further information placed in the media on a weekly basis by WIG ensuring the general populace remain fully informed of further developments relating to the severe water shortage situation experienced.

Reinforce key messages of Stage 2 and 3 and also to include:

- This is an Island-wide issue which will not improve until we see significant rainfall and the reservoirs are back to normal capacity we all have to restrict our water usage to essential use only. Failure to do so will result in more drastic measures being required to protect essential supplies.

## **Stage 5**

Further information placed in the media on a weekly basis by WIG under instruction from the SHRF Gold group ensuring the general populace remain fully informed of further developments relating to the severe water shortage situation experienced.

Key messages to include:

- The situation is now so critical there is a chance that homes and businesses will have their supplies disrupted requiring customers to collect water from standpipes.

## **Recovery**

Inform the public that the crisis is coming to an end and what restrictions are being lifted and when they will commence. This will probably be staged over a number of days in order to have a controlled procedure to allow business to return to normal.

Key messages to include:

- We are now in recovery
- Requirements to remain at this level
- Acknowledgment of community effort
- Who is now managing the situation.

## **Channels/Tactics we will use**

The following channels & tactics will be used in a Drought situation being declared:

- Regular meetings of WIG to coordinate communication priorities for the week. Frequency of meetings will depend on Drought stage and seriousness of situation. In the initial stages of a Drought the WIG will meet weekly to ensure messages can be issued frequently with maximum impact
- Live online Q&A to provide information and answers to frequently asked questions
- Regular use of on-Island radio and newsprint, which has reach and credibility
- Briefings with the Governor, Chief Secretary and Elected Members as appropriate
- Generating releases around responsible water use and conserving this precious resource
- Generating positive stories around water storage and improving water standards
- Young people and schools will be targeted - they are likely to pass on key messages to their parents and peers. A representative from the Education Directorate will be invited to join the WIG
- Where appropriate, targeted use of paid for publication i.e. water saving tips. This is dependent on a funding being allocated to the WIG

- Appropriate leaflets and posters, for example, which should also be downloadable from SHG and CSH websites.

The following tools and activities have been identified as the most appropriate to communicating our key messages during any Drought situation being declared. Channel use and frequency will depend on the seriousness of the situation:

### **Tools**

- SHG Website
- CSH website
- Regular updates in local media
- Press Releases from SHG where appropriate to reinforce messages or to provide reassurance to the public
- Articles/features to indirectly address any concerns from the public
- Posters/Leaflets i.e. Water Saving Tips 'Every drop counts'
- Social Media i.e. Facebook & Twitter
- Radio Interviews/updates/on-air conversations
- Media briefings/conferences around major announcements
- Use of local TV to broadcast any press conferences, video clips on saving water or to provide a rolling script/gallery of the water situation on the Island i.e. empty reservoirs
- Competitions in Island schools around water saving
- Radio jingles and 'soft' messaging around conserving of water
- Support from the media on water saving tips/messages
- Promotion of responsible use of water at our borders and through private sector businesses and non-Government organisations
- Live online Q&A to provide answers to questions being asked by the public
- An online Media Resource/Education Centre that will be accessible at all times even when a drought has not been declared.

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