



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NORTH OKANAGAN – GREATER VERNON WATER

Agricultural Allocation Purchase Policy Fact Sheet

Greater Vernon Water (GVW) agricultural customers are charged an *Allocation Fee* for water used for bona fide agricultural purposes. Some customers may find that their water use exceeds their allocation and must pay an *Agricultural Over Consumption fee*.

The most inexpensive way to avoid this fee is to improve irrigation efficiency and repair leaks. Many irrigation scheduling and water conservation resources are available at www.rdno.ca/agwater. GVW recommends working with a certified irrigation professional to optimize an irrigation system. If a customer has made efficiency improvements and still needs more water, they may apply to purchase more allocation.

What is Allocation?

A property's allocation is based on an average crop needing *5,500 cubic meters* of water per hectare (equivalent to 21.7 inches/ha) over the course of an average season in our area's climate; however, some crop types may need more or less water and the micro-climate or soils for a particular property may affect the crop water needs.

Historically, agricultural properties purchased allocation based on the irrigated area of the property. For example, a 6 ha property may have 5 ha of allocation, recognizing not all the land is available to farm. In the past, customers were also given a 0.4 ha credit to reduce their allocation fee based on this same idea that the farm likely had a house and other outbuildings that reduced the irrigated land area. This credit has been eliminated for agricultural customers as of 2016 so that customers can utilize the full volume of their allocation, but those without agricultural status can still use this credit to reduce their allocation fee as they are not using agricultural water.

Application Requirements:

- A property must be classified by B.C. Assessment as a farm or have GVW Farm Classification to be eligible to apply to purchase more allocation.
- An application form must be completed. The "Water Allocation Form (Allocation Adjustment)" is used for allocation purchases and can be found online and at the Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO) office.
- An application fee of \$350 must be paid at the RDNO office.
- GVW staff will assess if the water system has sufficient capacity to meet the increased service needs. Applications where there is insufficient system capacity will not be approved.
- If you are seeking more allocation than your actual property size (e.g. 7 ha of allocation for a 6 ha property), a report from a professional Agrologist is required to outline why the extra water is necessary due to the extenuating hydrological conditions of the property. This report does not guarantee approval.
- GVW will provide a report either supporting or not supporting the application for review by the RDNO Board of Directors and the Board must approve all allocation purchase applications. Applicants within the Township of Spallumcheen must be approved by the Township prior to being submitted to the RDNO Board.

How much does it cost to purchase Allocation?

In addition to the application fee, there is a \$1,700 per 0.1 ha fee to purchase allocation (as per GVW Rates Imposition Bylaw No. 2864, 2020). If approved, the purchase fee must be paid prior to April 15 if purchasing allocation prior to the start of the irrigation season, or September 30 if the application is received mid-season. In addition to the purchase fee, the successful applicant is also responsible for the full year's Allocation Fees, even if the application is made mid-year.

What can the Allocation be used on?

Agricultural services must be metered separately from domestic services. Allocation water must only be used for bona fide agricultural purposes and cannot be used for any non-agricultural purposes that are considered domestic uses such as washing vehicles, watering personal vegetable gardens, lawns, or shrubs. If a property has access to a non-potable water source, then the non-potable water must be used for agricultural activities. All water services, including stock watering, must be metered. Low flow activities, like stock watering, may require a separate (smaller) meter capable of recording those low flows. See GVW Water Use and Regulation, Bylaw No. 2545, 2014, as amended for more details on metering.

Can I apply a new allocation purchase to previous years?

No, allocation cannot be purchased retroactively. Applications can be made to buy allocation for the upcoming year or an application can be made mid-season. No applications will be allowed after August 15 for the same year.

Can I give up my Allocation since I'm not farming?

Yes – allocation can be reduced or eliminated. Please see RDNO Policy No. ENG-WTR-005 for details; however, you will have to apply to re-purchase the allocation back if you change your mind in the future.

Need more Information?

For more details on the Allocation Purchase Policy, the full document can be found online at: www.rdno.ca/gvw under "Water System Policies". For current Allocation purchasing rates and Allocation fees, see the GVW Rates Imposition Bylaw found at www.rdno.ca/gvw under "Bylaws".