



Water Conservation Newsletter Article

Spring Tune-Up

Spring is quickly approaching and now is the time to make sure your irrigation system is ready to start working again after being off for the winter wastewater averaging season. How? Follow the tips below:

Self-Test

The fastest way to check your irrigation system is to inspect it yourself. Here's how:

- Set your controller to operate a two-minute test program. If the controller does not have a pre-programmed test program, set each station to run for two minutes using the C or D program that may not be normally used.
- Start the program manually and then watch the system as it runs through each station.
- Look for heads that are broken, leaking, and misaligned or not watering how they should be. Also watch for heads that are clogged or obstructed by shrubs. Stressed or dry areas are often caused by one of these problems.

Ideally, the test program should be run monthly to keep track of how the system is operating. This may also prevent unexpected increases in your water bill caused by leaks or broken heads. To keep your irrigation system running as efficiently as possible, call a licensed irrigator to repair any problems for you. (According to State law, a "landscaper" or gardener cannot repair irrigation systems; they must be a **licensed** irrigator.)

Start Slow

Your spring watering schedule should be half the amount you water during summer months. Yet, this is when most overwatering of turf occurs. Cool morning and evening temperatures make it unnecessary to water as frequently as during the summer.

- As needed in March or April, we recommend watering once every 7 to 10 days with one start time.
- Set controllers to run before 10am or after 7pm. Once the sun has risen, wind speeds tend to pick up, which would simply blow the irrigation water off your property. Watering before the sun is up or after it has set is more effective.
- Hand-water newly planted landscape; it's more efficient than using an irrigation system.
- Mulch deeply, at least 4 inches, around trees, shrubs, and flower beds. This helps prevent weed growth and reduces the amount of water lost through evaporation. The City of Round Rock supplies free mulch to water utility customers.

Save Money

Beginning May 1, the City of Round Rock is implementing new water rates that will be effective from May through September only. For a residential customer with a typical 5/8 inch meter, the base rate of \$13.18 remains the same. For 1,000 to 18,000 gallons of water used, the rate is \$2.24 per thousand. For each 1,000 gallons of water used over 18,000, the rate increases to \$2.80. Keeping your water use low will help keep your water bills low.

Get Help

How can you tell if you may be overwatering? The City of Round Rock's Water Utility Department offers free irrigation system evaluations to its customers to check out your irrigation system and provide a recommended schedule based on plant material, light, and sprinkler head type. If you are interested in scheduling this service, call the City's Water Conservation Specialist, Jessica Woods, at 671-2755 or email jwoods@round-rock.tx.us, or talk with a professional licensed irrigator about your system.