

Frequently Asked Questions About Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Conservation Measures and the South Florida Water Management District's Comprehensive Water Conservation Program

March 2010

Q: What is the District's Comprehensive Water Conservation Program?

A: In September 2008, the South Florida Water Management District adopted a Comprehensive Water Conservation Program to protect South Florida's water resources and help ensure sustainable water supplies by developing a lasting water conservation ethic throughout South Florida. The District is promoting water conservation for its many benefits in meeting the growing demands on the region's limited water supply.

The Comprehensive Water Conservation Program fosters a conservation culture with regulatory, voluntary and financial incentives, as well as education and marketing strategies. All of the components of the program are designed to build on and complement successful water conservation initiatives at the local, state and national levels. The dynamic and flexible program is designed to also evolve with any changes in Florida law and the District's progress in environmental restoration. Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Conservation Measures are one component of the program.

Q: What are the Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Conservation Measures in South Florida?

A: The Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Conservation Measures establishes a two-day-a-week landscape watering schedule throughout the District, with a three-day-a-week provision for users in some counties. The measures were developed with input from water users across the region over a series of eight public workshops and several meetings of the District's Water Resources Advisory Commission work group. The rule applies when the source of water for irrigation is a utility, lake, pond, canal or well.

2-Day-A-Week Watering

Charlotte, Highlands, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola and Polk Counties

The Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Rule limits lawn and landscape irrigation to two days per week.

- Residents and businesses with an **odd-numbered** street address may water lawns and landscapes on **Wednesdays** and/or **Saturdays**, only **before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.**
- Residents and businesses with an **even-numbered** street address, **no street address** or those that irrigate **both even and odd addresses** within the same zones, which may include multi-family units and homeowners associations, may water lawns and landscapes on **Thursdays** and/or **Sundays**, only **before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.**
- Residents and business located in the City of Cape Coral and Broward, unincorporated Lee, and Miami-Dade Counties must comply with the two day/week restriction pursuant to local ordinance.

3-Day-A-Week Watering Option

For Collier, Glades, Hendry, municipalities in Lee, Martin, Monroe, Palm Beach and St. Lucie Counties only.

A three-day-a-week watering provision to the Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Rule is available to users who reside in counties located wholly within District boundaries. Users may irrigate two days as allowed above or may exercise the option and irrigate a third day.

- Residents and businesses with an **odd-numbered** street address may water lawns and landscapes on **Mondays, Wednesdays** and/or **Saturdays**, only **before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.**
- Residents and businesses with an **even-numbered** street address **no street address** or those that irrigate **both even and odd addresses** within the same zones, which may include multi-family units and homeowners associations, may water lawns and landscapes on **Tuesdays, Thursdays** and/or **Sundays**, only **before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.**

Q: What are the landscape irrigation restrictions in the utility service areas of Lake Worth and Hallandale?

A: Emergency water shortage orders remain in place for Lake Worth and Hallandale, where lawn irrigation is allowed one day a week. These restrictions help protect coastal wells from saltwater intrusion.

1-Day-A-Week Watering

Water utility customers in the service areas of Hallandale Beach and Lake Worth remain on once-weekly watering restrictions to help protect their coastal wells from saltwater intrusion.

Less than five irrigated acres:

- Residents and businesses with **odd-numbered** addresses can water lawns and landscapes on **Mondays** from **either 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. or from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.**

- Residents and businesses with **even-numbered** addresses, those with no addresses, and those that irrigate both even and odd addresses in the same zone can water lawns and landscapes on **Thursdays** from **either 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. or from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.**

Greater than or equal to 5 irrigated acres:

- Residents and businesses with **odd-numbered** addresses can water lawns and landscapes on **Mondays** from **either 12 a.m. to 8 a.m. or 4 p.m. to 11:59 p.m.**
- Residents and businesses with **even-numbered** addresses and those with no addresses can water lawns and landscapes on **Thursdays** from **either 12 a.m. to 8 a.m. or 4 p.m. to 11:59 p.m.**
- Residents and businesses that irrigate both even and odd addresses in the same zone can water lawns and landscapes on **Thursdays** from **either 12 a.m. to 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 11:59 p.m.**

No area may be irrigated more than once per week.

Q: Are there any types of irrigation methods that are exempt from Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Conservation Measures?

A: Yes. Low-volume hand-watering, low-volume irrigation, micro-irrigation, and irrigation with water from a rain barrel, cistern or other rain-harvesting device is allowed at any time. However, a voluntary reduction in use is encouraged, and landscape irrigation conducted with such systems should not produce water runoff.

Low-volume hand-watering - using a hose with an attached automatic shut-off or trigger nozzle.

Low-volume irrigation - using equipment and devices specifically designed to deliver the smallest amount of water needed by the plant being irrigated and to put the water in the plant's root zone.

Micro-irrigation - delivering small amounts of water on or below the soil surface. Drops or tiny streams of water spray through emitters or applicators placed along a water delivery line. This includes bubbler, drip, trickle, mist or microspray, and subsurface irrigation methods.

Rainwater harvesting - the collection and storing of rainwater for irrigation or other non-potable uses. In typical residential applications, roof catchment systems channel rainwater into onsite storage (usually cisterns or rain barrels) via the home's system of gutters and pipes.

Q: Do Year-Round Irrigation Conservation Measures allow for additional watering days and times for irrigating newly planted lawns and landscaping?

A: Yes. Additional watering for up to 90 days is allowed following the installation of new lawns and landscaping.

- On the day new landscaping is installed, new plantings and the soil may be irrigated once without regard to the normally allowable watering days and times. Soil irrigation is also allowed immediately prior to planting.
- New plantings that have been in place for **30 days or less** may be watered on **Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and/or Sundays**, only **before 10 a.m.** and/or **after 4 p.m.**
- New plantings that have been in place from **31 to 90 days** may be watered on **Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and/or Saturdays**, only **before 10 a.m.** and/or **after 4 p.m.**
- Irrigation is limited to the areas containing new landscaping only. An entire irrigation zone may be watered only if new landscaping is planted on at least 50 percent of that zone. If new landscaping is planted on less than 50 percent of an irrigation zone, only the new plantings may be watered.

Q: Are additional days and times available for irrigating newly planted lawns and landscaping in the utility service areas of Lake Worth and Hallandale?

A: Yes. In the utility service areas of Lake Worth and Hallandale, additional watering is allowed for up to 60 days following the installation of new landscaping.

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For properties less than five acres:

- New landscaping that has been in place for **less than 30 days** can be irrigated from **2 a.m. to 8 a.m.** on **Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and/or Sundays**.
- New landscaping that has been in place for **31 days to 60 days** can be irrigated from **2 a.m. to 8 a.m.** on **Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays**.

For properties five acres or more:

- New landscaping that has been in place for **less than 30 days** can be irrigated from **12 a.m. to 8 a.m.** on **Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and/or Sundays**.
- New landscaping that has been in place for **31 to 60 days** can be irrigated from **12 a.m. to 8 a.m.** on **Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays**.

Q: Are there any landscape irrigation limits for residents and businesses using reclaimed water and/or supplemented reclaimed water?

A: No. Water from a reclaimed water system can be used anytime. To promote the most efficient use of this resource, the District encourages reclaimed users to

irrigate lawns and landscapes before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m., and to apply no more than three-quarters to an inch of water per week and/or operate irrigation systems for no more than 30 minutes per zone.

Reclaimed water is produced by thoroughly treating the liquids collected at waste water treatment plants.

Supplemented reclaimed water is reclaimed water which has been augmented with groundwater or surface water by a public or private water supply utility.

Reclaimed and supplemented reclaimed water is not meant for drinking and is used almost exclusively for irrigation. Both types of water are usually transferred through purple pipes.

Q: Can I apply for permission to change my watering days or times?

A: Yes. Under certain conditions, you may apply for a variance or letter modification for those holding water use permits. For more information, please visit www.sfwmd.gov.

Q: Are Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Conservation Measures mandatory?

A: Yes. Irrigation landscape limits are mandatory and are enforced by the South Florida Water Management District, local governments and law enforcement agencies. Residential fines are set by the local government and vary, but typically range from \$25 to \$125 for a first offense.

Q: Why are Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Conservation Measures an important component of the District's Comprehensive Water Conservation Program?

A: Measures in the District's Comprehensive Water Conservation Program, including year-round watering limits, are designed to accomplish a measurable change in water use. Consider that:

- Up to one-half of all potable water produced in our region goes to outdoor irrigation.
- More than 50 percent of the water applied to lawns may be lost to evaporation or run-off because of over-watering.
- Improved irrigation efficiency enhances landscape quality; helps to stretch local water supplies; and helps protect and sustain local water resources for area residents and the environment.

- The potential water savings from Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Conservation Measures is substantial. Due to similar measures in place during the recent water shortage, a total savings of 138.8 million gallons of water per day was achieved in seven counties alone over a six-month period.

Q: Are there other components to the South Florida Water Management District's Comprehensive Water Conservation Program?

A: Yes. Components and key strategies of the plan include:

- Goal-based conservation planning, implementation and improved reporting for large, permitted water users.
- Conservation-based rate structures for utilities designed to encourage water savings and discourage high-volume use.
- The retrofitting of outdated, water-guzzling plumbing devices. Adopting and incorporating Florida-friendly landscaping principles.
- Water conservation education strategies, including classroom education, social marketing and professional development.
- A call for governments and large users to lead by example.

Q: How much water does a lawn or landscape need?

A: Proper irrigation is based on the amount of water each lawn needs. Lawns and landscapes typically need to receive only three-quarters to an inch of water each week. The lawn may not need to be watered at all if it has rained during the week. Most shrubs and trees do not need any supplemental irrigation once they are established in the landscape.

Q: Where can I learn more about the District's Comprehensive Water Conservation Program?

A: More information about the program is available on the South Florida Water Management District's Water Conservation Web site at www.savewaterfl.com and www.sfwmd.gov/2days.