

Irrigation Systems

Southwest Florida
Water Management District

WATERMATTERS.ORG • 1-800-423-1476

**Phase 1 (Moderate Water Shortage)
Water Restrictions & Year-Round
Water Conservation Measures**

FACT SHEET

Proper irrigation system maintenance conserves water by minimizing waste. This is why the District prohibits the operation of a broken sprinkler head or other malfunctioning component after the responsible party has been notified about the problem by the District, water utility or local government (references: Rule 40D-21.621, Florida Administrative Code and Rule 40D-22.201(2)(e), Florida Administrative Code).

Maintenance is not limited to fixing broken, missing or misaligned irrigation system components. It should also include proactively testing a system to identify problems, verify proper operation of a rain or moisture sensor, and make seasonal adjustments to the irrigation schedule.

There are important water use allowances for maintenance:

- Irrigation systems may be operated during otherwise restricted days or times (in other words, any day and any time) for testing and repair purposes.
- Routine, proactive testing may be done as often as once a week.
- The run-time for any one test in any one irrigation zone may not exceed 10 minutes.
- An attendant must be on-site when the testing is taking place. This generally means that the attendant is visible from the nearest road or other public property. If the attendant is not clearly visible, an irrigation professional's commercial vehicle or other means (such as temporary marker "flags") should be used to alert passers-by of the ongoing activity.

On rare occasions, a well failure or major pipe break results in debris being introduced into the irrigation system. The system must then be thoroughly flushed-out in order to prevent clogging of valves and sprinkler heads. If this flushing activity will involve using a complete irrigation application cycle during an otherwise restricted day or time, the irrigation contractor should call the District's water hotline (1-800-848-0499) to report the situation. The District can then use the reported information (address involved and date the one-time flushing will occur) to avoid an unnecessary enforcement action.

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