

Lawn and Landscape *irrigation rule*

Saving Florida's water resources is a vital responsibility that will take everyone's participation to be successful. Water conservation may seem unnecessary in a state surrounded by water, but not all of that water is available for drinking or irrigation.

One of the most important ways to help meet our water supply needs for today and in the future is through conservation, which is the efficient and effective use of water. Lawn and landscape irrigation can account for more than half of residential and commercial water use. Watering wisely promotes healthier lawns and landscapes, and conserves our precious water resources.

To ensure the efficient use of water for lawn and landscape irrigation, the St. Johns River Water Management District adopted water conservation provisions to its rule regulating lawn and landscape irrigation. The rule is in effect year-round and applies throughout the District's 18-county area.

Think *2* Two

**Water lawns before 10 a.m. or
after 4 p.m. and no more than
two days a week.**

What are the limits on lawn and landscape irrigation?

Irrigation is allowed only before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.

Irrigation is allowed no more than two days per week, per zone. A contiguous property may be divided into different zones and each zone may be irrigated on different days than other zones. However, no single zone may be irrigated more than two days a week.

Irrigation limitations apply to water from private wells, surface water bodies and water supply utilities.

Water users choose their own irrigation days unless their local government has adopted an ordinance that specifies the irrigation days. Check with your local government to see if specific irrigation days have been established for your area.

Persons irrigating with an automatic lawn irrigation system installed after May 1991 must install, maintain and operate a rain sensor device or switch that overrides the system when adequate rainfall has occurred.

What are the exceptions to the lawn and landscape irrigation rule?

Irrigation using a micro-irrigation (drip) system is allowed anytime.

Irrigation of new landscape is allowed at any time of day on any day for the initial 30 days and every other day for the next 30 days for a total of one 60-day period, provided that the irrigation is limited to the minimum amount necessary for establishment.

Watering in of chemicals, including insecticides, pesticides, fertilizers, fungicides and herbicides when required by law, the manufacturer, or best management practices, is allowed anytime within 24 hours of application.

Irrigation systems may be operated anytime for maintenance and repair purposes, not to exceed 10 minutes per hour per zone.

Irrigation using a hand-held hose equipped with a spray nozzle that can be adjusted so water flows only as needed is allowed anytime.

Discharge of water from a water-to-air air-conditioning unit or other water-dependent cooling system is not limited.

The use of water from a reclaimed water system is allowed anytime. A reclaimed water system includes systems in which the primary source is reclaimed water, which may or may not be supplemented from another source during peak demand periods.

The use of recycled water from wet detention treatment ponds for irrigation is allowed anytime provided the ponds are not augmented from any ground or off-site surface water, or public supply sources.

What if additional irrigation is needed?

A standard general permit is required for circumstances when three-day-a-week irrigation is needed. To obtain a permit, applicants must demonstrate the need to irrigate three days a week, and submit a \$50 application fee. Applications are available online at www.sjrwmd.com.

Who does the rule apply to?

The rule applies to all lawn and landscape irrigation not regulated by a consumptive use permit. Typically, this includes residential, commercial and industrial establishments. Two-day-a-week irrigation limitations do not apply to golf course fairways, greens, tees and roughs, agricultural crops, nursery plants, or high-use recreational areas such as ball fields. Consumptive use permits typically regulate these types of irrigation.

How does the rule conserve water?

Lawns and landscapes generally require less water than is applied.

65 percent of water sprinkled on lawns during the hottest part of the day is lost to evaporation. When you water before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m., the water can seep into the ground, promoting healthy plants that establish deep root systems.

According to the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, established Florida lawns and landscapes need watering only two to three times per week in the dry season. Even less water is needed when it rains and in the fall and winter. Two days a week is ample irrigation to keep nearly all landscapes healthy.

For more information

To learn more about the lawn and landscape irrigation rule, or for tips on conserving water inside and outside, call the District's Office of Communications and Governmental Affairs at (800) 725-5922 or visit our Web site at www.sjrwmd.com. You may also want to visit www.floridaswater.com.

Florida's Water

It's Worth Saving



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