

BE PREPARED FOR SUMMER: IRRIGATION

You're preparing your property for the summer months: getting the AC tuned-up, planting flowers, and ensuring your building is in good shape so that your energy bills won't skyrocket. While you're preparing for warmer weather, it's time to de-winterize and inspect your sprinkler system. Doing so can save significantly on water bills and avoid costly repairs.



Did you know that an irrigation system with a leak 1/32nd of an inch in diameter (about the thickness of a dime) can waste about 6,300 gallons of water per month?

System efficiency is the key to effective water conservation. Regardless of the type of system you use, there are simple things you can do to ensure that the right amount of water gets where it is needed and you avoid unnecessary costs and headaches.

SPRING MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

- Close all manual drains that were left open when your irrigation system was winterized.
- Open the main valve in a slow and gradual manner, allowing the piping between it and the backflow prevention assembly to fill with water.
- Pressurize the mainline from the backflow prevention assembly to the control valves. Have one of the control valves open while you do this so the air trapped in the piping can escape through the sprinkler heads as the pipes fill with water.
- Have the cross-connection assembly, or back-flow, tested by a state certified tester. Make sure you contact a licensed professional who specializes in backflow testing. You can visit your city's website for a full list of certified technicians.
- Replace the back-up battery on the controller.
- Adjust the date/time on your controller if needed.
- Run the entire sprinkler system, one zone at a time. As you do this, check for the following:
 - Signs of possible leaks,
 - Damaged sprinkler heads or piping which could have occurred over the winter,

- Accurate spray patterns - Adjust your sprinkler heads so they water your landscape and not sidewalks or pavement. Make sure their spray isn't blocked by plants, uncut grass, or other materials,
- All rotor or impact sprinkler heads are, in fact, rotating,
- Mainline leaks or seeping valves.

After you have gone through the checklist above, the next steps are to clean clogged nozzles and sprinkler heads to ensure proper coverage. Then, it's a good idea to ensure that you're free of leaks in your mainline by turning off all water inside or outside your building and making sure the red triangle and/or numbers on your meter gauge outside are not moving.

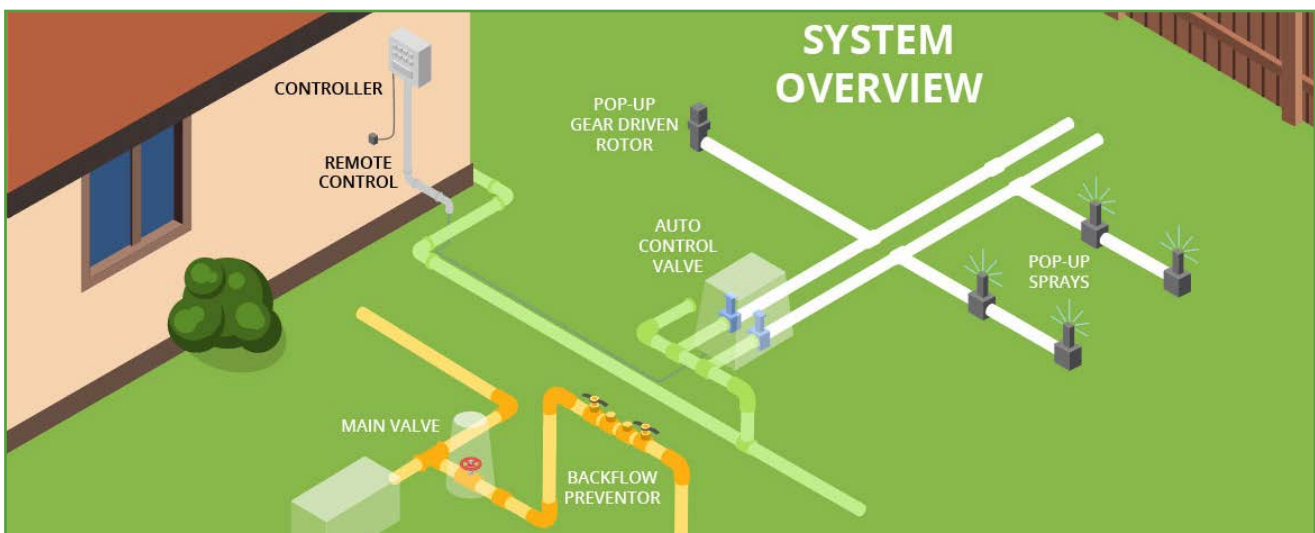
A Few Easy Tips & Tricks on Conserving Water:

- Check with your water provider to

make sure you're following the current water restrictions. Proper scheduling on your irrigation system is a very important part in helping conserve water and keeping your water bill lower in the summer months.

- Install a rain sensor if you don't already have one. Rain sensors are designed to shut off sprinkler systems when rainfall reaches a preset amount, typically 1/4 inch. Once the moisture level subsides, the sensor re-enables the sprinkler system, resuming the upcoming watering schedule. Rain sensors should be mounted in an unobstructed area exposed to open sky - minimizing the potential for fallen leaves or other debris from blocking the sensor.

Once you're done, you will be in good shape for summer. These steps keep your system running well, save water and get ahead of unwelcome surprises.



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