

## Spring is the Perfect Time for a Sprinkler Tune-up

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Spring is finally here! The short days of winter have come to an end. The sun's rays are glowing brighter, flowers are beginning to bloom, and grass is greening-up. Now is perfect for a spring-time sprinkler tune-up. Make sure your sprinklers are working correctly and your system is irrigating efficiently. Below are some suggestions to help you improve your irrigation efficiency as well as a list of six common irrigation errors to avoid.

Increasing the efficiency of your irrigation system can be accomplished by following this checklist:

- ✓ Perform regular maintenance by turning on all irrigation zones. Check for leaks and that all sprinkler heads are operating properly.
- ✓ Adjust sprinklers to avoid spraying buildings, driveways, streets, and sidewalks. In addition, be certain that plants or structures do not interfere with the irrigation spray pattern.
- ✓ Make sure there is a functioning rain shutoff device placed in an unobstructed location.
- ✓ Separate the irrigation system into multiple zones and water only those areas that need it.
- ✓ Use your programmable timer to water different areas of the landscape for different lengths of time.
- ✓ Use drip or micro-irrigation in ornamental planting areas. Drip and micro-irrigation apply water more efficiently by dispensing water slowly near the base of the plant, reducing runoff and evaporation.

### Did you know?

The iron stains on this fence are the result of a sprinkler radius that is too large.



Replacing the sprinkler heads with nozzles with smaller radii would reduce this staining and keep the fence from needing constant repainting.



### The 6 most common irrigation errors:

1. **Broken or misdirected sprinklers.**
2. **Sprinkler spray pattern obstructed by plant parts or grass blades.** These include branches, trunks, or leaves that can cause the spray pattern to be uneven.
3. **Mixed sprinkler head types.** For example, when stationary shrub spray heads and rotating turf sprinklers are used in the same irrigation zone, the shrubs usually end up being overwatered.
4. **Unmatched precipitation rates.** The flow rate (amount of water applied per minute) of a sprinkler with a quarter-circle spray pattern should be  $\frac{1}{2}$  the amount of the same type of sprinkler with half-circle coverage, and a  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the flow rate of a full-circle sprinkler.
5. **Improperly spaced sprinklers.** Space the lawn sprinklers for the water from one sprinkler just reaches the adjacent sprinkler head(s), ensuring uniform watering. This is a term referred to as head-to-head coverage.
6. **Irrigation scheduled incorrectly.** Irrigation controllers are often set to run too frequently or for too long per irrigation event.

Want to learn more about your irrigation system and how to set a watering schedule for your unique lawn and landscape? Here are helpful worksheets so you can be Water Smart!