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## WATER USE RESTRICTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### When can I water my lawn?

**All outdoor watering including using sprinklers and/or hand watering of trees and gardens must be done between 7 pm and 9 am on the permitted days of the week.** Watering in the evening, overnight or early morning hours reduces water losses due to evaporation from the heat of daytime temperatures.

During Stage 1 – Watering of lawns and use of sprinklers is permitted between 7:00 pm and 9:00 am on **Wednesdays and Saturdays** for even civic addresses and **Thursdays and Sundays** for odd civic addresses (up to 2 hours maximum). Trees and gardens can also be watered during these time periods.

During Stage 2 – Watering of lawns and use of sprinklers is permitted between 7:00 pm and 9:00 am on **Wednesdays only** for even civic addresses and **Sundays only** for odd civic addresses (up to 2 hours maximum). Trees and gardens can also be watered during these time periods.

During Stage 3 and Stage 4 – No watering of lawns is permitted (*except for new lawns with a Garden Irrigation Permit – see next question*). Trees and gardens can only be hand watered during Stage 3 and Stage 4 watering restrictions (see below).

### What about a newly sodded lawn?

New lawns should be planted in the spring to avoid excessive use of artificial irrigation during the drier summer months when water is limited. New lawns require a Garden Irrigation Permit in order to be approved for additional watering. Information on additional watering allowances for new lawns with a Garden Irrigation Permit will be provided along with the permit.

During Stage 1, Garden Irrigation Permits can be obtained at City Hall and will be issued for 21 days where new sod has been planted and for 49 days where the lawn will be grown from seed. **Garden Irrigation Permits will not be issued during Stage 2 – 3 – 4 Water Use Restrictions.**

## **If there is a total sprinkling ban, will my lawn die?**

Your lawn will naturally go dormant and turn brown during a hot, dry spell. A good rainfall or cooler weather will help your lawn revive quickly. Watering lawns sparingly or not at all during the summer months saves one household up to 17,000 litres of water.

## **My fertilizer-pesticide-herbicide application requires watering outside my designated watering time?**

It is expected that the watering restrictions will be followed. Lawn fertilization is most effective when applied in fall, early spring and late spring. Fertilizer is more likely to harm your lawn than help it during a period of drought. If you do plan to fertilize your lawn during the summer months it is best wait for the forecast to call for steady light rain.

## **What about vegetable gardens, flower beds, and trees?**

The City wants to promote local food production and drought resistant gardening.

All outdoor watering including hand watering of trees and gardens must be done between 7 pm and 9 am. Watering in the evening, overnight or early morning hours reduces water losses due to evaporation from the heat of daytime temperatures.

### Stage 1-2 Water Restrictions – Vegetable Gardens, Trees, Flowers, etc.

- Hand watering using buckets, a spring-loaded spray nozzle or micro/drip irrigation to water vegetable gardens and fruit trees is permitted on any day of the week during Stage 1 – 2 between 7 pm and 9 am for a maximum of **4** hours.
- Hand watering using buckets, a spring-loaded spray nozzle or micro/drip irrigation to water ornamental trees and shrubs is permitted on any day of the week during Stage 1 – 2 between 7 pm and 9 am for a maximum of **2** hours.
- Soaker hoses are not permitted except within the lawn watering restrictions outlined above.
- In-ground pop-up sprinkler systems must follow the lawn watering restrictions outlined above.

### Stage 3-4 Water Restrictions – Vegetable Gardens, Trees, Flowers, etc.

- Hand watering using buckets, a spring-loaded spray nozzle or micro/drip irrigation to water vegetable gardens and fruit trees is permitted on any day of the week during Stage 3 – 4 between 7 pm and 9 am for a maximum of **2** hours.
- Hand watering using buckets, a spring-loaded spray nozzle or micro/drip irrigation to water ornamental trees and shrubs is permitted on any day of the week during Stage 3 – 4 between 7 pm and 9 am for a maximum **1** hour.
- Soaker hoses are not permitted in Stage 3 – 4 watering restrictions.
- In-ground pop-up sprinkler systems are not permitted in Stage 3 – 4 watering restrictions.

## **What are micro spray/drip irrigation systems?**

Micro spray/drip irrigation systems deliver water to the root zone of the plants which avoids evaporation. A micro spray nozzle head or micro drip emitter uses approximately 3.785 litres of water per hour vs. a sprinkler which uses 27 litres per hour. An average system uses less than 20 gallons per hour at less than 25 psi.

Note: Irrigation systems that utilize pop up sprinkler heads can be changed very easily and inexpensively to conform to micro spray/drip irrigation standards (see your local irrigation system provider for further information).

## **Can I wash my car or boat?**

Vehicles and boats can be washed at any time during Stage 1 and 2. To prevent any unnecessary wasting of water, boats and cars must be washed with a hose equipped with a spring-loaded nozzle and/or a bucket filled with water.

Washing vehicles is not permitted during Stage 3 restrictions, unless preparing the vehicle for applying paint.

Washing vehicles or boats is not permitted at all during Stage 4 watering restrictions.

## **Why 7pm to 9am for outdoor watering?**

Watering during the evening, overnight and morning hours reduces the amount of water losses due to evaporation from lawns, sprinklers and soil.

## **When can I wash my house, driveway or sidewalk?**

Washing of houses, driveways and sidewalks is permitted during Stage 1. During stage 2 and 3 it is not permitted unless it is for the preparation of applying paints, preservatives or for pouring concrete. No water usage for washing of houses, driveways and sidewalks is permitted during Stage 4.

## **If I pay my taxes why can't I water my lawn whenever I want?**

Increased demands in water consumption result in increased costs for pumping and treating water and would eventually result in the need for the upgrading of infrastructure which could increase rates substantially. Additionally our municipal water sources are not infinite; using less water benefits other system users and the environment that these sources support.

## **If I live in a strata how do I determine my watering day?**

The watering day is dependent on the address of the strata and not the unit number.

### **Can my kids still play in the sprinkler?**

Yes, during Stages 1 and 2 when lawn watering is permitted. Stage 3 and Stage 4 do not permit the use of sprinklers but use of a hose with a spring-loaded nozzle is permitted.

### **I can't meet the alternate day and time restrictions of the bylaw. What should I do?**

The bylaw restrictions must be met; automated sprinkler systems that cannot be programmed to comply with the restrictions will have to be manually operated.

### **I am not connected to the municipal water supply. I use a private well or water source for lawn watering. Does the bylaw apply to me?**

Water restrictions do not apply to those homes on private wells or water sources. However property owners are encouraged to be good environmental stewards and follow the bylaw restrictions.

### **What is considered “wasting water”?**

Wasting water includes allowing water to run excessively or unnecessarily to waste. Some examples include;

- Allowing irrigated water to puddle or run off a lawn into the storm drain system
- Allowing irrigation water to be sprayed onto a paved surface such as sidewalks, driveways, roadways, curbs, or gutters
- Washing of vehicles with a hose not equipped with spring-loaded nozzle or shut off valve at the discharge end of the hose.
- Leaving a hose running without using a spring-loaded nozzle.
- Allowing leaks at sprinkler or hose fixtures to drip while not in active use.

### **Why are there exemptions for commercial enterprises?**

Sprinkling regulations are meant to reduce water use in ways that do not cause serious economic hardship. hose users requiring water as part of a commercial operation are expected to conserve as much water as possible without resulting in a loss of business. During times of extreme drought, however, the Director of Public Works & Development Services may order commercial operators to cease watering operations. Stage 4 watering restrictions will apply to commercial operators including car washes.

## What is the difference between Provincial drought levels stages and watering restriction stages?

The provincial drought level system utilized by the Province is used for describing forecasted or current conditions in a water basin, watersheds or street systems. Their drought levels are based on indicators such as snow levels, seasonal runoff, precipitation, and streamflow, and guide the implementation of watering restrictions by local governments. Watering restrictions enable local governments to promote water conservation in their communities, manage their water supplies in times of drought and reduce operational maintenance costs associated with water treatment and supply. As an example, the Provincial drought stage 1 reflects normal conditions, whereas a local government watering restriction stage 1 indicates the first level of a potential water supply problem.

## Why are school and municipal playing fields exempt from the regulations?

The City is reducing the amount of irrigation to sports fields with limited use; however, some critical fields will continue to be watered regularly to protect the playing surface. Most playing fields are built on a sand base for better drainage. Turf grown on a sand base can die if not watered. Due to the high replacement costs of playing fields, the City of Duncan believes it is a poor use of public money to risk damage because of lack of watering and heavy foot traffic areas requiring regular watering will not bounce back in the fall like residential lawns will. Therefore, shutting down irrigation to these fields poses a high risk of significant and costly damage to the fields.

During Stage 3 – 4 Watering Restrictions, the City reduces the watering of its parks and spray-park as follows:

Charles Hoey Park	There are 5 sprinkling zones in Charles Hoey Park. Two of the five sprinkler zones that water the “grass only” are shut off. The remaining three zones, which water the small grassed areas and planters, operate with reduced times.
Centennial Park	Sprinkler zones that water the grassed areas are shut off; the remaining zones are tree drip system zones and planters are operating with reduced times. Out of the 19 zones, 16 zones are shut off and three are operational.
Spray Park (Within Centennial Park)	The water from the spray park is on demand. In other words, someone has to hit the sensor for the water to come out. As such, the amount of water that is used is dependent on the number of users.  There has been some concern expressed about the spray park’s operation; however, many people feel there is a need for families to have somewhere to take their children to escape from the heat, particularly for those who don’t have the ability to drive to the river.

	Although the water is not recycled, the water does go into the rock garden which allows for ground water recharge. Overflow goes into the creek so it is not wasted. Staff monitor the well levels frequently to ensure there is enough water and if necessary there may be a reduction in hours of operation or a completion shut down of the spray park.
Canada Ave. Park (Heiwa Park)	Sprinkler systems operate with reduced times.
TCH Boulevards and Planters	Sprinkler systems operate with reduced times.
Sports Fields	Sprinkler systems operate with reduced times.
Planters throughout the City	Sprinkler systems operate with reduced times.
Pine Street Park	System is shut off.
China Garden	System is shut off.

Note: The normal water time per sprinkling zone is 20 minutes per zone. These are reduced to 10 or 15 minutes each, depending on the sensitivity of the planted area.

**What about City boulevards?**

The City has significantly reduced the amount of watering in these areas, with timers and other changes, but some irrigation of community infrastructure is necessary to maintain these assets.

**My neighbour is not using water in accordance with the By-Law. How do I report this offence?**

Reports can be made to the City via phone at (250) 746-6126, via email [duncan@duncan.ca](mailto:duncan@duncan.ca); through the Incident reporting on the City’s website at [www.duncan.ca](http://www.duncan.ca), or in person at City Hall. Please record the address and street that the violation has occurred at as well as the time and type of violation.

**How does the City of Duncan enforce the Waterworks By-Law?**

Reports of a violation are followed up by making contact with the homeowner and providing them with the details of the violation. If non-compliance continues, fines may be issued. **Violations of Stage 1, 2 and 3 and 4 water use restrictions have ticketing provisions of \$100, \$200 and \$300 and \$400 (pending adoption); respectively.**