

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DROUGHT



DROUGHT READY SCV

What's Up with Watering Restrictions?
 What's in Effect: Water Conservation and Water Shortage Ordinance **STAGE 2** Efficient Irrigation Practices

WATERING REQUIREMENTS	HOW LONG TO WATER	WHEN TO WATER
<p>No more than 3 days per week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Odd addresses: Monday/Wednesday/Friday Even addresses: Tuesday/Thursday/Sunday No watering on Saturdays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A maximum of two 5-minute irrigation cycles per zone per watering day (10 minutes max per zone). 	<p>Only in the morning and evening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May-Oct: midnight to 9 a.m. and/or 8 p.m. to midnight Nov-April: midnight to 10 a.m. and/or 6 p.m. to midnight

EXEMPTIONS & ALLOWANCES

There are a few exemptions that protect our landscape investments. Watering day and time limits do not apply to:

- Landscape irrigation zones that use drip irrigation.
- Landscape irrigation zones that use high efficiency sprinkler nozzles with low precipitation rates (equal to or less than 1 inch per hour).
- The hand watering of established trees as well as fruits and vegetables for human consumption.

Additionally, you can hand-water brown spots using a hose with an automatic shutoff nozzle. This smart practice is more efficient than increasing how much you run your sprinklers.

WHAT IS AN IRRIGATION ZONE?

An irrigation zone is a separate area within an irrigation system that is controlled by a unique valve. An irrigation system can have multiple zones which are generally connected to a specific plant type with a unique watering requirement.

How to determine the number of irrigation zones you have: Turn on each station on your irrigation controller, one at a time. Each station is a zone.

For maximum irrigation efficiency, make sure the irrigation type matches the plant material within the zone. Typically, **sprinklers** are used for grass; **drip** is used for shrubs; and **bubblers** are used for trees.

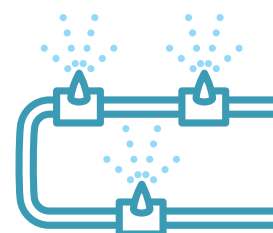
Recommended smart practice: Make sure each zone has these three key components – a control valve, a pressure regulator, and correct calibration with a smart irrigation controller.

WHAT IS AN IRRIGATION CYCLE?

An irrigation cycle breaks your total watering time into increments, which gives the soil time to soak up water.

By watering for short periods of time with breaks in between, the ground has time to absorb water from the previous cycle. In subsequent cycles of watering, the moistened soil allows water to travel even deeper, creating a healthier lawn.

Did you know? In the SCV, much of our soil is clay, which means there is typically runoff after 4 to 5 minutes when using traditional spray nozzles, but 30-40 minutes when using high-efficiency nozzles with a precipitation rate less than 1 inch per hour.





IRRIGATION RUN TIME

What does “two 5-minute cycles per irrigation zone” really mean?

It means that each zone of your landscaped areas (i.e. turfgrass, shrubs, other groundcover, etc.), controlled by separate valves, can be watered a maximum of two times per allowed watering day, no more than 5 minutes each time.

Recommended best practice: Grouping plants of similar irrigation needs in a zone allows for the most efficient use of water.

Can I only water my landscape for 10 minutes total?

On your watering days, you can water each zone in your irrigation system for a total of 10 minutes maximum. By breaking the 10-minute watering time into two 5-minute or less cycles, your landscape has time to soak up more of the water it needs, preventing runoff. Customers with high-efficiency sprinkler nozzles or those using drip may water for longer periods of time. However, please ensure that no irrigation runoff is occurring.

For example, if you have four zones in your system, your irrigation will run for a total of 40 minutes on the allowable watering days.

Can I change the time spent on irrigation (i.e. backyard 5 minutes; front yard 15 minutes)?

To effectively irrigate and minimize the stress on both your front and backyards, it is recommended that you follow the watering requirements of no more than 10 minutes per zone (two 5-minute cycles), as outlined in the Water Conservation and Water Shortage Ordinance. Always make sure that no irrigation runoff is occurring.

IRRIGATION DAYS

Can I spread the watering time over 4 days?

No. To comply with the Ordinance, you must follow the watering schedule of no more than three days per week, based on your address. Though some plant stress may occur, the watering limits, if applied correctly, will provide enough water to maintain your landscapes. If you notice runoff is occurring after three minutes, stop watering and allow the landscape to soak up the water.

Can I change my watering days?

No. All customers must abide by the watering day schedule set forth by the Water Conservation and Water Shortage Ordinance, unless you are irrigating with high-efficiency sprinkler nozzles or drip irrigation:

- Water only 3 days per week.
- Odd addresses on Monday, Wednesday, Friday.
- Even addresses on Tuesday, Thursday, Sunday.
- No watering on Saturdays.

NOTE – Customers with more than 10 centrally managed irrigation controllers may apply for the **Alternative Performance Compliance Waiver** and must demonstrate conservation performance on a monthly basis.

IRRIGATION CONTROLLERS

Are smart irrigation controllers exempt from watering day restrictions?

No, they are not. You will need to set your irrigation controller to run on the appropriate watering days, as well as the watering run time requirements – a maximum of two 5-minute cycles per zone per watering day.

A smart irrigation controller adjusts watering times based on your plants’ needs, landscape conditions and real-time weather.

Can I just reduce my irrigation controller to water 20% less? This would be better for the lawn and/or landscape.

Based on how you may water your landscape now, you may not be able to reduce your irrigation by 20%. Also, all customers must abide by the watering day schedule set forth by the Water Conservation and Water Shortage Ordinance.

SOLUTIONS TO HELP YOU MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR IRRIGATION

(WHILE OBSERVING THE WATERING RESTRICTIONS)



Upgrade Your Irrigation

Get rebates for high-efficiency nozzles, drip irrigation and other efficiency products.



Control Your Irrigation

Get a rebate for a smart irrigation controller.



Upgrade Your Landscape

Get a Lawn Replacement Program rebate and mix and match additional incentives.

Visit conserve.yourSCVwater.com to get started.

THE LAWN REPLACEMENT PROGRAM A GOOD WAY TO SAVE WATER AND MONEY

I want to know more. What do I need to do to participate?

Here are the basic program facts you need to know:

- ◆ \$3.00 per sq. ft. incentive for living grass* removed
* (Grass may be dormant. We do not count bare soil.)
- ◆ Eligible project areas: front, side, back yards and parkways
- ◆ Square footage requirements: projects 100 sq. ft. minimum – 2,500 sq. ft. maximum; (5,000 sq. ft. max per year)

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- ◆ Living grass before project start
- ◆ Pre- and post-inspections
- ◆ 50% plant coverage at maturity
- ◆ Must provide a landscape design plan, which includes proposed plants and irrigation types to be used
- ◆ New irrigation must be drip, or high-efficiency sprinkler nozzles with a smart irrigation controller and pressure regulation
- ◆ Irrigation equipment types cannot be mixed within a single irrigation zone

THINGS NOT FUNDED

- ◆ Artificial turf
- ◆ Impervious surfaces or structures

I've already completed my project, but I want to participate in your Lawn Replacement Program, Am I eligible?

If you've already completed your project, unfortunately, you are not eligible to participate in our program for the areas converted without having received a funding reservation confirmation from the Agency. We require pre- and post-inspections when reserving funding to ensure projects meet our program rules and requirements.

Thank you for your forward thinking and water-saving efforts! However, if you installed drip irrigation, high-efficiency nozzles, pressure regulating bodies with check-valve, master pressure regulators, or a smart controller, you may be eligible for product-specific rebates. Make sure to keep your receipts and go to bit.ly/SCVRebatePrograms for more information and to apply for any eligible rebate(s).

Why isn't artificial turf allowed in the Lawn Replacement Program? It saves water.

While artificial turf does save water, it is not a sustainable landscape material. Let us explain why:

- ✗ It is made of plastic and has a big carbon footprint to manufacture and install. Artificial grass does not produce oxygen, sequester greenhouse gases, or clean water through natural processes.

- ✗ When it rains or when you hose down artificial turf, water carries chemicals used to create the turf and absorbs into the ground, contaminating the water supply (i.e. chemicals).
- ✗ There is no wildlife or biodiversity benefit – it does not attract any butterflies, bees, beneficial insects, pollinators or birds to your landscape. Natural materials are essential to healthy and sustainable landscapes.
- ✗ It absorbs the sunlight, which increases the temperature of your backyard, often making it so hot it becomes unusable during the day and well into the evening. In many cases, plastic grass can be hotter than the surrounding asphalt.

Urban Heat Islands – Man-made structures and materials (such as artificial turf) used in urban environments absorb and re-emit the sun's heat more than natural landscapes (such as trees, vegetation

and other natural resources). Often, heat islands build throughout the day and become more pronounced after sunset due to the slow release of heat from urban materials.

Source: [EPA \[epa.gov/heat-islands/learn-about-heat-islands\]\(https://epa.gov/heat-islands/learn-about-heat-islands\)](https://epa.gov/heat-islands/learn-about-heat-islands)

- ✗ The plastic can pollute the soil and kill the soil life beneath it. By creating a dense plastic barrier on top of compacted soil and sand, no garden material can reach the soil beneath it, which kills the soil life (organism and microscopic animals that keep soil healthy)
- ✗ The plastic is often made with toxic chemicals/materials and cannot be recycled once it reaches the end of its useful life.

Source: <https://www.jackwallington.com/17-reasons-to-avoid-fake-lawns-how-bad-is-artificial-grass-for-the-environment/>

I'VE HEARD ABOUT THE BAN ON NON-FUNCTIONAL TURF. WHAT'S THAT ABOUT?

What is "non-functional turf"?

Non-Functional Turf (NFT) is mowed grass that is ornamental and not otherwise used for human recreation purposes. NFT does not include school fields, sports fields, and areas regularly used for civic or community events.

What is the ban on "non-functional turf" about?

Effective June 16, 2022, the State Water Resources Control Board has banned the watering of non-functional turf with potable water (SWRCB 2022-0018) for Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional (CII) customers including the common areas of Homeowners Associations as well as Common Interest Developments.

This does not apply to residential customers.

Are there any exemptions?

Exemptions include areas needed to water trees, perennials and native/drought tolerant grasses.

Does the ban on "non-functional turf" mean I need to remove the lawn I don't use?

This does not apply to residential customers. It applies to Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional (CII) customers including the common areas of

Homeowners Associations as well as Common Interest Developments. The emergency order is currently active for one year and may be extended should drought conditions persist.

CII Customers are encouraged to:

- turn off isolated NFT zones,
- cap NFT areas that are isolated or not critical to watering trees, shrubs, or perennials,
- and should consider converting to drought tolerant plants for long-term savings.

However, for CII customers that choose to convert non-functional turf, we recommended turning off the irrigation now and waiting until the fall/spring to replant with native, drought-tolerant, or other low water using plants.

Converting to NFT focuses on potentially larger savings for larger areas of landscapes.

For more information: <https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/conservation/regs/docs/2022/faq-swrcb-water-restrictions-20220728.pdf>

REPORT WATER WASTE

How do I report water waste?

The quickest way is online through our Report Water Waste form. Please make sure to include pictures and a thorough description of the location!

Visit bit.ly/SCVReportWaterWaste