



# Homeowner Water Efficiency

## Did you know?

Cities in Dakota County pump an average of four million gallons of water per day during the winter months compared to between 10 and 12 million gallons per day during the summer months? And, on some peak use summer days; cities might pump as much as 14 to 16 million gallons. The vast majority of this increase is attributed to lawn watering.

## Follow lawn watering rules

Despite living in the land of 10,000 lakes, Minnesota does not have an unlimited supply of affordable, high quality water. Together, we can help sustain our current and long-term water supply by simply scaling back current lawn watering practices. Remember to:

- ❑ Follow any odd/even day water restrictions that may be in place in your community.
- ❑ Verify whether there are prohibited hours during the day where watering is not allowed.
- ❑ Check for any special watering permits for new sod and seed.

## Practice smart irrigation

Most cities in Dakota County follow an odd/even and time-of-day lawn watering schedule. However, that does not mean you need to water that frequently. If you own an irrigation system, and it cannot be programmed on a schedule less than odd/even watering – such as twice per week – use the system’s manual operation to turn the system on/off, as needed.

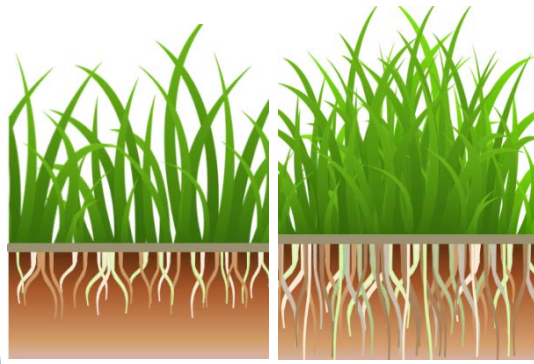
## One inch per week

Watering two times per week, providing a total of one inch of water per week, including rainfall, is all you need if you water your lawn. Watering too much not only wastes water, it also reduces root growth. And a shallow root system needs more water.

Individuals can encourage root growth by minimizing lawn watering in the fall and spring. This will encourage the roots to reach for water deeper in the soil and create a strong, deep root system to prepare for the hot, dry weather in summer.

So how long do you need to sprinkle to put one inch of water on your lawn? Because sprinkler heads vary in output rates, the best way to measure is by placing one or more empty tuna cans between your sprinkler heads and time how long it takes to fill the cans.

For example, if it takes one hour of sprinkling to fill the tuna cans, you can manually water your lawn for 30 minutes twice per week. Remember to also consider the amount of precipitation during the week.



Frequent, shallow watering promotes shallow roots.

Less frequent, deep watering promotes deeper rooting.

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## Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization

14955 Galaxie Avenue  
Apple Valley, MN 55124  
[www.vermillionriverwatershed.org](http://www.vermillionriverwatershed.org)  
952-891-7000

The Vermillion River Watershed encompasses an area of approximately 335 square miles, including portions of two counties and all or portions of 20 cities, towns, and townships. The main stem of the river begins in southeastern Scott County in New Market Township flowing east through central Dakota County, passing over a waterfall in the City of Hastings, and then discharging to the Mississippi River both through a northerly flowing outlet near the City of Hastings as well as through a southerly flowing outlet near the City of Red Wing, Minnesota.

## Do you have an irrigation system? Check out these helpful tips!

Just like any other household appliance, irrigation systems need to be maintained and used properly to achieve optimal efficiency. Follow these irrigation tips to reduce water use and save money on your utility bill.

- Ensure your irrigation system is equipped with a working rain sensor, which detects when it's raining and shuts off the irrigation system.
- Install a soil moisture sensor that directly links your lawns moisture requirements to your irrigation system; only watering when your lawn needs it and shutting off when the optimal moisture content is reached.
- If you notice an area of your yard needs more or less water, change the setting on that zone or adjust the sprinkler heads watering that specific area.
- Consider replacing existing heads with low-volume, low-angle heads with pressure-reducing valves. Adjust heads so the water is delivered as close to the turf as possible. This minimizes water lost to evaporation.
- On a monthly basis, visually verify that all sprinkler heads are attached and in working order.
- Observe your system in action. Adjust nozzles and irrigation duration as needed to ensure most efficient use of water possible. Make sure water is not sprinkling impervious surfaces such as sidewalks, roadways and driveways, and there is not excessive runoff during irrigation system operation.
- If you have an old irrigation controller, consider upgrading. "Smart" irrigation controllers use local weather data and site conditions to manage systems responsibly. They have varying levels of complexity, ranging from models that simply shut off the systems when it's raining to more advanced models that make adjustments to conditions such as ground moisture, soil type, sun exposure, and much more.
- Turn the system's automatic function off. Adjust the controls manually when the lawn needs water. Pre-programmed sprinklers continue to run when there is adequate rainfall, overwatering your lawn.
- Stop watering altogether. Grass will go dormant for several weeks without dying. In cases of severe drought, watering weekly will keep grass alive, even if it is still brown.
- Contact a qualified contractor to learn more. The Environmental Protection Agency lists its WaterSense® partners on its website at [www.epa.gov/WaterSense](http://www.epa.gov/WaterSense).

## Contact your homeowners association

If your homeowners association manages lawn irrigation controls, inquire about seeking potential equipment upgrades to these systems. Investing in improvements may significantly reduce water use and save thousands of dollars over the life span of the irrigation system.