



STAGE 1 DROUGHT RESTRICTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WATERING SCHEDULE

AUTOMATIC

Watering times are from 12:00 a.m. to 8 a.m. and/or 7:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. on the scheduled day for your property.

HOSE-END IRRIGATION

Watering times are from 12:00 a.m. to 10 a.m. and/or 7:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. on a scheduled day for your property.

WATERING DAY

Your watering day(s) depend on your customer type, irrigation method, and street address:

- **Monday**
Public Schools
- **Tuesday**
Commercial/Multi-Family* - automatic irrigation or hose-end sprinklers – with street address** ending in an even number
- **Wednesday**
Residential* -- automatic irrigation or hose-end sprinklers -- with street address ending in an odd number
- **Thursday**
Residential-- automatic irrigation or hose-end sprinklers -- with street address ending in an even number
- **Friday**
Commercial/Multi-Family -- automatic irrigation or hose-end sprinklers -- with street address ending in an odd number
- **Saturday**
Residential-- hose-end sprinklers -- with street address ending in an odd number
- **Sunday**
Residential-- hose-end sprinklers -- with street address ending in an even number

***Properties with four units or fewer** follow the residential schedule. **Properties with more than four units** follow the multi-family schedule.

****Properties with a “half” address** follow the schedule for the house number without including the fraction (*for example, 2025 ½ Elm Street is considered an odd-numbered address*).

WATERING METHODS ALLOWED ANY TIME ON ANY DAY OF THE WEEK

- Drip irrigation*, hand-held hose, or refillable container
- Watering trees with a Treegator®, soaker hose, soaker tape, or automatic tree bubbler in the drip-line of the tree canopy
- Watering vegetable gardens with a soaker hose or soaker tape
- Watering with **rain water**, **gray water**, or other auxiliary water

WaterWiseAustin.org | watercon@austintexas.gov | 512-974-2199 ext. 4

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*If your drip system is part of an automatic irrigation system, you must turn off the spray head zones

OTHER WATERING RESTRICTIONS

Customers must also prevent **water waste** at their property. Water waste includes:

- Failing to repair a controllable leak, including a broken sprinkler head, a broken or leaking pipe, or a leaking valve.
- Operating a permanently installed irrigation system with:
 - a broken head;
 - a head that is out of adjustment where the arc of the spray head is over a street, parking area, or other impervious surface; or
 - a head that is misting because of high water pressure
- Allowing water to:
 - Run off a property so that there is a trail of water running in a street, parking area, or other impervious surface for a distance of 50 feet or greater
 - Pond to a depth greater than ¼ inch in a street, parking area, or other impervious surface.

SCHOOLS

Watering is allowed from 12:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and/or from 7:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. on an assigned day. Athletic fields are exempt from the schedule and may be irrigated at any time on any day.

Public schools water on Mondays.

Private schools follow the commercial schedule. The watering day is determined by the address on the water utility service account.

- Odd-numbered addresses water on Friday
- Even-numbered addresses water on Tuesday.

CONDOS, TOWNHOMES, AND MOBILE PARKS

Individual owner-operated sprinkler systems follow the residential schedule. The watering day(s) is based on the number of the condo, townhome, or mobile home.

If using an automatic irrigation system:

- Odd-numbered units water on Wednesday.
- Even-numbered units water on Thursday.

If using a hose-end sprinkler:

- Odd-numbered units water on Wednesday and Saturday.
- Even-numbered units water on Thursday and Sunday.

Irrigation systems in common areas, operated by property management, follow the commercial schedule. Addresses are determined by the address of the water utility service account.

- Odd-numbered addresses water on Friday.

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- Even-numbered addresses water on Tuesday.

PRESSURE WASHING

CAN I WASH MY SIDEWALK/DRIVEWAY/DECK/PATIO/OTHER PAVED AREA? WHAT ABOUT THE SIDING ON MY HOUSE/FENCE/OTHER UNPAVED SURFACE?

Yes. You may pressure wash these items if you use a pressure washer with a 3.5 gallon per minute nozzle with a positive shutoff valve. You may also wash items using a garden hose with a positive shutoff valve attached or bucket.

I AM A PROFESSIONAL PRESSURE WASHER. WHAT RESTRICTIONS DO I HAVE TO FOLLOW?

All professional pressure washers, including mobile vehicle washing businesses, must use equipment that includes:

- Spray nozzles that use no more than 3.5 gallons per minute,
- Recycling unit,
- Working trigger shut-off, and
- Protective weep mechanism- where applicable.

WASHING VEHICLES

CAN I WASH MY VEHICLE IN MY DRIVEWAY OR YARD?

Yes. You may wash your car at home. You can use a pressure washer with a 3.5 gallon per minute nozzle with a positive shutoff valve, an auto shut-off garden hose nozzle, or bucket.

CAN MY ORGANIZATION HOLD A CHARITY CAR WASH?

Yes, as long as it takes place at a car wash facility that has completed an [annual efficiency inspection](#).

FOUNTAINS

MAY I RUN AN ORNAMENTAL FOUNTAIN? WHAT ABOUT A WATER FEATURE IN MY GARDEN?

Yes, they may run as long as they recirculate the water. A recirculating fountain cycles water from its reservoir or catchment basin back to the orifice or fountain jet.

WHEN CAN I ADD WATER TO A RECIRCULATING FOUNTAIN OR BIRDBATH?

You may add water at any time on any day.

CAN I OPERATE MY FOUNTAIN IF I USE GRAYWATER OR RECLAIMED WATER?

State law does not allow [gray water](#) to spray into the air so it cannot be used in a fountain. [Reclaimed water](#) is not the same as gray water. Reclaimed water is highly treated and can be used in a fountain.

CAN I OPERATE A NON-RECIRCULATING FOUNTAIN IF I FILL IT WITH BOTTLED WATER?

Yes, bottled water is not regulated by the Water Conservation Code.

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CAN I RUN A NON-RECIRCULATING FOUNTAIN IF IT SUPPLIES WATER TO WILDLIFE?

No, all operating fountains must recirculate. You can use a handheld hose or bucket to fill it so it can provide water to animals or serve as a birdbath.

RECREATIONAL WATER USE

ARE THERE RESTRICTIONS ON OPERATING POOLS, SPLASH PADS, AND SPAS?

No. Pools, splash pads, and spas may be used, operated, and filled without restriction.

ARE THERE RESTRICTIONS ON MY KIDS PLAYING WITH WATER?

Children can use recreational water toys under all stages except Stage 4. Please place the toys in an area that keeps run off from the property to a minimum.

PATIO MISTERS

CAN A RESTAURANT/CAFÉ/BAR OPERATE A PATIO MISTER?

Yes. Commercial facilities may operate patio misters between 4 p.m. and midnight.

I HAVE A PATIO MISTER IN MY BACKYARD. CAN I USE IT?

Yes. The Water Conservation Code does not restrict home use of patio misters

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS

I AM CONCERNED ABOUT FOUNDATION CRACKING. WHEN CAN I WATER IT?

You may water your home's foundation on your assigned watering day(s) and times. Set the sprinklers to water the ground about 18 inches from the foundation.

ENFORCEMENT

WHO HAS TO FOLLOW THE WATER RESTRICTIONS?

All Austin Water customers must follow the restrictions. This includes customers who live in the Austin Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ).

IF I USE AN AUXILIARY WATER SOURCE, DO I HAVE TO FOLLOW THE SCHEDULE?

No. The Water Conservation Code does not apply to auxiliary waters, such as [reclaimed water](#), [rainwater](#), [gray water](#), or well water. However, auxiliary waters are subject to other city and state regulations.

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF A VIOLATION?

Failing to follow the restrictions initially result in a warning. Subsequent violations can result in an administrative penalty, starting at \$25 for residential customers and \$150 for commercial customers.

WHAT ARE THE ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTIES?

Residential penalties start at \$25 per violation. Commercial penalties begin at \$150 per violation. Penalty charges increase after each violation. The current Water Conservation penalties and penalty ranges were approved on May 5, 2022 by Austin City Council. **The penalty matrix can be found [here](#).**

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PENALTY CHARGE IF RUNOFF FROM ANOTHER PERSON'S PROPERTY COMES ONTO MINE?

No. Only the property where the runoff originates will be in violation.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN IF I RECEIVE A REPORT OF AN ALLEGED VIOLATION POSTCARD IN THE MAIL?

It means that your address was reported to 3-1-1 for a water violation. Austin Water sends a Report of Violation postcard as a courtesy so you can make sure your irrigation system is set for the correct schedule. It does not mean that you received a violation charge.

HOW DO I REPORT A WATER VIOLATION?

You can call 3-1-1, submit a [report online](#) (*under Service Type, select Water Waste Report*), or use the [311 app](#) on your mobile device. When reporting a violation, please provide the address, time, date, and type of violation. Additional information such as a business name or specific location on the property is also helpful.

HOW CAN I FOLLOW UP ON WATER VIOLATION REPORTS?

You may call 3-1-1 to follow up.

I HAVE REPORTED A VIOLATION SEVERAL TIMES. WHY HAS THERE NOT BEEN A PENALTY CHARGE?

An Austin Water staff member must witness a violation before issuing a penalty charge. We use the reports we receive to schedule patrols at times when violations are likely to occur. We also use them to prioritize patrols by neighborhood.

WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT WATER WASTE?

- Inspect and maintain your irrigation system to repair leaks, replace broken sprinkler heads, adjust misaligned heads, and reduce misting. You are allowed to test your system at any time as long as you are present.
- Know your irrigation controller. Make sure watering times are appropriate to reduce overwatering/runoff.
- Incorporate the topography of your property into the design of your landscape.

I HAVE RUNOFF BECAUSE MY PROPERTY IS ON A SLOPE. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

If runoff is an issue, talk to your landscaper or irrigator about strategies to reduce the amount of water that flows from your property. You can also speak with Austin Water staff at 512-974-2199 for guidance on this issue.

WHAT CAN I DO IF MY SPRINKLER HEADS ARE MISTING BECAUSE MY WATER PRESSURE IS HIGH?

One way to prevent misting is to have a licensed irrigator install a Pressure Reduction Valve (PRV) on your system. Austin Water offers [rebates](#) for PRV installation.

VARIANCES

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WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I HAVE A SITUATION WHERE I CANNOT FOLLOW THE RESTRICTIONS?

Variations are available in limited situations that include properties that are too large to water in a single day, installation of new xeriscaping, or health and safety reasons. You must follow the current watering schedule until Austin Water approves your variance application.