



## Mill Bay Water District

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### **WATER USE RESTRICTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

#### **When can I water my lawn?**

During Stage 1 – watering of lawns is permitted between the hours of 7:00 pm – 9:00 am on odd or even days depending on your address (up to 2 hours maximum). During Stage 2, watering of lawns is still permitted during those same time frames but even numbered houses are only permitted to water on Wednesdays ; odd numbered houses are permitted to water on Sundays. During Stage 3, no watering of lawns is permitted.

#### **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 exempt them from stage 1 water use restrictions. During stage 1, Garden Irrigation Permits can be obtained through the District Office 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 and 3 Water Use Restrictions.**

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

Your lawn will normally 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.

#### **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 District wants to promote local food production and drought resistant gardening.

- Buckets or spring-loaded spray nozzle to water trees, shrubs, flowers or vegetables are permitted on any day of the week during stage 1, 2 and 3 between 7-9 am and 7-9 pm in order to reduce evaporation and increase efficiency (maximum 4 hours).
- **Micro spray/drip irrigation systems** may be used anytime to a maximum of 4 hours per day.
- Weeper hoses meet the definition of a micro/drip irrigation system and can be used any day of the week during stage 1, 2, and 3 (maximum 4 hours).
- Soaker hoses (hoses that have hundreds of holes that spray water in the air) must follow the same sprinkling regulations for lawns and are not permitted during stage 3
- In-ground pop-up sprinkler systems must follow the same sprinkling regulations for lawns and are not permitted during stage 3.

## **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 the unnecessary wasting of water, boats and cars must be washed with a hose equipped with a spring-loaded nozzle and a bucket filled with water. Washing vehicles is not permitted during stage 3 restrictions.

Note: As many commercial car washes recycle and reuse the same water to operate their businesses, those wishing to have their vehicle or boat washed can utilize commercial car washes.

## **Why 7-9 am and 7-9 pm?**

Watering during the morning and evening reduces the amount of evaporation that occurs from the 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.

### **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 community 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. These stages allow recreational use of sprinkling systems. Stage 3 is a complete watering ban – this includes recreational use.

### **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.

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

Sprinkling regulations are meant to reduce water use in ways that do not cause serious economic hardship. Those 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. In particular, car washes recycle and reuse the same water to operate their business. During times of extreme drought, however, the Trustees of the Water District may order commercial operators to cease watering operations.

## **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?**

There are some fields which 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 District believes it is a poor use of public money to let it die because of lack of watering and heavy foot traffic areas requiring 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.

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

Reports can be made to the District via phone at (250) 743-9023, via email [mbwd@shaw.ca](mailto:mbwd@shaw.ca); through the District website at [www.millbaywaterworks.ca](http://www.millbaywaterworks.ca), or in person at the District office. Please record the address and street that the violation has occurred at as well as the time and type of violation.