

## **Outdoor Water Use Restrictions** **For Hillsborough County**

John Bowker's eNews has nicely summed-up the main points of the watering restrictions as:

1. Lawn watering by in-ground sprinklers using regular potable water from the county mains (same as you use inside the house) can only be done between midnight and 4 a.m. and only on the one day of the week you have been using under Phase 3 for the past couple of years.
2. Lawn watering hours by in-ground sprinklers using well or lake water remain the same, i.e., it can be done from midnight to 8 a.m. or from 6 p.m. to midnight, but only on your designated day of the week. You cannot water the same zone twice on your designated day.
3. Hand watering of shrubs, plants, etc., but not the lawn, can be done by a hose with an automatic shut-off nozzle between 6-8 a.m. or 6-10 p.m. three days a week based on your address. Even addresses may do so on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Odd addresses may do so on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.
4. Washing of cars, trucks and other mobile equipment is allowed once a week. At a residential property, vehicle washing may occur on Tuesday or Saturday at addresses ending in even numbers, and Wednesday or Sunday at addresses ending in odd numbers. Low-volume methods must be used, such as fitting your hose with an automatic shut-off nozzle.
5. The annual pressure washing of buildings, structures, driveways, sidewalks and the pressure washing of buildings or other structures in preparation for painting or other maintenance is allowed.
6. Fountains, waterfalls and other outdoor artistic water features are limited to operating four hours a day, and the operating hours shall be posted.

Here is the expanded detail for the watering restrictions now in effect:

Hillsborough County is now under Phase 4 (Critical Water Shortage) restrictions. You must use the Phase 4 restrictions when using County water for any activity. The Phase 4 restrictions begin on page 6 of this document.

However, the older, more lenient Phase 3 restrictions apply to irrigation water that is pumped from a pond or well by a homeowner, since it doesn't impact the County's water supply. Phase 3 mainly allows you a larger window of time within which to irrigate.

**Fines and Penalties:**

Violating these restrictions could result in a fine of \$100 for the first offense, \$200 for the second and so on, leading up to \$500 for the 5th and succeeding violations. Non-payment will result in a summons to appear before a code enforcement special magistrate, who could impose a fine of as much as \$1,000 a day until the original penalty is paid. In extreme cases, the magistrate could choose to levy a one-time fine of \$15,000.

**Important Telephone Numbers:**

- (813) 275-7094 to hear a recorded message about restrictions.
- (813) 272-6680 to call Customer Service.
- (813) 224-8993 to rat on your neighbors.

**Relevant government websites:**

Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD):  
[www.watermatters.org](http://www.watermatters.org) - Click on "Modified Phase IV (Critical) Water Shortage Restrictions for the Tampa Bay Area."

Hillsborough County:  
[www.hillsboroughcounty.org](http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org) - Click on A-Z Index - then "W" - then "Water Restrictions"

**This document contains both the Phase 3 and Phase 4 restrictions.**

**If you do not pump your own irrigation water from a well or lake, please skip to the Phase 4 Restrictions that start on page 6.**

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**Phase 3 Restrictions:**

Use the following rules only when using your own pumped water for a particular activity.

*Be sure to abide by the Phase 4 restrictions (starting on page 6) at all other times!*

**Irrigation of Established Lawns and Landscaping:**

Irrigation of established lawns and landscaping in unincorporated Hillsborough County is allowed one day a week. Follow the watering schedule outlined in the chart below.

These restrictions apply to water from private wells and surface water (ponds). They do not apply to reclaimed water, although these customers are encouraged to use only what they need.

All irrigation must be accomplished from midnight to 8:00 a.m. or from 6:00 p.m. to midnight. **Any one zone of a property may only be watered once during the allowable day, NOT both in the morning and again in the evening.**

The permitted days for watering are as follows:

Addresses ending in 0 or 1	Monday
Addresses ending in 2 or 3	Tuesday
Addresses ending in 4 or 5	Wednesday
Addresses ending in 6 or 7	Thursday
Addresses ending in 8 or 9, locations with no address (common areas, entry areas), and locations with mixed addresses (office complexes, shopping centers)	Friday

**Irrigation of New Lawns and Landscaping:**

*Follow these rules for watering new lawns and landscaping. Note that all watering must be accomplished before 8 a.m. or after 6 p.m.*

**Turfgrass** - under the Severe Water Shortage declaration, the establishment period for new sod, plugs, turfgrass is limited to a period of 30 calendar days. On days 1-15, beginning the day of installation, you may water any day of the week. On days 16-30, even-numbered addresses may water on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays; odd-numbered addresses may water on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays. Following this period, all turfgrass is considered established, and must follow the restrictions outlined above.

**Landscaping (other than turfgrass)** – the establishment period is limited to 60 calendar days. On days 1-30, beginning the day of installation, you may water any day of the week. On days 31-60, even-numbered addresses may water on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays; odd-numbered addresses may water on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays.

**Sprinkler System or Hand Water?** - New plant material must cover at least 50% of an irrigation zone in order to water with an in-ground sprinkler system during the initial establishment period. If not, the new plant material must be hand watered. (Example: If you purchased one flat of grass plugs to place throughout your front yard to fill in bare spots, this would not cover 50% of an irrigation zone. Hand watering would be required.) Even if you water by hand, you must follow the same guidelines for new lawn and landscaping establishment.

Also, only those zones containing 50% new plant material may be watered, not the entire yard. (Example: If you had your entire front yard re-sodded, but not your backyard, only those zones covering the front yard could be run during the establishment period. The backyard zones would have to remain on the regular watering schedule. Most irrigation timers have an A and B program. Program A can be set for the regular watering. Program B can be programmed for multiple days to only water those zones containing the new plant material during the establishment period. After the establishment period has ended, be certain to clear all information from Program B, as these irrigation controllers are notorious for resetting after a

power outage or spike and running all programs at the same time, even if Program B is turned off.

### **Low Volume Irrigation:**

Low volume irrigation of plant materials other than lawns and grass is allowed any day, however, you must water before 8 a.m. or after 6 p.m. The use must not be wasteful and unnecessary.

### **Hand Watering:**

You may hand-water plant material other than lawns and grass on any day, as long as you do so before 8 a.m. or after 6 p.m.. However, such use may not be wasteful and unnecessary. Hand watering of lawns and grass may only occur during the designated day and time for irrigation of established lawns and landscaping at that address. A hose-end sprinkler placed in the yard is not considered hand watering and is subject to the same restrictions as an in-ground sprinkler system.

### **Reclaimed Wastewater:**

The use of reclaimed wastewater is not restricted, however its use must not be wasteful and unnecessary.

### **Irrigation System Maintenance:**

Irrigation systems may be operated during restricted hours for cleaning and maintenance purposes, but limited to ten (10) minutes per week. An attendant must remain visibly on site during the entire cleaning and maintenance operation.

### **Automatic Rain Sensing Shut-off Device:**

All landscape irrigation systems must be equipped with a rain sensor device or switch that will override the irrigation cycle of the sprinkler system when adequate rainfall has occurred. This requirement applies to both new and older irrigation systems.

### **Chemical Treatment:**

If chemicals such as pesticide, fertilizer, herbicides, insecticides, and fungicides are applied to your lawn or landscape plants by a hired professional, they can be watered in according to manufacturer's instructions within 24 to 48 hours of application. Applying water following a chemical treatment by a hired professional is allowable on your non-designated watering day provided a dated chemical advisory marker showing the date of chemical application is visible in the yard (usually by the mailbox). Also, restricted hours must still be followed (before 8 a.m. or after 6 p.m.) If you wish to apply a chemical treatment to your lawn or landscape plants yourself, the application of water must be done on your designated watering day and time for your address.

**Car Washing:**

Washing of cars, trucks and other mobile equipment is allowed once a week. At a residential property, vehicle washing may occur on Tuesday or Saturday at addresses ending in even numbers, and Wednesday or Sunday at addresses ending in odd numbers. Low-volume methods must be used, such as fitting your hose with an automatic shut-off nozzle.

Fund-raising car washes held on behalf of non-profit organizations are allowed, as long as water is used efficiently. Hoses must be fitted with an automatic shut-off nozzle at all times.

**Pressure Washing:**

Pressure washing of buildings or other structures in preparation for painting or other maintenance is allowed. Also allowed is the annual pressure washing of buildings, structures, driveways, sidewalks and other impervious surfaces as part of a planned maintenance program to either maintain a warranty or to prevent a "slip and fall" hazard. Washing or cleaning streets in preparation for a parade or other public event is allowed.

Other than these instances, washing or other water-based cleaning of streets and other impervious surfaces is allowed only to meet federal, state or local health and safety standards, such as required dust control.

**Decorative Fountains:**

Fountains, waterfalls and other outdoor artistic water features are limited to operating four hours a day, and the operating hours shall be posted. If the water feature also provides a necessary water quality benefit, such as aerating a stormwater pond, it may be operated any hours as necessary.

**Recreation Use:**

Pools should be maintained in a way that minimizes the need for make-up water. This includes promptly repairing leaks, optimum scheduling of backwash filtration, and using shade or covers to reduce evaporation.

Residential and other non-commercial uses of water for recreational purposes should be reduced as much as possible. For example, a sprinkler or sprinkler-like device may be used only at the times normally allowed for lawn watering, and discharge only as much water as is horticulturally necessary for the lawn. A wading pool, "Slip 'N Slide" or other child-oriented recreational device shall run off or be emptied onto a lawn or landscape that requires irrigation.

## Phase 4 Restrictions

### Effective Dates:

- These restrictions go into effect on April 3, 2009.

### Lawn Watering Schedule:

- **Days:** All lawn watering remains limited to the same once-per-week schedule. The permitted days for watering are as follows:

Addresses ending in 0 or 1	Monday
Addresses ending in 2 or 3	Tuesday
Addresses ending in 4 or 5	Wednesday
Addresses ending in 6 or 7	Thursday
Addresses ending in 8 or 9, locations with no address (common areas, entry areas), and locations with mixed addresses (office complexes, shopping centers)	Friday

- **Hours:**
  - **Midnight to 4 a.m.** for properties less than one acre in size, using an in-ground irrigation system (rotor and spray sprinkler heads).
  - **Midnight to 4 a.m. and 8 p.m. to midnight** for properties more than one acre, using an in-ground rotor and spray irrigation system.
  - **6–8 a.m. and 6–10 p.m.** for properties of any size, using a sprinkling can, hand-held hose equipped with an automatic shut-off nozzle, or micro-irrigation.

*Note that the same lawn area may not be watered by multiple means, in other words, persons may not use an irrigation system and a hand-held hose to water the same area twice on their day.*

### Landscape (non-lawn) Watering Schedule:

- **Days:**
  - Watering of landscapes using an in-ground irrigation system (rotor and spray sprinkler heads) or a hand-held hose equipped with a portable sprinkler remains limited to the same **once-per-week** schedule as lawn watering.
  - Watering of landscapes (non-lawn) using a sprinkling can, hand watering with a hose equipped with an automatic shut-off nozzle, or micro-irrigation is now limited to **three days per week**. Micro-irrigation includes soaker hoses, drip tubes, microjets and other forms of low-volume irrigation technology. Even addresses may use any of these forms of efficient irrigation on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Odd addresses may do so on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.

- **Hours:**
  - **Midnight to 4 a.m.** for properties less than one acre in size, using an in-ground irrigation system (rotor and spray sprinkler heads).
  - **Midnight to 4 a.m. and 8 p.m. to midnight** for properties more than one acre, using an in-ground rotor and spray irrigation system.
  - **6–8 a.m. and 6–10 p.m.** for properties any size, using a sprinkling can, hand-held hose equipped with an automatic shut-off nozzle, or micro-irrigation.

#### **Establishment Irrigation for New or Replacement Lawns:**

- **Days:** New and replacement turf (sod, plugs, seed, etc.) continues to have a 30-day establishment period:
  - On days 1–15, the new or replacement turf may be watered any day of the week.
  - On days 16–30, the turf may only be watered approximately every other day. Even-numbered addresses may only water on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Odd-numbered addresses may only water on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.
- **Hours:**
  - **Midnight to 4 a.m.** for properties less than one acre in size, using an in-ground irrigation system (rotor and spray sprinkler heads).
  - **Midnight to 4 a.m. and 8 p.m. to midnight** for properties more than one acre, using an in-ground rotors and sprays irrigation system.
  - **6–8 a.m. and 6–10 p.m.** for properties any size, using a sprinkling can, hand-held hose equipped with an automatic shut-off nozzle, or micro-irrigation.

#### **Establishment Irrigation for New Landscaping (non-lawn):**

- **Days:** New plants (other than lawns) now have a new, 60-day establishment period:
  - On days 1–15, new plants may be watered any day of the week.
  - During days 16–45, new plants may be watered approximately every other day. Even-numbered addresses may water on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Odd-numbered addresses may water on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday.
  - During days 46-60, new plants may be watered two days per week. Even-numbered addresses may water on Tuesday and Saturday. Odd-numbered addresses may water on Wednesday and Sunday.
- **Hours:**
  - **Midnight to 4 a.m.** for properties less than one acre in size, using an in-ground irrigation system (rotor and spray sprinkler heads).
  - **Midnight to 4 a.m. and 8 p.m. to midnight** for properties more than one acre, using an in-ground rotors and sprays irrigation system.
  - **6–8 a.m. and 6–10 p.m.** for properties any size, using a sprinkling can, hand-held hose equipped with an automatic shut-off nozzle, or micro-irrigation.

#### **Car Washing:**

Washing of cars, trucks and other mobile equipment is allowed once a week. At a residential property, vehicle washing may occur on Tuesday or Saturday at addresses ending in even

numbers, and Wednesday or Sunday at addresses ending in odd numbers. Low-volume methods must be used, such as fitting your hose with an automatic shut-off nozzle.

Fund-raising car washes held on behalf of non-profit organizations are allowed, as long as water is used efficiently. Hoses must be fitted with an automatic shut-off nozzle at all times.

### **Pressure Washing:**

Pressure washing of buildings or other structures in preparation for painting or other maintenance is allowed. Also allowed is the annual pressure washing of buildings, structures, driveways, sidewalks and other impervious surfaces as part of a planned maintenance program to either maintain a warranty or to prevent a “slip and fall” hazard. Washing or cleaning streets in preparation for a parade or other public event is allowed.

Other than these instances, washing or other water-based cleaning of streets and other impervious surfaces is allowed only to meet federal, state or local health and safety standards, such as required dust control.

### **Decorative Fountains:**

Fountains, waterfalls and other outdoor artistic water features are limited to operating four hours a day, and the operating hours shall be posted. If the water feature also provides a necessary water quality benefit, such as aerating a stormwater pond, it may be operated any hours as necessary.

### **Water-Based Air Conditioning:**

- Government facilities, common areas in malls, lobbies of multi-tenant office buildings and similar public spaces using cooling towers or other water-based cooling must keep the temperature at or above 78 degrees Fahrenheit.
- There are exemptions for health and safety, such as hospital facilities.

### **Remaining Restrictions:**

Unless modified by the new Phase IV order, Phase III restrictions remain in place in Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas counties. This includes the use of irrigation wells and lakes and utilities not affected by the Phase IV order.

The information listed above is a summary of [Water Shortage Order No. SWF 09-012](#) declaring modified Phase IV (Critical Water Shortage) restrictions for Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas counties through June 30, 2009, and the [first modification to Water Shortage Order No. SWF 08-044](#), declaring modified Phase III (Extreme Water Shortage) restrictions.

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Please ignore the following because these are the old Phase 4 rules that were recently rescinded. I'm putting them here so that I don't have to recreate them just in case they get reinstated at some future time...

**Fountains:**

- Aesthetic fountains and other water features are now prohibited.

**Car and Pressure Washing:**

- Residential car washing is now prohibited.
- Charity car washes are now prohibited.
- Commercial car wash operations and mobile detailing services are allowed. However, cars for sale or lease may not be routinely washed; they may be washed immediately prior to sale or lease.
- Pressure washing conducted by commercial businesses is allowed for certain purposes, which include cleaning to eliminate a safety hazard, preparation for painting or similar activity, maintaining a paint or material warranty, and as needed to meet federal, state or local health and safety standards.