

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **Why are school and municipal playing fields exempt from the regulations?**

These areas are often too large to be effectively irrigated within the allowed sprinkling times. Also, 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 and large irrigated grass areas, the Town of Ladysmith believes it is poor use of public money to let it die due to lack of watering. Irrigation to turf is shut down in community and regional parks during Stage 3 and Stage 4 watering restrictions. In addition, the Town of Ladysmith is reducing the amount of irrigation to sports fields with limited use; however, fields must be maintained at an acceptable level to avoid liability concerns.

## **What about gardens, flower beds, and trees?**

Residents can use a bucket, spring-loaded spray nozzle or micro/drip irrigation to water trees, shrubs and gardens on any day of the week. Longer watering times are provided for food crops such as vegetable gardens and fruit trees, while less time is allowed for ornamental plants and gardens. Watering should take place between 7pm and 9am in order to reduce evaporation and increase efficiency.

## **What about my car or boat - can I wash them?**

Vehicles and boats can be washed at any time during Stage 1 and Stage 2 water use restrictions. 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 is not permitted during Stage 3 or Stage 4 restrictions.

## **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 Sprinkling Permit in order to exempt them from water use restrictions. Sprinkling Permits can be obtained by contacting the Public Works Office by email at [info@ladysmith.ca](mailto:info@ladysmith.ca), by telephone at 250.245.6445 or in person at 330 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Sprinkling Permits will be issued for 14 days where new sod has been planted or where the lawn will be grown from seed. **Sprinkling Permits will not be issued during Stage 2, Stage 3 or Stage 4 water use restrictions.**

## **Do these restrictions apply to soaker hoses or in-ground sprinkler systems?**

Yes. The restrictions apply to all sprinkling systems. A soaker hose has holes emitting water at all angles around the hose which operate at full pressure resulting in significant evaporation. For this reason, a soaker hose is considered a type of sprinkler system.

### **What about micro irrigation, drip irrigation systems and weeper hoses?**

Only a system using less than 90 L/hr (20 gallons per hour) which operates at less than 25 psi to deliver water to the root zone of the plant material is considered to be Micro irrigation or Drip irrigation. Weeper hoses are considered micro/drip irrigation, and are permitted; soaker hoses are not permitted.

Conservation measures for these methods of irrigation are less stringent as they reduce evaporation losses by delivering the water directly to where the plants need them as well as having significantly lower flow ratings than other methods of irrigation. For the reasons stated above these types of systems are allowed to operate even during Stage 3 and 4 restrictions.

### **What's the difference between a weeper and a soaker hose?**

A weeper hose emits water through very small pores in the rubber; there is no water spray stream emitted from the hose, resulting in less evaporation than a soaker hose. A soaker hose has holes that are large enough to emit water as a spray stream, resulting in more evaporation than a micro/drip irrigation system or a weeper hose. Weeper hoses are considered micro/drip irrigation, and can be used according to the Hand Watering, Micro/Drip Irrigation rules. Soaker hoses are considered sprinklers and must follow the rules for sprinkling.

### **Why 7 pm to 9 am?**

Watering during the morning, evening or overnight hours reduces the amount of evaporation that occurs from the lawns, sprinklers and soil. Allowing watering anytime overnight helps spread the peak water demand (e.g. less sprinkling first thing in the morning when many people are showering and using water to get ready for the day).

### **Can I hose down my house or other outdoor surface?**

Stage 1 allows outdoor surfaces including houses to be hosed down; Stage 2, 3 and 4 do not allow for hosing down of outdoor surfaces.

### **If I pay my taxes why can't I water my lawn whenever I want?**

Water rates and fees vary in range per year per household, depending on where you live. Increased demands in water consumption result in increased costs for pumping and treating water and eventually result in the need for the upgrading of infrastructure which could increase rates substantially. Additionally, our water sources are not infinite and 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 Stage 1 and Stage 2; please ensure the water is shut off when playtime is finished. These Stages allow recreational use of sprinkling systems. Stage 3 and 4 are a complete watering ban that includes recreational use.

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

Your lawn will naturally go dormant and turn brown during a hot, dry spell. A good rainfall or cooler weather may help revive your lawn. Watering lawns sparingly or not at all during the summer months saves one household up to 17,000 litres.

**I can't meet the alternate day and time restrictions of the bylaw. What should I do?**

The water use restrictions must be met; automated sprinkler systems that cannot be programmed to comply with the restrictions will have to be manually operated.

**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 until the forecast predicts steady light rain.

**I am not connected to the municipal water supply. I use a private well or water source for lawn watering. Do the water use restrictions 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 water use restrictions to conserve this vital resource. Aquifers are; for the most part, interconnected with river flows or neighbouring properties water resources, therefore, the more everyone can reduce their water usage the better.

**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 Stage 4 regulations, commercial users are expected to reduce water use to minimum essential levels.

**My neighbour is not using water in accordance with the water use regulations. How do I report this offence?**

Reports can be made to the Town of Ladysmith via phone at 250.245.6446 or email: [be@ladysmith.ca](mailto:be@ladysmith.ca). Please record the address and street that the violation has occurred at as well as the time and type of violation.

**How does the Town of Ladysmith enforce the water use regulations?**

Reports of a violation are followed up by making contact with the homeowner and providing them with the details of the violation and educational materials. If non-compliance continues, operational staff will give a warning notice to the homeowner. Water Bylaw #1298, Section 32 (2) states "Every person who violates any provisions of this bylaw shall be guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction and shall be liable to a fine of not more than \$2,000 or to imprisonment for not more than 6 months, or both. Each day that a violation of the provisions of this bylaw occurs, exists or is permitted to occur or exist, shall constitute a separate offence."