

# Water Ways



## How often should you water your lawn?

Water use rises dramatically in the summer as customers turn on their sprinklers to irrigate lawns and

landscaping. But there is a danger of overwatering. Landscape contractors who conducted a pilot outdoor water audit for Chelan County PUD in 2003 said about 90 percent of the homeowners they visited were using too much water on their lawns.

How can you tell if you're overwatering? One way is to dig a small hole in your lawn. Healthy root systems are 4-6 inches deep. Lawns with shorter root systems are getting too much water.

In addition to wasting water, overwatering will cause diseases and loss of nutrients. Watering thoroughly, but infrequently, makes roots grow deeper and more drought resistant. Grass is best watered with sprinklers that deliver large drops of water close to the ground. Overlap the sprinkler patterns for good coverage. Adjust your watering to compensate for changing seasons and weather conditions.

About 1 inch of water per week is recommended at 70 degrees. Add  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch for every 5 degrees in temperature. When temperatures exceed 85 degrees, increase watering to 2 inches or more. This amount of water should penetrate 6 inches into the earth. Check periodically and adjust the schedule accordingly.

## For more information

- Call the PUD to request brochures on outdoor or indoor water conservation or Xeriscape (low-water) landscaping: 661-8008.
- Visit this Web site: [www.chelanpud.org](http://www.chelanpud.org). Click on "Conservation," then "Water." The Web site includes tips, links to other Web sites, and beautiful photos of the flowers and grasses from the Riverfront Park Xeriscape Demonstration Garden in Wenatchee.

## The tuna-can test

Use this test to determine the amount of water your sprinklers provide:

1. Set out five empty tuna cans from the sprinkler head to the edge of its spray pattern.
2. Turn on the sprinkler for exactly 15 minutes.
3. Measure the depth of water in each can and add up the numbers. Divide by 5 to get an average depth.
4. On the chart, find the average depth. To the right is the total watering time in minutes for 1 inch of water.

Average water depth in tuna can after 15 minutes	Total watering time in minutes for 1 inch of water
1/8	120
3/16	80
1/4	60
5/16	46
3/8	40
1/2	30
5/8	24
3/4	20
1	15
1 1/4	12

## Tips for reducing your water use (and water bills)

- Water early in the morning when the air is calm.
- Adjust sprinklers so they do not spray on walks, driveways and against buildings.
- Water the lawn and plants separately, because they require different amounts of water. (Check with your local nursery on watering requirements of plants.) *(over)*

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- Adjust sprinklers to prevent misting.
- Adjust watering times, so water doesn't puddle or run off. If water does not penetrate the soil easily, break your watering into two periods a couple hours apart.
- Water annuals only when the top inch or two of soil are dry. Dig into the soil with your fingers to feel the moisture.
- Use mulch to minimize evaporation. Mulches help the soil retain moisture, inhibit weed growth and prevent erosion.
- Regularly check your irrigation system for leaks, unexplained sprays and excessively wet areas. Even a small leak can waste as much as 700 gallons per day.

**How to reach us**  
Energy Services/Conservation:..... 661-8008  
Water Department:..... 661-4254  
Web site: [www.chelanpud.org/conservation](http://www.chelanpud.org/conservation)

## Water Conservation Loans

Chelan County PUD is offering residential customers served by PUD water systems financial assistance to install water-efficient irrigation systems. The loans are available to customers who use PUD water as their sole source of water, and whose summer water use is double their winter use. Loans of up to \$4,000 are available to cover design costs, trenching, and installation of equipment and timers/controllers. The interest rate is just 2.5 percent. For more information, call 661-8008.

**10%** Studies nationally have shown that even small changes in watering practices can save customers up to 10 percent on their water bills.

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