



Town of Lincoln Water Department Tips for Irrigation Sprinkler Systems Tune-Up Checklist

There is no better time than spring to make sure your automatic sprinkler system is ready for another season of efficient lawn and garden watering. Here are a few simple steps that will go a long way towards saving water and money.

The most important thing to remember when turning on your sprinkler system is to turn on the water slowly. You can create a huge water hammer if you are not careful. A water hammer is a high-pressure surge that occurs when a valve is first opened. An initial pressure surge can result in pipe bursts and damaged valves. When restoring water to your sprinkler system, open the main water valve slowly to allow pipes to fill with water in a gradual and controlled manner, thus preventing a water hammer and costly damage. Always open the system shutoff valve slowly to let the system pressurize gradually.

1. Starting your sprinkler system while the ground is still frozen can result in damage to the pipes. Use a shovel to make sure that the soil is frost-free 12 inches deep. If it is still solid as a rock, then wait another week and test it again before starting the sprinkler system.
2. Run a check of the irrigation controls and programs. Make sure the date and time is correct, and that the settings are appropriate for your landscape's watering needs. Keep a copy of your watering schedule nearby.
3. Check for debris that may block the flow of water from the sprinkler heads. Uneven distribution can lead to too much water in some areas and not enough in others, both resulting in an unhealthy landscape and wasted water. Inspect spray heads and make sure they haven't become buried and debris has not accumulated around them during the winter.
4. Nozzles and sprinkler heads are designed to withstand normal wear and tear of irrigation. Replace cracked, chipped or worn components, such as sprinkler heads, nozzles, valves or pipes. A broken sprinkler system can wreak havoc on lawns, gardens, and water bills, so it is important to check and replace them periodically.
5. Valves regulate the distribution of water throughout the entire system. A leaky valve will waste water, and increase your water bill. Visually inspect each valve to make sure they are operating properly. Before turning on any water to the system, make sure all manual drain valves are returned to the closed position.
6. It is important to make sure the water pressure is at a safe operating range for your sprinkler system. A system with too much pressure will result in cracked pipes, busted valves, sprinkler head leaks and inefficient watering and a high water bill. If the pressure is above the suggested operating range, a pressure regulator may be required to prevent damage to the sprinkler system.
7. Contact your Sprinkler Irrigation Company for assistance
8. Have the backflow preventer tested each spring by a certified backflow device tester licensed in Mass as part of the system start up.