

Irrigation Analysis for Water Savings - A New San Antonio City Ordinance

In an effort to maximize year around water conservation efforts the San Antonio City Council passed a water conservation ordinance addressing a variety of water conservation opportunities. One of the provisions included in the ordinance requires that properties over 5 acres, athletic fields and golf courses with in-ground irrigation systems submit an annual irrigation check up to the San Antonio Water System Conservation Department by May 1 each year. The intent of this ordinance provision is to ensure that a minimum standard of irrigation system maintenance is performed. Regularly scheduled maintenance of irrigation systems contributes significantly to water savings. A typical commercial irrigation system uses on average 20,000 gallons each time the irrigation system is run. A poorly maintained system can use upwards of 60,000 gallons for each run. A well maintained irrigation system should be checked at a minimum, monthly, weekly in high traffic areas. Any maintenance issues found should be repaired in a timely matter.

Properties that do not have a current irrigation system check-up on file will lose their courtesy water waste warning if the irrigation system is reported being run outside designated irrigation hours or if water from the irrigation system is found running down the street or other impervious cover. The property will immediately be placed on the water waster list and the property owner or manager will receive a personal citation if any Conservation Enforcement Officer observes an additional violation.

Design issues such as the desire to change a spray zone to drip, cap off a zone that is irrigating well established trees and shrubs, or if the landscape design has changed should be considered. San Antonio Water System customers may qualify for rebates for these design changes that result in water savings.