

Water Conservation Standards

In an attempt to aid both residents and businesses of Hoover in mitigating the detrimental effects of water shortage the City has developed the following Water Conservation Standards. The primary goal of these standards is to promote the wise use of Hoover's water resources and to educate the public about conservation practices. In doing so, we will greatly improve our ability to extend potable water supplies in the event of actual water emergencies. The following water conservation practices are recommended for year round use and especially during the months of May through October:

1. **Reduce the watering frequency of lawns and other landscaped areas.** Generally, through the months of summer, established lawns typically require only one inch of water per week. Deep watering once a week is healthier for your lawn, as it is more effective at reaching the slightly deeper roots of shrubs and trees. Purchasing a \$2 rain gauge can assist you in determining how much water or rain your yard has received.
2. **Install sprinkler systems that are the most water efficient,** such as drip irrigation and / or soaker hoses. Position sprinkler heads to water the landscape only and not paved areas. Be sure to override your automatic sprinkler system if it does rain, or install a rain sensor that will help control the system for you.
3. **Water lawns and landscape during early morning hours only.** These are the hours when plants are most active in the uptake of water and nutrients. Also temperature and wind speeds are lowest during the early morning hours and this tends to reduce evaporation.
4. **Plant native and drought tolerant grasses, ground covers, shrubs and trees.** Once established, native plants do not require water as frequently and will better tolerate drought conditions. Group plants together based on similar water needs and use a three to four inch deep layer of mulch around plants to help them retain moisture. This layer will also help to control weeds. Contact a landscape service, greenery or the City's landscape architect for a list of native plants.
5. **Raise the cutting height of your lawn mower blade.** Taller grass encourages deeper root growth, shades the root system and reduces evaporation than a closely clipped lawn.
6. **Use a broom instead of a water hose** to clean leaves and other debris from the porch, driveway or sidewalk.
7. **Use a shut-off nozzle on your garden hose** when watering plants by hand or when washing cars. Never leave a sprinkler or water hose on and unattended. One garden hose can pour out 600 hundred gallons or more of water in only a few hours. Use a kitchen timer to remind yourself to turn off your sprinklers.
8. **Avoid over fertilizing your lawn.** Fertilizer applications increase the need for plants to absorb water. Apply fertilizers containing slow-release or water insoluble forms of nitrogen.
9. **Use a commercial car wash that recycles water.** If you wash your own vehicle, park it on the grass and use a hose with an automatic shut off nozzle.

All City of Hoover public facilities shall adhere to the above mentioned recommendations as well as the practices listed below.

- 1. Check all irrigation systems for efficiency, leaks and proper nozzles.**
- 2. Install rain gauges so that watering schedules can be adjusted to rainfall amounts.**
- 3. Apply soil wetting agents to better utilize irrigation and rainfall.**
- 4. Install master shut off valves on irrigation systems, where possible, to prevent water loss due to breaks.**
- 5. Install rain sensors to control irrigation systems.**
- 6. Keep turf aerated and de-thatched to allow for better water absorption.**

The Hoover Parks & Recreation Department and the Hoover School System, which are the heaviest water consumers within the City departments, have committed to studying and implementing the use of well water, lake water and other static non-potable sources for irrigation of athletic fields and grounds. These alternate sources of water are planned for supplemental use in the short term and as primary use in the long term. When drought management stages are implemented, the alternate watering sources need to be identified by a visible sign.

Adoption of the 2000 International Building & Plumbing Codes by the City of Hoover and the enforcement of these codes by the Building Inspections Department, provides for the conservation of water by the installation of water saving fixtures in all new structures and renovations. Water closets are now limited to 1.6 gallons per flush as compared with 3.5 to 5 gallons for older models. Residential lavatories and sinks are rated for 2 gallons per minute based on a maximum water pressure of 60 psi. Lavatories for public restrooms, schools and places of assembly are rated at .25 gallons per cycle (for metered faucets). Showerheads are now rated for only 2.5 gallons per minute. Present water flow requirements for all fixtures have been much improved over previous standards.