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Daylight saving time affects lawn irrigation systems, too

Sarasota County reminds property owners that timing is everything when it comes to the Southwest Florida Water Management District's new Phase III watering restrictions. Utilities Operations Manager Tony Gipe says now that citations will be issued with no warning, residents may avoid a citation by ensuring that their irrigation systems do not run after midnight on their allowable watering day, or at any time during restricted watering hours.

Each citation now calls for a minimum fine of \$100, per the Modified Phase III Water Shortage Declaration issued in February. SWFWD issued the declaration in response to continued drought conditions and hopes it will reduce water usage by 10 percent. The declaration applies to Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte, and DeSoto counties.

"Most residents are simply not aware that their irrigation systems have to be manually adjusted," said Gipe. "We just want to remind them that if they don't want to get fined, they need to check their watering time to make sure it is not in violation of the Phase III rules."

Although current watering days for Sarasota County residents have not changed, there are some new restrictions related to Phase III.

- Fountains and waterfalls may only operate four hours per day. Operating hours must be posted.
- No special watering allowances will be granted for veriticutting (removing vertical growth that occurs around a grass plant) or overseeding.
- New or replacement lawns may water for a total of 30 days, if needed. Watering may occur all days during the first 15 days but will be limited to every other day after the first 15 days. No watering is allowed between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.
- For other new plant establishment (not including lawns), watering may occur for a total of 60 days, if needed. Watering may occur all days during the first 30 days but will be limited to every other day after the first 30 days. No watering is allowed between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.
- Hand watering and micro-irrigation of plants (not lawns) may occur all days, however no watering is allowed between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.
- Irrigation restrictions apply to all water sources, including private wells, lakes, and canals.
- The use of reclaimed water within various municipal jurisdictions may have different restrictions.

Along with the residential restrictions, restaurants are being asked to serve water only upon request, and residents should limit installation of new lawns and plantings.

Current watering days for Sarasota County residents have not changed. They remain:

- Even addresses (house numbers ending with 0, 2, 4, 6 or 8) may water only on Tuesday.
- Odd addresses (house numbers ending with 1, 3, 5, 7 or 9) may water only Thursday.
- Common areas with no address, such as medians or roadside plantings, clubhouse or recreation areas may be irrigated only on Tuesday.

- The maximum amount of water applied is limited to three-quarters of an inch in each irrigation zone, once, on each allowable watering day.
- Property under two acres may water before 8 a.m. or after 6 p.m.
- Property over two acres may water before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.

Complete watering restrictions for Sarasota County are available at www.scgov.net.

To report a suspected watering violation:

- Call Sarasota County Utilities at 941-861-6790, option 3
- Contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000
- Fax to 941-861-0603
- E-mail utilitybill@scgov.net

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