

OVERVIEW

The Plano Parks and Recreation Department constantly adjusts irrigation system programming to meet or exceed the required reduction of 5%. The park irrigation system as a whole is both large and complex. Included below are just a few elements to consider when evaluating water requirements and conservation. It is difficult to compare a system of this size to the type of watering methods and requirements of residential and small commercial applications. The difference can only be successfully conveyed through proper education and the sharing of reliable information. Irrigation is necessary to protect City park assets and the safety of its users. Efforts are ongoing to improve the ability of the Parks Department to meet the needs of the City's park infrastructure while also doing so in a conservative and responsible manner. The department is fully prepared to exercise good stewardship doing its part in whatever is both practical and necessary, to meet any and all water restriction stages as directed.

The City of Plano Parks and Recreation Department understands the importance of water conservation, especially in times of extended drought and above normal temperatures. The Department has been proactive in its water management practices for over 20 years. The Parks Department maintains over 4,800 acres of outdoor spaces citywide. Over 1,200 of these acres have irrigation systems to supplement rainfall deficits to Department maintained turf, trees, and landscape materials citywide throughout the year. In addition, the Department also manages supplemental watering for over 7,000 median and right-of-way trees. The Plano Parks and Recreation Department strives to provide well-maintained park and athletic facilities throughout the community while conserving as much water as possible.

The primary balancing act of an adequate conservation program is the maintenance of safe play spaces, especially in sports fields, while understanding the need to utilize less water. This balance impacts the ability to grow grass, maintain irrigation systems to prevent breaking through soil shifts, and provide scenic respites throughout the community.

Elements of the program provided by the Parks and Recreation Department include:

- Monitoring of over 540 miles of irrigation lines through a computerized system
- Considering types of plant materials installed within the park system
- Timing fertilizer applications with rain if possible
- Continuing review of where and when irrigation systems are necessary
- Protecting irrigation infrastructure to reduce future repair and replacement costs

All details concerning drought stages, requirements and exemptions are contained in the following link: [City of Plano Water Conservation Drought Plan \(RESOLUTION NO. 2010-3-1\)](#)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q – What types of areas are irrigated by the City of Plano Parks Department?

A – Irrigated areas include:

- Athletic fields and sports turf areas
- Practice and casual use field areas in park sites
- Special use areas in park sites
- Reservation/rental facilities in park sites
- Open play areas
- Public building lawns and landscapes
- Median trees and landscapes

Q – What areas are not irrigated by the City of Plano Parks Department?

A – Non-irrigated sites:

- Nature preserves (open areas)
- Greenbelts
- Linear parks under power transmission lines
- Median and right of way turf
- Large open community park areas
- Limited and seasonal use areas
- Selected park perimeter areas
- Undeveloped open spaces

Q – Why does the City of Plano Parks Department irrigate?

A – Irrigation during summer months is necessary for many reasons.

- Protect building and horizontal structure foundations
- Protect concrete walkway sub-grades to prevent dangerous and damaging grade shifts and misalignments (trip hazards) between surface joints
- Prevent dangerous and hazardous ground cracking or heaving on programmed, casual play and high use foot traffic areas
- Protect citywide living assets including sports turf, trees and other living plant materials

Q – Why does the City of Plano Parks Department water during the day?

A – The City of Plano Parks and Recreation Department does not routinely make it a practice to irrigate during the day. Should you witness daytime watering taking place at a park site or public building, it may be one of the following:

- Routine maintenance, adjustments, calibrations, inspections and/or repairs of a system by an onsite licensed irrigation technician
- Temporary irrigation of recently installed turf or landscape materials
- Watering for the recovery of turf, trees, or landscape materials due to an irrigation system being out of service recently
- A system malfunction

Q – A golf course is a large site to irrigate. Where does Plano Parks and Recreation obtain the water to irrigate the Pecan Hollow Golf Course?

A – The Pecan Hollow Golf Course maintains its turf surfaces through the use of recycled water when irrigating. This has no impact on the City's water consumption through typical utility infrastructure.

Q – How is Plano Parks and Recreation doing its part to conserve water?

A – The City of Plano Parks and Recreation Department has a highly sophisticated, highly capable irrigation central control system. All irrigated areas have site specific, custom written irrigation programs so as to maximize water distribution efficiency. All irrigation programs are monitored daily and adjusted as needed. The irrigation central control is capable of shutting down the complete system citywide from a single computer while also delivering water anytime on demand, to any site necessary. The irrigation central control monitors and gathers field reports on historical and real time data along with reports on system malfunctions that may occur. In addition, the system is capable of shutting itself down automatically should a malfunction or failure such as a major leak be detected. When this information is received, it is evaluated by trained technicians. The technicians then make any necessary changes and may also execute work orders should there be a need for field repairs and/or adjustments. Some of the data available to be evaluated includes:

- System and zone start, run, and stop times

- Water usage reports
- The area/zones where water was applied
- System malfunctions and failures
- System leaks and line breaks

Q – What other measures has Plano Parks and Recreation taken to reduce its water use within the park system?

A - The City of Plano Parks and Recreation Department also has additional water conservation measures and programs in place. They include:

- Non-recreational turf irrigation reduction program
- Ongoing irrigation system preventative maintenance program
- Conduct ongoing routine system inspections
- Renovations of older systems with improved irrigation design and component installation
- Improved leak detection practices
- Remote access to irrigation central control computer to make immediate changes when needed
- All irrigation systems are equipped with a master valve to shut down the complete or partial system should a mainline leak occur
- All irrigation systems have flow meters to monitor the amount of water flowing to a site allowing technicians to detect water leaks remotely
- The reduction or elimination of irrigation where landscapes have been renovated with more drought resistant landscaping materials
- Landscaping to meet the minimum requirements of a building or site
- Tree specific watering

Q – What should I do if I witness or suspect the parks department is overusing water or happen to see a system malfunction such as a leak or excess water running?

A – The department makes every attempt possible to keep irrigation systems operating properly and eliminate fugitive water without incident. Occasionally, as is the case with all irrigation systems, malfunctions occur. Should you suspect there is a problem, please report your sighting to:

From 8:00AM – 5:00PM Mon-Fri
Call: 972-941-7263

After Hours
Call: 972-727-1623

OR
Email - parksinfo@plano.gov