



## ELCO Water District - Voluntary Watering Restrictions and Recommendations

Even though ELCO's 2026 water supplies should be sufficient to meet anticipated demands, customers are encouraged to voluntarily limit their water use. On average, 50 percent of the water used in a single-family household is applied to landscaping.

During the next few months, the ELCO Board will be monitoring the District's raw water supply and customer demands. If conditions warrant greater reductions in water use, ELCO will implement more restrictive measures. ELCO's response to a water supply shortage will progress in stages. Initially, customers are being asked to voluntarily conserve water. If problems persist, restrictions could be imposed to limit outdoor water use.

Historically, ELCO customers have responded extremely well when asked to voluntarily reduce water use. Because ELCO has access to storage in area reservoirs, most of the water conserved this year will be available for use next year. To increase the availability of water for next year, ELCO customers are encouraged to reduce water use whenever possible. Below are tips on how to reduce outdoor consumption:

- Delay turning on your sprinkler system until after the last projected frost date, typically mid-May, and then limit lawn watering to not more than 2 days per week.
- Do not water your yard between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. It's generally windier, warmer, and less humid during this time resulting in more evaporation and less efficient use of water.
- Do not water your lawn when it's raining or windy out. You can install a rain or wind sensor device to shut off your irrigation system during these times.
- Do not waste water by letting your sprinklers spray concrete sidewalks or driveways or structures.
- Get your lawn ready for less water this year! This spring, deep core *aerate* your lawn to break up thatch and compacted soils, allowing water and air to penetrate more

### **New Lawn Care**

- Get it right from the start and prepare your soil by deep tilling in compost!
- A deep root zone is the first line of defense against drought.
- Want to have a lower water bill? Amend your soil with at least 3 cu. yds. of compost per 1,000 sq. ft. This will increase the water holding capacity of the soil, which means you will need to water less often!
- New lawns can use up to 20% more water.

deeply into the root zone. *Fertilize* with a slow-releasing nitrogen fertilizer or by top dressing your lawn with high quality compost. You may need to apply an *herbicide* if weeds become a problem when less water is applied and plants experience more stress.

- Mow your lawn a day or two after you water. A lawn mowed at 3” is more drought tolerant than a lawn mowed at 2”. Only remove 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the grass blade at a time to help minimize stress.
- Getting brown spots on your lawn? Cool season grasses such as bluegrass will go dormant when it gets too dry but will come back when the soil moisture is replenished. If you have tall fescue and your grass becomes mousey brown, it may be dying back and thinning out because it doesn’t have a dormancy mechanism and behave like a cool season grass. Try over seeding those dead areas next year to encourage re-growth.
- Apply mulch to your flower and vegetable gardens to maintain soil moisture.
- Have large areas of turf? Consider planting some of the area in climate adapted plants that can get by with less water.
- Pop up sprays heads are susceptible to wind drift losses. Rotor heads can be more efficient because they produce a “stream” of water. Well managed drip irrigations systems are the most efficient and excellent for flower and vegetable areas. Smart Controllers use soil moisture or weather data to automatically adjust sprinkler runtimes or watering days to only apply the water needed.
- ELCO Water District is contracting with the Resource Central to perform irrigation audits. An irrigation audit includes visual inspection of each zone to identify problems; tests are performed to measure how much water is being applied and a custom watering schedule is provided. If you are interested in an audit, please call (303) 999-3824 and leave a message or sign up online at <https://resourcecentral.org/sprinklers>.

### **Cycle Soak Method for Lawn Watering**

To get 1-inch of water on your lawn, apply ½- inch in one cycle, let it soak for an hour and then come back and apply the second ½- inch.

### **Tree Care**

- Water using a deep root fork or needle and a soaker hose to a depth of 24 inches. This is where the tree roots should be, below turf roots.
- A small tree (15-ft diameter canopy) can use 660 gallons/month in June-July, comparable to the same area in bluegrass turf in full sun.

For more information visit the Northern Water website at [www.northernwater.org](http://www.northernwater.org).

Properties with non-potable irrigation supplies are not subject to these voluntary water restrictions.

If you have questions or would like additional information, please email us at [elco@elcowater.org](mailto:elco@elcowater.org).