



As of June 1st of this year, very strict watering restrictions were put in place for Spokane by the city council. Those restrictions are listed below:

Level 1: Every summer June 1st – Oct. 1st.

No watering between 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Limit watering to no more than 4 days within a week.
Suggested best practice of no more than a total of 2 hours watering per day.
Suggested: no using water to clean hardscapes (driveway, patio, etc.)

Level 2: When the Spokane River is below 1,000 cubic feet per second.

No watering between 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Limit watering to no more than 2 days per week.
No more than a total of 2 hours of watering per day.
No using water to clean hardscapes.

* These restrictions go into effect each summer June 1 – Oct. 1. They apply to every City of Spokane water customer (residential, commercial, multi-family, etc.). Exemptions are allowed for trees, newly planted landscapes, vegetable gardens, and to mitigate wildfire risk. Level 2 is the drought response portion of this ordinance and will only go into effect if the Mayor or a majority of City Council declare a drought emergency.

If you have been aware of these water restrictions at all, I bet you only heard about the watering every other day and only at night rules. We may be able to maintain turf (lawns) with those restrictions, but two days a week won't cut it during the summer. Lawns in Spokane won't stand a chance. So how do you keep that from happening to your lawn? Here are our recommendations if you are trying to follow the restrictions AND keep your lawn healthy:

Since the restrictions list the number of DAYS you can water, not the number of sessions, we suggest that you follow our regular watering recommendations based on temperature as best as possible (which are listed at the end of this handout) but change how you schedule your watering. You can technically get 2 watering sessions done within 1 day and place them far enough apart that you won't be overwatering and will be following the ordinance.

So, for example, if based on temps you should be watering 6 times a week, but you are trying to follow the no more than 4 days a week and not between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. restrictions, you could do something like this:

- Water Monday at 12:01 am then water again on Monday at 10:00 pm. (You have gotten two watering sessions done but only used 1 of your 4 allotted days.)
- Water for one session on Wednesday.
- Friday, water at 12:01 am and again at 10:00 pm.
- Finally, water one session on Saturday.

This schedule would technically fall within the level 1 restrictions.

This system will require keeping a close eye on your lawn and the weather so that you are doing the two sessions in one day on the hottest days of the week when your lawn will need it most.

For level 2 restrictions, well you can use the tactic above to get a total of four sessions of watering in one week, but that may not be enough for your lawn if it is really hot. After all, watering for longer sessions (deep watering) doesn't work in sandy soil (which is 90% of North Spokane). In fact, deep watering in that type of soil wastes water, a fact that these restrictions don't take into account. So, in Level 2, maybe you choose to stick to the restrictions as much as possible, but add in enough sessions to keep your lawn healthy. It is your lawn after all.

However, you water this summer, here are a few tips to help keep your lawn well hydrated:

1. During the summer you should mow at a height of 3 inches. Keeping your grass longer during the summer provides more shade to the soil and protection from the sun, which helps your lawn retain moisture and decreases the amount of water lost to evaporation.
2. Mulch when you mow! (Mulching is leaving mow clippings on your lawn instead of bagging and discarding them.) Not only does this save time when mowing, but those clippings took up water and nutrients before they were cut. Leaving them on your lawn allows that water and nutrients to go back into your lawn.
3. Keep a close eye on your lawn. Look out for signs of under-watering as well as over-watering (it can happen sometimes). If your lawn is starting to yellow and the grass blades feel brittle, you need to water more. If your lawn is foot-printing, (when you walk across it, the grass blades stay down instead of springing back up) it needs more water! If your lawn is staying very damp all the way up until the next time you water, you are overwatering. (Often times this doesn't happen in the whole lawn, but only in shaded areas. If this is the case, water shaded areas less than sunny areas.) If you are seeing puddles in your lawn, it probably means that one of your sprinklers needs to be repaired.

A few other notes on these restrictions:

These restrictions were not made by lawn specialists. If they were, they would consider the fact that healthy lawns are one of the best filters for groundwater. Lawns protect our aquifer! Another thing: parks, golf courses, and schools can water as they see fit. Homeowners, property taxpayers, can't. That doesn't sit right with us. Finally, how are these restrictions enforced? Your neighbors are encouraged to call authorities on you if you water more than these restrictions dictate. You'll get a warning first, then a fine. This doesn't fit with our idea of what being a good neighbor is all about.

We want to be good neighbors by doing our best to be kind to one another, look out for and take care of one another, and love each other. We think we can do that while still taking care of our lawns.

Our general watering guidelines based on temperature are listed below:

For North Spokane, Spokane Valley, Liberty Lake, & Post Falls:

These areas have sandy soil or rocky riverbed soil. If you live in one of these areas, you should water frequently but not too deeply. Deep watering is generally a waste in these soil types. You should do shorter but more frequent watering sessions.

Recommended Watering based on Temp:

65°- 78°: water 3-4 times a week

78°- 86°: water 4-6 times a week

86° and above: water 5-7 times a week

When consistently in the 90°s and above, water every morning, & add additional night sessions a few times a week.

For Coeur D'Alene, Hayden Lake, & the South Hill:

These areas have loamy soils which contain varying degrees of clay. For this type of soil, deep watering is best. You should water for longer sessions (getting at least ½ to 1 inch of water on the lawn each session), but you can do them less frequently.

Recommended Watering based on Temp:

65°- 78°: water 2-3 times a week

78°- 86°: water 3-4 times a week

86° and above: water 4-7 times a week

When consistently in the 90°s and above, it may be necessary to add in 1-2 additional nighttime watering sessions.

Please feel free to ask your tech or give us a call if you have any other questions about these watering restrictions.

Thank you,
Mike