

# Regency News

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Spring 2010

## Early Winter Sprinkler Damage

The City of Calgary is very concerned that many irrigation systems have damage due to freezing as a result of the dramatic temperature drop on October 8, 2009. Regency would like our customers to pay special attention when turning on your irrigation system. This year it will be extremely important to search for signs of broken pipes and leaks during your start-up.

On October 8, 2009 Calgary saw temperatures as low as  $-7^{\circ}\text{C}$  and the continued to plummet setting a record low of  $-16^{\circ}\text{C}$  on October 12, 2009. The change in weather was so quick and dramatic, from the high 20's in September just three weeks earlier that many irrigation systems froze or had freezing damage.

The City of Calgary and the Alberta Chapter of the Irrigation Association (ACIA) began to hear concerns from both customers and irrigation contractors in October, that they were unable to winterize their sprinkler systems. Many of the properties that called were turned away, as the call volumes were so high. Many of our customers still had water in their irrigation lines or had already had freezing damage. This left only one winterization option, to shut the water off and open valves as away to minimize damage by providing room for the ice to expand out of the lines. In most cases the damage had already been done, especially to above ground lines in shrub and flower beds.

### Signs of Damage:

- Visible damage to above ground irrigation lines in shrub beds and flower gardens.
- Check hi-pops for cracks and leaks
- Check valves for cracks and leaks
- Hissing noises coming for the irrigation system
- Some heads working while others seem to have low pressure or are not popping up at all
- Water coming to the surface or running off the property
- Watch the water meter when the irrigation system starts getting turned on; it will run while all the lines are filled with water and then should stop after a minute or so

An irrigation system that is leaking could cost thousands of dollars in water charges if the leak is not found and repaired quickly. It may also cause property damage or flooding in your basement or neighbours.

In the future to prevent damage, Regency strongly recommends that you book the earliest date possible. Most lawns are going dormant by the end of September and do not require additional watering, and trees and shrubs can be hand watered if necessary.



**T**roubleshooting Sprinklers: If an entire zone is not turning on please go to Troubleshooting Valves. If one sprinkler is not popping up there is probably a little bit of frost in the line and you can try turning the system off. Wait a few days and try again. If it still does not pop-up take the nozzle off the top of the head to be sure that there is no dirt or debris in the head, you can also look down and see if there is any ice in the head. If there is some foreign matter in the head try washing the nozzle under a tap. If there is still ice in the head wait another few warm days before trying again.

**T**roubleshooting Valves: Valves that will not turn on; start by trying to turn the valve on manually with the bleed screw, or manual switch. If the zone turns on you know that the problem is with either your wiring or control panel. Check your controller's Owner Manual or troubleshooting in this case. If the zone still doesn't turn on then the problem is with your valve. Open the valve and check to be sure that there is no debris inside. If there is, flush it out, close valve and try again. If you are still having problems please call the office and we will try to talk you through fixing the problem or book a service call. PHONE: (403) 250-2685

**K**eeping a healthy lawn produces enough oxygen for a family of four. Sprinkler systems are the most eco friendly way of watering that green space when they are kept in proper working order.

## Do-It-Yourself Start-Up

Regency Irrigation recommends May 1<sup>st</sup> as a start-up date. However, before you begin the start-up procedures you want to be sure all the frost is gone from your yard. You can do this by taking a shovel or screw driver and dig around on the north side of your yard looking for frost. If you do not find any, by all means turn on your system, but listen to those weather forecasts and if they call for temperatures of more than minus five degrees, be sure to shut off your main water valve and drain the mainline. If you would like Regency to turn on your system please give Priscilla a call, 250-2685 or e-mail, priscilla.g@regencyirrigation.com and she'll get you booked in. If you wish to start-up your sprinkler system yourself, please read on.

1. Go outside to your valves, located in green underground boxes, open the valve box lid and check that:
  - There is *NO* ice in the box.
  - Your valve tops and bleed screws are tightened down.
  - That all wires look like they have a good connection.

**Note:** If there is any ice in your valve box leave the lid off and do not attempt to turn your system on until all the ice has melted and the water has drained into the ground.
2. Check that all manual drains are closed, you may have one on the outside of your house where the water comes out, and/or one in your valve box, and/or one in your basement down stream from your irrigation check valve.

**O**ne inch of rainfall on a 2000 square foot residential roof generates 1250 gallons of water than can be reused.

**A**pproximately 40% of water used in summer is used outdoors.



**Please call the office, or come and visit us in our show room, if you have any questions.**

3. Turn on your mainline valve *VERY SLOWLY*. You should stop hearing water run within two minutes of turning the valve fully on. If water continues to run, turn the valve off and go outside and check your valve box again. Try to find where the water may be seeping from. If your system is automatic, check to make sure that none of your automatic valves are turned on manually.
4. **For Automatic Systems:** After the water stops running, replace battery (if applicable) and plug-in controller. Program your controller to water each zone for two minutes starting five minutes from the time on the controller. When the system turns on, be sure to watch each zone operate and look for problem areas, such as; sprinklers not working, and/or zones not working. If you have any problems turn to Troubleshooting your Sprinkler System. If the entire system is working properly, program your controller for your normal watering schedule, but be sure to turn the system off if the forecast is calling for freezing temperatures and turn it on again when the weather warms up.
5. **For Manual Systems:** Go to your valve manifold and turn your zones on one at a time, check that each zone is operating properly including heads.



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