



Sprinkler System Operation:

Optimal Settings for BexarMet Customers

Automatic sprinkler systems are the ultimate in convenience for lawn and landscape maintenance. However, these systems can also inflate a water bill very quickly if they are not set properly or have broken or maladjusted components. Type of grass, amount of shade, type and depth of soil and slope of the lawn play a part in the proper settings of the system. If a rainfall event produces rain in excess of the weekly water requirement for your grass, do not water for that week. The rain sensor required for the irrigation system should also prevent irrigation when rain occurs. If possible, set the rain sensor to shut off the system when at least ½” of rain falls. Sprinkler use between 10am and 8pm is prohibited year round by BexarMet Water Rules and San Antonio City Ordinances. Hand watering is permitted at any time, on any day.

Turfgrass Type and Amount of Water Needed Per Week

Grass Type	Amount of Rain/Water Needed Per Week	Gallons Per Square Foot Per Week
St. Augustine	1 inch	0.62
Zoysia	¾ inch	0.47
Bermuda	½ inch	0.31
Buffalo	½ inch or less (Natural rainfall is best.)	0.31 or less

Average Amount of Watering Time/Days Needed Per Week

Grass Type	Average Amount of Watering Minutes Needed Per Week Per Zone/Area		Depth of Soil and Number of Days Per Week Needed *	
	Sun	Shade/Partial Shade	Less than 6"	More than 6"
St. Augustine	20 to 25	10 to 15	2 to 3	1 to 2
Zoysia	15 to 20	10	2 to 3	1 to 2
Bermuda	10 to 15	10 (Not a shade grass)	2	1 to 2
Buffalo	5 to 10	Sun Only	1 to 2	1 or less
Landscape Beds	7 to 10	5 to 7	1 to 2	1

* If watering more than once per week, split total watering time per zone for the week evenly between each day.

(Example: If watering each zone for 20 minutes per week and you wish to water twice per week, then water for 10 minutes each zone, twice per week for a total of 20 minutes per zone.)

Ideally, you should water deeply once per week to encourage deeper root growth and increased drought tolerance. If you water once per week, use the longest recommended zone time listed above for your grass. However, in shallower soils, once per week watering is not always the best option. During drought restrictions when once per week watering schedules are required, there is no option for watering multiple times per week with sprinklers.

If the yard is sloped heavily and the soil is shallow, use a “cycle and soak” approach for the irrigation to prevent runoff. Set your zone to run half as long, wait at least 30 minutes for the water to soak in and then run the zone for the remaining half. The “cycle and soak” method is becoming more popular for sloped lawns, shallow soils and clay soils.

During the fall and winter, watering schedules should be reduced dramatically to once per 14 days or more. If winter rains occur, supplemental watering may only be needed once per month.