

Water Conservation Tips for... Golf Course Irrigation Professionals

WATER CONSERVATION TIPS ARE ALL PART OF EDUCATING PRIVATE CLUBS, GOLF COURSE OWNERS, MANAGERS AND GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ON JUST HOW THEY CAN INCORPORATE THE INTELLIGENT USE OF WATER INTO THEIR OPERATIONS.

Succinctly, it's about using water efficiently – in the most precise and even manner possible, minimizing waste. There are many practices and products that can be used to manage water more efficiently.

1. Promote the water/cost saving benefits of water conserving products

Water conservation products are better for the environment AND they can save money. Some clubs, board and executive staff may need to be educated on the benefits of purchasing a more expensive water-conserving product. Chances are it will save them money in the long run. For example, the automatic monitoring afforded by a central control system saves water, time and money. Design, install, and sell water-conserving products that benefit the environment and the customer's checkbook.

2. Use high efficiency nozzles for uniform coverage

Use nozzles that apply water evenly. Even water distribution not only reduces water usage, but improves course appearance by reducing 'brown spots.' Proper nozzle and pressure setting is critical to determining optimal distribution. High efficiency nozzles are matched precipitation nozzles that provide the best and most uniform coverage, thereby eliminating watering gaps and reducing water usage...by as much as 30 percent. To select the proper nozzle and pressure for your spacing, consult Rain Bird Golf Technical Services.

3. Install an automatic controller with water-conserving functions

There are key features currently available in automatic controller for maximum flexibility and water efficiency:

- *Multiple start times* – allows several shorter and more precise run times to prevent run-off and puddles
- *Multiple independent programs* – allow the watering schedule to be divided into smaller, more precise watering schedules to accommodate the watering needs of different areas of the course
- *Water budget* - provides easy and flexible adjustments to the amount of water used for irrigation
- *Automatic shut on/off* – allows the user to pause a watering schedule when irrigation isn't needed and resume watering when appropriate

4. For complete system automation, consider a weather station and central control system

Central control systems show annual water savings of 25 – 30 percent on average. A central control system operates a single or multiple controllers, sensors and other irrigation devices from one central location. It contains all of the functions listed in the controller section above plus additional sensors that monitor and control environmental conditions...automatically and without the need for personal intervention.

- *Cycle + Soak™* - provides water management to special areas throughout the course that have slopes or poor drainage – once soak times are established, the sprinklers are not allowed to apply water at an application rate that the soil cannot accept.

- *Smart Feature Response* – enables the controller to detect system problems like line breaks or broken sprinklers and shuts down irrigation to the affected zones to prevent water waste – ensures that you're watering to maximum efficiency through the night.

- *ET Programming* – enables the controller to calculate daily evapotranspiration (ET) values and adjust the station run times to replace only the water used by the plants. This maintains a healthy course while minimizing water use.

5. Become more educated about irrigation efficiency: become IA Certified

By becoming IA certified you will become more knowledgeable about designing and installing efficient golf course irrigation systems. Much of the coursework includes information on water-conserving products and techniques. By understanding these, you can perform irrigation audits to assess the efficiency of an irrigation system. And, you can better educate your customers on the benefits of an efficient, water-conserving irrigation system to a healthy environment. Contact the Irrigation Association for more **BR**

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To subscribe to THE BOARDROOM magazine please call (949) 716-4995 or E-mail: lisa@apcd.com