



## Residential Irrigation Spring Start-up Procedure

We recommend waiting until around **May 1<sup>st</sup>** for starting up your sprinkler system in Calgary. Starting up the system too soon will result in certain parts not functioning correctly, generally causing the water to leak thru the control valves and water leaking out of the sprinklers or zone refusing to shut down. If this occurs, turn the system off and wait a few more days.

**If you would like us to complete this procedure for you, please contact our office at 403-613-0552.**

This procedure usually takes about 25 – 50 minutes for a typical yard.

**Step 1)** Make sure the yard is visibly clear of snow and ice. Find a small probe or a 20cm / 8” screw driver and test the ground on the north side of the property. Usually on the north side of the property is where ice and ground thaws out last in Calgary. Probe the ground for frost. If you can not get the probe easily into the ground, wait until the ground softens up.

**Step 2)** Open the valve boxes (usually green in colour).

- a) Is there ice in the box? If there is, leave the lid off the box and wait until the ice & water have melted and drained from the box.
- b) Are the bleed screws tight and solenoids in the off / closed position?
- c) Is there any broken pipes or parts?

**Step 3)** Check for any open hose connections, taps or drain valves on the irrigation mainline. Most houses have a hose hook up connected to the irrigation system on the mainline outside where the water exits the house.

**Step 4)** Make sure all inside valves are closed.

**Step 5)** SLOWLY open the inside mainline isolation valve. Do this very slowly. Water should stop flowing in a couple minutes. If not, turn the water off to the irrigation system and walk property and look for signs of water.

**Step 6)** For automatic systems, set each zone to run for a 2-3 minute test cycle. Check all zone components by walking the system with the zone running automatically. Make sure sprinklers are rotating and spray sprinklers properly covering.

**Step 7)** For manual systems, turn on each valve manually and check each zone.

**Step 8)** Once all zones have been checked thru, return to the basement of the house and check the water meter. With no water in the house running and the sprinklers off, the water meter should not be moving.

**Step 9)** Program the irrigation controller / time to water. Water schedule should be updated at minimum monthly during the watering season. New model WiFi controllers connect to the internet and automatically adjust the controller based on the weather, thus matching the water requirements to the local weather. We generally set sprinkler controllers to water grass a maximum of 2 – 3 times a week, unless daytime temperature is over 28C. Watering too often shortens the grasses root zone and weakens the grass, making the grass susceptible to winter kill, rodents, weeds, stress & washes away the fertilizer.

\*\* If temperatures drop below zero, we recommend shutting the water off to the sprinkler system and opening any drain valves. Then once the weather warms, repeat this procedure again.

**Remember to winterize the system before freezing temperatures occur in fall!**  
– We recommend by the end of September.