

Pine Tree Village

Irrigation System Maintenance Made Simple



YOUR
HOMES
SPRINKLER
SYSTEM:

DOES IT
NEED
UPDATING?

Who owns sprinkler systems in Pine Tree Village? The homeowner or the Pine Tree Village Association?

Answer: You. As the homeowner you are responsible for keeping the system in working condition AND configured to accommodate the large lawn mowers used by landscaping services.

What if a sprinkler head breaks?

Answer: Damages to the sprinkler heads are usually not due to careless lawn mower operators but to poorly configured systems. Our irrigation systems are, on average, about 30 years old. It is not difficult to imagine that many, if not most, are in need of updating.

Since Pine Tree Village does not have a maintenance department, servicing and updating the sprinkler systems is the responsibility of each homeowner. Homeowners are encouraged to hire a vendor capable of reconfiguring / maintaining the systems to

ensure systems are able to sustain commercial lawn mowers riding over them. When the systems are configured properly, all experts agree that damage to sprinkler heads will be greatly minimized.

Some suggestions for configuring a system ready for commercial landscaping servicing:

1. Routine service checks and repair/adjustments are essential to a well-functioning sprinkler system. PTV has its own irrigation system surrounding the lakes and along Lawrence Road. The landscaping vendor does routine wet-checks and, when needed, repairs every other month. Wet-checks consist of running the system and checking the output of every sprinkler head, zone by zone. Routine service can also include the clearing of sprinkler heads although some experts assert that with quality new sprinkler heads, such clearing is not necessary. Most residents in PTV prefer to have the sprinkler heads clear of grass so that they are easy to find and the spraying is not blocked by grass.
2. When pop-up sprinkler heads 'explode', pop their nipple (the center piece on the top of the head), work loose or fail to retract when the zone has completed its watering, it's an indication a replacement head is required. A pop-up sprinkler head is designed to allow the unit to sit at ground level safely below mower blades. When the head is activated during watering the middle piece pops up above the grass even when the grass is at maximum height. For our lawns, a 4" pop-up is considered adequate and a 6" is considered optimal. If the head does not rise higher than the grass surrounding it, watering will be limited to not more than a few inches around the head.
3. Some heads and doughnuts have sunk deep into the ground after years of lawn mower over-passes and the elevation of the lawns over years of growth. These heads may work... but not efficiently. They need to be dug up and brought to the standard, which is the top of the head sits at ground level and the doughnut is at least one inch higher than the head.
4. Sprinkler heads closer than 2" from a sidewalk or driveway stand the risk of being damaged by edging of the lawns. Such sprinkler heads may need to be re-positioned to allow for routine service.

5. If you see green grass around a working sprinkler head but brown grass further away surrounding it, the head is the problem. It's too low in the ground and/or has a 2" pop-up. That head should be replaced with a 4" or a 6" pop-up.

6. If, no matter what you do, a head is consistently disturbed during routine mowing you can purchase a red or orange flag and place it directly next to the head... OR ... re-locate that head.

7. Irrigation timers should be set to turn the system on no more than three times a week and no more than 30 minutes per zone. The system should **end** its cycle by approximately 7:30 am so that on days the lawns are to be cut the spray does not impede the work of the crews. The crews sometimes click off the system but forget to click it back on. Driving a mower through a shower with heads popped up cannot be a good thing for the lawn, the irrigation system, the mower or the driver.

If you do not have an obvious problem with the irrigation infrastructure (water shooting into the air or a deep hole around the head (which is symptom of a broken underground pipe) and the lawn is generally green, chances are your system is just fine. Such systems need only routine checks and servicing.

It is important to remember that we have commercial grade equipment continuously running over about 8,000 sprinkler heads. It is impossible to service a community without running over many sprinkler heads. Just take a walk through this community and you will see many lawns with no visible sign of a sprinkler head in the ground. If you can't see them walking slowly then a driver cannot see them riding far more rapidly. Please insure your residential irrigation system is ready to accept commercial grade service.