

# SPRINKLER SYSTEM INSPECTION

Sprinkler systems are in constant need of service. Because sprinkler systems consist of moving parts these sprinkler parts will wear out.

The following descriptions are of normal maintenance items that are usually the *homeowner's responsibility*. The average life of a sprinkler head is about three years in sandy soil.

Leaking seals on worn out sprinklers. Old leaking sprinklers can not only waste a lot of water and raise your utility bill, they can steal pressure from your zones leading to a lack of proper coverage.

Rotors not turning. Rotors, the heads that move and throw a long distance, will eventually stop turning. Rotor heads need to turn in order to provide head to head coverage. When closed case rotors stop turning, for example Hunter PGPs, they need to be replaced.

Heads too low in the turf. This is one of the most common problems seen grass types that produce thatch. As the thatch layer grows higher it begins to disrupt the spray pattern of the sprinkler head. If the spray head seems significantly low, you can replace it with a taller head. For example you can change a 4" pop up to a 6" pop up. If the head is only slightly lower than it needs to be you can raise it with a "riser extension" which are commonly available in all hardware stores.

Plants blocking spray heads. As the landscape matures, often the sprinkler system needs to change along with it. Using flexible PVC hose or "funny pipe" you can move the sprinklers in front of the shrubs into the turf. Then you can install adjustable sprinkler nozzles to throw some water back into the shrubs which are now behind the spray heads. Don't worry if the shrubs do not receive as much water as the turf. Established shrubbery does not require as much water as does turf due to their deep root growth.

Clogged spray nozzles. It takes only a tiny amount of debris to clog a sprinkler nozzle. When that happens coverage suffers. If it appears to only be a slight clog it is often possible to tap on the nozzle with a screw driver handle to clear the obstruction. Some spray heads come with built in nozzles that cannot be replaced such as the Hunter PS. In this case, open the adjustable nozzle all the way to a 360 degree pattern. This will sometimes flush the obstruction. If it does not, the entire spray head must be replaced.

Misaligned sprinkler heads. Sprinklers get out of adjustment as do most things with moving parts. Make sure that you are only watering the landscape, not the road or your patio. Straighten any sprinkler heads that have tilted and are no longer straight.

The following descriptions are of damage that is usually the *Snow Removal/Landscape contractor's responsibility*. **RED FLAGS ARE USED TO INDICATE THESE DAMAGES.**

Sprinkler head sheared off. This happens when a machine or snow shovel cuts off or breaks the top part of the sprinkler head.

Dead sprinkler head. This happens when a sprinkler head is run-over by a vehicle and deforms the case so that the sprinkler is jammed and can't rise.