Flood Irrigation Service

The City of Tempe provides Flood Irrigation Service to approximately 900 residential customers and 16 City Parks. Over 14,500 individual irrigation deliveries are performed each year. Our services include both operation and maintenance of the distribution system on behalf of our irrigation customers.

City of Tempe "Irrigators" control the delivery of water to each property by opening and closing the main gates and customer valves in a controlled sequence. The Irrigators serve multiple properties and subdivisions at once, and must carefully maintain the amount of flow and pressure to each gate, pipe and valve to ensure proper coverage and efficient use of both water and time. Unless there is a flooding emergency, it is not necessary or advisable for customers to operate their own valves. Doing so causes an unexpected increase or decrease in system pressure that may result in excess water flooding the properties, or shorting water to adjacent properties. The Irrigators visually monitor the water level of each yard during the irrigation sequence. Due to the number of houses being irrigated at any particular time, the Irrigators are not usually able to stay onsite for each property as it fills.

If there is a problem or condition that prevents the complete irrigation of the property (such as a leaking berm) the Irrigator will either speak with the customer directly, or note the condition on a door-hanger to notify the owner/occupant of the problem. If the billing address provided to Customer Service is different than the service address, the Irrigator will send a postcard style notice to the billing address. While courtesy efforts may help our customers receive a full irrigation, ultimately the customer must ensure their property is ready to receive and retain water.

The irrigation system is a gravity feed system, no pumps are used at any point in the system. The amount of water released from the Granite Reef Dam, located in east Mesa, is based on the combined water orders received by SRP. For this reason, water must be ordered in advance of the actual delivery date. The released water takes about 24 hours to reach the Tempe Canal, from which it is diverted through a series of gates and pipes to each subdivision and property.

The City of Tempe irrigation system is a user network that serves, and is maintained, by those who use it. Tampering with the delivery of water, or unauthorized use and operation of the system to receive water (utility theft) is a Felony. To report water theft, vandalism, graffiti, or suspicious behavior, please contact the City of Tempe Police Department at 480-350-8311.

Irrigation Terminology

What is an Irrigation *"run"*?

The term Irrigation ***"run"*** is a two week period during which all *active* accounts receive flood irrigation. There are 12 historic subdivisions within the service area that cannot be irrigated simultaneously. Therefore each subdivision receives water at a different time and date within the two week "run" period. The first week, half of all accounts receive water, the other half are irrigated the following week, to complete one two-week "run".

Each week of a two-week run begins on a Sunday night at 10:00PM and continues 24 hours per day. Typically all accounts scheduled within a particular week will receive water by the following Thursday. The only exception is when the schedule falls on a Monday that is an observed holiday. In that case we may postpone deliveries until Monday evening so our irrigation customers and Tempe residents may enjoy their yards and City parks on those extended holiday weekends. Fridays are used to perform emergency repairs and/or routine maintenance to the system. The time (day or night) you may receive water is approximate, and depends largely upon your location within the area being irrigated. The following variables may also affect delivery times and dates.

- The delivery schedule of Salt River Project and its ability to provide water in the canal system
- System capacity (pressure and flow capability of pipes)
- The number of active accounts in each subdivision
- The overall condition of the properties within the subdivision, including the construction of adequate berms to retain water, the amount of debris in yards, length of grass (obstructs flow and monitoring), and overall soil conditions (moist from recent rain or completely dry)
- Lot sizes of the properties within the subdivision
- Equipment or system tampering
- Main breaks that force the system to be shut down for repair
- Line condition (pipes plugged with roots or debris)

Each of these variables affects how effectively water can be delivered throughout the system. Water is usually delivered on the scheduled delivery date, however, if your water is *more* than two days late, please contact the Water Utilities Division at 480-350-2623. Normal business hours are Monday- Friday between 6 am and 4 pm.

Each year one irrigation run will be delivered in January, February and March. Beginning in April, the scheduled irrigation runs will continue non-stop through October, for a total of 18 runs per year. This schedule ensures that ample water will be available during the hottest months of the year. No irrigation water will be delivered during the SRP dry-up period in November and December.

What and where is the "valve"?

Irrigation valves, sometimes called ports, are actually like a ground-level faucet that controls the release of water to each property. Valves have a center "stem" used to open and close the valve. The Irrigator opens the valve to a set point, based on the size and flow characteristics of each property. Valves can be located anywhere on the property, but are usually about three or four feet in from the property line along the street or alleyway.

A park valve open and running

What is a "berm"?

A berm is an earthen ridge or raised area of dense soil that retains water within an area, or prevents water from entering a structure or other areas you do not want water. Berms surround the perimeter of most irrigated properties and homes. Berms are constructed using a clay type soil to create the ridges, then lightly sprinkling them with water to settle

them into place over time. As grass grows, berms become more resistant to erosion and collapse. As a general rule for ease of maintenance, berms should be three times as wide as they are tall. This dimension allows for cutting the grass without scalping, and also helps to prevent shearing the top off the berm with the lawn mower. Also keep in mind that berm design should allow water to safely spill into a street or alley rather than enter any structure, patio, storage shed etc.

The berm along the walkway of this park allows for easy maintenance and prevents water from entering the pond on the other side.

The corner of this house has no berm to prevent water from contacting the structure. As the water reaches the same level as the foundation, it seeps in behind the exterior wall, leading to extensive damage over time.

What is a "conduit"?

A conduit is a pipe that conveys water from one part of the yard to another. Conduits are often placed under driveways and sidewalks for water to reach from one side to the other. Conduits should be flushed out each winter to remove leaves and debris. A garden hose equipped with a spray nozzle works well.

~ Helpful Tips for a Complete Irrigation of Your Property ~

- If possible, watch your yard as it is being irrigated. Look for any obstructions or resistance to flow. Fill in low spots in berms and grade the property as needed. Ensure the property is ready to safely receive and retain water. Ensure water cannot enter any structures.
- Pets must have refuge from the area to be irrigated
- Trim grass to less than six inches. Doing so allows the Irrigator to monitor the flow and depth of water.
- Flush out conduits to remove debris
- Remove items from the yard that may be damaged by water or pose a safety hazard to the irrigator
- Provide clear access to the irrigation valve. The irrigators may actuate your valve by using a small step ladder to reach over a wall or fence from the alleyway. Please ensure the area behind any walls or fences (near the irrigation valve) is kept free of debris.
- To temporarily skip or cancel your irrigation for one or more runs, please provide a minimum 24 hours advance notice by calling the Water Utilities Division at 480-350-2623.