

Waukesha starts watering restrictions

Brochures on ordinance coming in mail

Freeman Staff

WAUKESHA- Waukesha Water Utility officials have begun to mail brochures to city residents reminding them of the new sprinkling ordinance that began May 1 and prohibits most midday watering.

Some city residents have already received a brochure, and the remainder should receive the paperwork within the next few days, according to a news release from the utility.

Midday use of sprinklers is generally prohibited under the new ordinance, according to the release. Residents are limited to watering on two assigned days per week, and the ordinance remains in effect until Oct. 1.

Waukesha residents with odd numbered addresses may use sprinklers before 9 a.m. and after 5 p.m. Tuesdays and Saturdays. Those with even-numbered addresses may use sprinklers before 9 a.m. and after 5 p.m. Thursdays and Sundays.

A watering can, container or hose may be used at any time to water gardens, trees or shrubs if the watering device is used by hand and not left unattended.

The water utility considered allowing watering every other day, but studies show that even day/odd-day schedules actually increase water use.

"People then assume they should water every other day, even though they never watered that much in the past," said Dan Duchniak, general manager of the utility.

A primary purpose of the ordinance is to reduce peak water usage that occurs when many residents water their lawns at the same time.

The utility also pointed out in the release that new landscaping may be watered at any time during the first month after installation if it meets one of three criteria:

It must have been installed at the time of new construction.

It must alter more than one-fourth of the area of a small existing yard.

Or, it must alter an area greater than 3,000 square feet of any existing yard.

A special variance permit is not required for sprinkling new landscape. Outdoor sports complexes and cemeteries are also exempt from the regulation.

The utility may grant special variances to avoid an emergency condition affecting health, sanitation or fire protection or if the ordinance substantially deprives the applicant of his or her financial livelihood.

A notice will be posted near the front door of the property or mailed to the person responsible for the water bill when the city determines a sprinkling violation has occurred.

If a third notice is required, it also will be mailed to the property owner. The city may refer the matter to the police department for a citation to be issued when the violation persists after three or more notices, according to the release.

A minimum forfeiture of \$160 applies for first offenses. However, this year, the city intends to focus on educating the public about the new restrictions.