



Common Irrigation Mistakes & Corrections

Definitions:

- **Head-to-head coverage** - where each sprinkler in a zone is throwing water its surrounding sprinklers.
 - **MSMT** - Multi Stream Multi Trajectory
- 1) **Increasing a zone's run time to fix hot spots (dry turf patches).**
 - a. There is a common misconception that increasing run time will fix dry patches of turf. However, often, these dry patches of turf are the result of water not actually reaching the dry area. In these cases, lengthening the run time will not help. In fact, it usually results in pooling and significant runoff. Rather than increasing run time, check for sprinkler nozzle obstruction, adequate sprinkler height, and head-to-head coverage. If any of these issues are present, resolving these first will be the best way to reduce dry spots in your lawn. To maximize performance of your sprinkler system, it is recommended to install high-efficiency (MSMT) nozzles. If head-to-head coverage cannot be achieved by swapping out nozzles, the next best thing is to hire an irrigation system professional to check your system and redesign it to achieve head-to-head coverage.
 - 2) **Adding fertilizer each spring.**
 - a. Fertilizer is energy for plants. Applying it will promote growth within a week, but plant health/aesthetics also depends on water. When fertilizer is added and growth accelerates, more water will be needed. To keep water application and maintenance low, only apply slow-release fertilizer if a soil test shows that key nutrients are lacking.
 - 3) **Leaving debris settle around sprinkler heads.**
 - a. Eventually, debris will build up and obstruct the sprinkler's spray pattern.
 - 4) **Watering a shrub/perennial with pop-up sprinklers or rotors**
 - a. Have you recently removed turf from your landscape and planted a drought tolerant shrub or perennial bed in its place? If so, make sure any sprinkler heads that were irrigating the turf are capped or re-placed. Spray heads are a very ineffective way to apply water to a shrub or perennial bed. Instead, install a drip irrigation system. Drip systems apply water directly to plant roots, significantly minimizing water lost to evaporation.