



Tip of the Week

Before snow flies, winterize your sprinkler system



Each year, many Colorado homeowners have serious water damage when the sprinkler system left in summer-mode freezes in November or December. Winterizing most sprinkler systems runs in the \$100 range, but repairs due to freeze damage can be many times that amount. Proper winterization can save you a world of grief--and a lot of dollars.

How to get your system ready for winter:

- ♣ Wrap the backflow prevention device located outside to help prevent freezing before your system is fully winterized.
- ♣ Shut off the water to the sprinkler system. There's usually a shut-off valve in the basement.
- ♣ Drain water from the backflow prevention device. from the ports. On warm days, you can turn the water back on and run the system until it is winterized.

Schedule a winterization. Some homeowners think draining the sprinkler system is all they need to do. But even when the system is drained, water often remains in the pipes and in the sprinkler heads. Remember, water expands when it freezes and pressure from that expansion can burst pipes and damage sprinkler heads and other parts.

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Winterizing is done with an air compressor--and because of the equipment, usually requires the help of a landscape service contractor. The compressor is hooked up to the sprinkler system and zone-by-zone pushes air into the pipes so that all the water is forced out. This process takes 1 to 3 minutes per zone. Winterizing the system with compressed air is the best way to make sure your sprinkler system has no water in it that can freeze, create damage and lead to costly repairs.

What to do with the controller (timer):

If the controller is outdoors -

Manufacturers recommend leaving the power on and the dial or switch in the "Off" position.

If the controller is indoors - Either leave the power on and the dial or switch in the "Off" position OR remove the battery backup and unplug the transformer from the power outlet.

To find a contractor to winterize your sprinkler system, go to www.alcc.com and click on *Find a Pro*.

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