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**Water Department urges better compliance with watering program,
prepares to levy fines for violations**

LITTLETON – Although an odd/even watering program has been in effect for almost three weeks, customers have continued to use water at an extraordinarily high volume, prompting the Littleton Water Department to reiterate his call for customers to adhere to conservation measures to reduce consumption.

No appreciable rainfall, warm weather and continued high usage have spurred Water Department employees to redouble their public education efforts in an attempt to achieve better compliance and avoid the possibility of imposing more serious restrictions on water use, according to Savas Danos, the department's general manager.

The department is urging compliance with an odd/even watering program that allows residents with odd numbered addresses to water on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and those with even numbered addresses to water on Wednesdays, Fridays

and Sundays. No watering is allowed on Mondays, nor is it permitted any day between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Hand watering vegetable and flower gardens is allowed, but customers are encouraged to water only when necessary, and not during daytime hours (7 a.m. – 7 p.m.).

A department analysis of usage continues to show an average consumption of 1.9 million gallons per day, an amount close to the system's capacity, according to Danos.

“Clearly, people are still using excessive amounts of water as they try to compensate for the lack of rain,” Danos said. “While I appreciate the fact that many of our customers may just now be learning of the odd/even program, I cannot stress strongly enough that we need strict adherence to our policy to achieve our conservation goals and avoid further restrictions.”

The department has prepared violation tickets as an enforcement tool. The first violation will result in a warning, the second, a fine of \$50, the third, a fine of \$200 and the fourth, a fine of \$500 and a reduction in water service. Danos said his primary target is lawn watering during the day. “Daytime watering is costly and largely ineffective,” he said. “I understand that people are trying to maintain their property, but this objective can still be met with much less water during the early morning or evening hours.”

Danos said he believes that the watering program does not unduly impede property maintenance needs. “This is a practical, proactive step that, if followed properly, will help us avoid more restrictive measures.”

Water department staff has attributed the high consumption to outdoor watering -- in particular automatic sprinkler systems that often deliver amounts of water in excess of a lawn’s actual need. He suggested that customers call the installation company or the manufacturer to obtain directions on resetting the system for odd/even use.

“We appreciate every effort our customers have made to help us manage our resources more efficiently,” Danos said. “By making a greater commitment to compliance, we are confident that we can continue to meet the demand for water without putting unnecessary stresses on our system.”

Danos offered these tips on cutting back on outdoor water use.

Water your lawn and garden only when needed.

Do not follow a fixed schedule. Water grass and plants only when they show signs of wilting. To find out if your lawn needs watering, step on the grass, then move back. If the grass stays flat, it's time to water. In most cases, lawns need to be watered only once a week.

Water your lawn and garden during the cooler parts of the day.

Heat and wind rob your lawn and garden of water before it can be used. Watering before 7 a.m. also helps to prevent fungus growth.

Do not leave your garden hose unattended.

A garden hose can pour out more than 600 gallons of water in just a few hours. Use a garden hose with a shut-off nozzle. Hoses without a nozzle can waste 10 gallons or more per minute.

Be sensible when using your lawn sprinkler.

Position your sprinkler so water lands on the lawn and garden, not on paved areas. Do not leave your sprinkler running all day. Use a kitchen timer to remind you to shut it off.

Put a timer on your underground lawn irrigation system.

Learn how to shut it off in case of rain and do not use it every day. Generally, 15 minutes of watering per zone is all that is necessary to maintain your lawn.

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