

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES  
OF GRADY COUNTY, GEORGIA, TO REVISE THE STANDARDS  
FOR OUTDOOR WATERING OF LANDSCAPE**

WHEREAS, Grady County (hereinafter "County") recognizes an imminent need to create a culture of water conservation and to plan for water supply enhancement during future extreme drought conditions and other water emergencies;

WHEREAS, reasonable restrictions on the outdoor watering of landscape are necessary to address this in furtherance of addressing this need;

WHEREAS, the General assembly of the State of Georgia has required all counties in Georgia to adopt an ordinance to be in effect no later than January 1, 2011, to limit outdoor watering of landscape to between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m. (with certain exceptions); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to O.C.G.A § 12-5-7, the Board of Commissioners have prepared an ordinance to address outdoor watering of landscape.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDAINED that the following is adopted as an Ordinance to be included in Chapter 26 Environment, Article I In General, to read as follows:

**Sec. 26-1. Restriction on Outdoor Water of Landscape.** Outdoor watering for purposes of planting, growing, managing, or maintaining ground cover, trees, shrubs, or other plants in the unincorporated area may occur only between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m.; provided, however, that this limitation shall not create any limitation upon the following outdoor water uses:

(A) Commercial raising, harvesting, or storing of crops; feeding, breeding, or managing livestock or poultry; the commercial production or storing of feed for use in the production of livestock, including, but not limited to, cattle, calves, swine, hogs, goats, sheep, and rabbits, or for use in the production of poultry, including, but not limited to, chickens, hens, ratites, and turkeys; producing plants, trees, fowl, or animals; or the commercial production of aquacultural, horticultural, dairy, livestock, poultry, eggs, and apiarian products or as otherwise defined in O.C.G.A. § 1-3-3;

(B) Capture and reuse of cooling system condensate or storm water in compliance with applicable County ordinances and State guidelines;

(C) Reuse of gray water in compliance with O.C.G.A. § 32-3-5.2 and applicable local board of health regulations;

(D) Use of reclaimed waste water by a designated user from a system permitted by the Environmental Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to provide reclaimed waste water;

- (E) Watering personal food gardens;
- (F) Watering new and replanted plant, seed, or turf in landscapes, golf courses, or sports turf fields during installation and for a period of 30 days immediately following the date of installation;
- (G) Drip irrigation or irrigation using soaker hoses;
- (H) Hand watering with a hose with automatic cutoff or handheld container;
- (I) Use of water withdrawn from private water wells or surface water by an owner or operator of property if such well or surface water is on said property;
- (J) Watering horticultural crops held for sale, resale, or installation;
- (K) Watering athletic fields, golf courses, or public turf grass recreational areas;
- (L) Installation, maintenance, or calibration of irrigation systems; or
- (M) Hydroseeding.

**Sec. 26-2. Enforcement.**

- (A) No person shall use or allow the use of water in violation of the restrictions on outdoor water use contained in ordinance.
- (B) The Grady County Code Enforcement Department shall be the enforcement authority for this ordinance. The County Manager may also authorize other departments as may be deemed necessary to support enforcement.
- (C) Criminal and alternative penalties. Any violation of this section may also be enforced by a citation or accusation returnable to the Magistrate Court or by any other legal means as set forth in this Code.

**Sec. 26-3. Repealer.**

All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with this ordinance are repealed.

**Sec. 26-4. Severability.**

The sections, paragraphs, sentences, clauses and phrases of this ordinance are severable. Should any section, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase of this ordinance be rendered invalid by any Court of Law, the remaining sections, paragraphs, sentences, clauses or phrases shall not be affected but shall continue in effect until amended or repealed by action of the governing authority of Grady County, Georgia.

## Frequently Asked Questions about Outdoor Water Use

Updated 06/02/10

### **I heard I can now water my yard every day. Is that true?**

Yes. The Governor recently signed a new state law. Citizens in Georgia can now water any day of the week regardless of your address between the hours of 4 PM and 10 AM. There is NO watering between 10 AM and 4 PM. **These new time limitations are ONLY for landscape water use.**

### **Can I now wash my car or pressure wash my house any day too?**

No. The new law signed by the governor only relates to landscape uses. The old odd / even schedule remains in place for all other outdoor uses. Even and unnumbered addresses may use water outdoors for cleaning, recreation, etc. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays; odd addresses may use water for these activities on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays. There are no "hourly" restrictions for these activities.

### **If I don't have an automated sprinkler do I have to water with a hose before 10 AM or after 4 PM?**

No. The new rules allow hand watering with a shut off nozzle any time of the day any day of the week.

### **What if I have a little league game scheduled and we need to water the field to cool it down or settle the dust at 2 PM?**

Sports fields and parks are exempt from the hourly restrictions. These areas may be watered any time any day of the week.

### **What if I put in new landscape? Do I have to water between 4PM and 10 AM?**

No. Newly installed landscape is also exempt from the hourly restrictions for the first 30 days following installation.

### **What about drip irrigation?**

Drip irrigation is completely exempt from the outdoor rules it may be used any day or any time.

### **Why can't I wash my car any day of the week too?**

The changes to the landscaping rules were part of a new state law. The other outdoor uses were not addressed. As municipal governments / water suppliers we are required by law to follow all of the current water use rules. The current rules for uses other than landscape are no hourly restrictions on the odd / even schedule. These rules are also being considered for an update and we will make information available as soon as any changes are made.

### **What exemptions exist to the new hourly restrictions?**

- Commercial Agriculture.
- Alternative sources of water (grey water, rain water, condensate, etc.)
- Irrigation of food gardens.
- Irrigation of newly installed or reseeded turf for the first 30 days.
- Drip irrigation or soaker hoses.
- Hand watering with a shut off nozzle.
- Water from a private well.
- Irrigation of plants for sale.
- Irrigation of athletic fields, golf courses or public recreational turf.
- Installation and maintenance of irrigation systems.
- Hydroseeding.

### **What if a professional pressure washes my house? Does it have to be on the odd / even schedule?**

No. Commercial businesses are exempt from day of the week restrictions.

### **Now can I have a charity car wash on any day regardless of the address?**

No. Unfortunately charity car washes like at home car washes are subject to the odd / even schedule. This is determined by the address of the facility hosting the car wash. Of course partnering with a professional car wash is exempt from the odd / even schedule because of their "professional exemption". It is also a best practice for saving both water quality and quantity.

*Being allowed to water everyday does not mean it is the best practice. Irrigation should supplement rainfall. Ideally most established landscapes in periods of limited rainfall need to be watered deeply once a week. The reasonable use of our water resources is essential in the region. Use the step test and visual inspection to determine if your plants and grass need to be watered.*

### **How to perform the "step test":**

Place your foot firmly on your turf area.

Watch how quickly the turf springs up to cover your footprint.

If the turf springs up immediately (a few seconds) your turf is probably not in need of watering.

If the foot print remains or the turf slowly rises to eventually cover it your turf is in need of a deep watering.

### **Visual Inspection**

Check plants in the early morning or late evening. Plants checked in the heat of the day will always appear to need water.

If the plant is wilting; yellow or grayish in appearance; has dried edges or browning; or loss of flowering the plant is probably in need of water.

**Sec. 26-5. Effective Date.** This ordinance shall go into effect on January 1, 2011.

Adopted this 19<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2011.

GRADY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

By:   
Albert Ball, Chairman

Attest:   
Carrie Kines, Clerk