



RECYCLED WATER GUIDE #5:
LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR
RESPONSIBILITIES

UNDERSTANDING HOW TO PROPERLY WORK WITH RECYCLED WATER

May 2021

WHY DO I NEED TO HANDLE RECYCLED WATER DIFFERENTLY FROM POTABLE WATER?

Independence is committed to sustainable strategies to preserve our ground water supply. A part of the strategy is to use recycled water for outdoor irrigation, including parks, open spaces, and private residences. Presently, customers in Independence can use recycled water for the irrigation of lawns, trees, shrubs, and other landscape plants.

Recycled water is highly treated wastewater that can be used for outdoor irrigation and is regulated by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Regulation 84. In Colorado, Regulation 84 governs how recycled water is to be provided by the Independence Water and Sanitation District (District). It regulates water quality standards to ensure the water is safe for the public. However, recycled water is not potable; thus, anyone working with it must also be aware of and follow certain procedures to make sure that once delivered to the property, it is utilized in a manner that maintains its safety.

The following are practices for properly installing irrigation systems that use recycled water. In Independence, the recycled water is currently treated to the Category 3 standards of Regulation 84, and the practices summarized in this guide are specific to that level of water quality. Understanding these practices will ensure that your bid is accurate and that the homeowner will be in compliance with all requirements.

CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITY #1:

PRIOR TO STARTING WORK, MAKE SURE THE HOMEOWNER HAS AN APPROVED LANDSCAPING PLAN

Every homeowner's landscaping plan must be reviewed and approved by the District. The review process ensures the proposed improvements are in compliance with District watering policies and Regulation 84 standards. Once approved, the homeowner will receive approval documents. Your bid should be based on the approved plans, and do not start work until you have received a copy of the approval documents. If you are assisting the homeowner with design, the review process is outlined in Guide #2 ("Steps for Landscaping Plan Approval and Installation").

CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITY #2:

KNOW WHAT CAN BE IRRIGATED WITH RECYCLED WATER

In the District, recycled water can only be used to irrigate grass, shrubs, trees, and flower beds.

Do NOT use recycled water for the following:

- Drinking (including for pets)
- Children's toys and wading pools
- Vegetable garden irrigation
- Hot tubs
- Washing of cars, driveways, sidewalks, fence, or home siding
- Outdoor fountains or water features

If the homeowner wants to have an automatic sprinkler system for a vegetable garden, it must be connected separately to the potable system.

CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITY #3:

ADHERE TO SAFE PRACTICES FOR RECYCLED WATER

There are certain safe practices that will keep your employees safe. Not only will these practices keep everyone healthy, but some will improve conservation and help preserve recycled water as a valuable resource:

- Wash your hands if you come into contact with recycled water.
- Inform employees about safe practices, as well as the benefits of recycled water. This includes seasonal and part-time employees.
- Cooperate with District representatives during a site inspection.
- Direct sprinklers away from structures, sidewalks, fences, driveways, decks, patios, seating areas, and vegetable gardens.

CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITY #4:

HELP EDUCATE THE HOMEOWNER ON THE IRRIGATION SYSTEM

Some homeowners may be unfamiliar with sprinkler systems. A lot of people assume a system is a “set it and forget it” piece of equipment, not realizing that it takes a little bit of oversight and minor maintenance. Try to explain the features of the system in a way that is accessible and understandable. The

District asks that you focus on the following:

- Help identify the irrigation zones in the homeowner’s yard.
- Explain the difference between sprays, rotors (if part of the system), and drip emitters.
- Explain how to adjust the zone starting times and duration.
- Explain that zone times should be adjusted at least monthly to account for changes in temperature, daylight, and precipitation.
- Explain how to temporarily turn off the system when it rains.
- Direct them to Guide #4 (“Outdoor Watering Tips and Techniques”).

CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITY #5:

BUY PURPLE

Per Regulation 84, buried irrigation pipes, sprinkler heads, and valve boxes should be the color purple. Most major manufacturers of these parts have them in purple, as it is a national standard.

CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITY #6: TRAIN YOUR ENTIRE STAFF ANNUALLY

Prior to being allowed to install a sprinkler system, at least one person from your company must receive training from the District. This training covers recycled water, your company's responsibilities, and how to properly use it at the homeowner's property. This person will be your company's designated Responsible Contact and should have the authority to train other staff and shut down operations if a violation notice is received. The Responsible Contact will also be required to sign an acknowledgment form on behalf of your company.

Once the Responsible Contact has received the training and submitted the acknowledgment form to the District, this person is required to ensure that all staff members that will be working on the site receive training. These individuals can attend the same training from the District as the Responsible Contact, or they can receive it internally at your company. The training elements should include the following:

- Review "Recycled Water Guide #1: Introduction to Recycled Water."
- Review "Recycled Water Guide #5: Landscape Contractor Responsibilities" (this document).
- Review the training presentation administered by the District.
- Include seasonal and part-time employees and any subcontractors.
- Consider including all staff in the internal training so that personnel can easily be assigned to this site.
- Record the date and time of the training sessions. You may use the District-provided materials and presentation as the basis for your internal training.
- Record the names of all individuals that received the training.
- Have the training materials on the construction site at all times.