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## What Floridians Think They Know About Water Quality & Quantity Water Conservation and Watering Restrictions

The University of Florida IFAS Center for Public Issues Education (PIE Center) recently released a report based upon the “Public Opinions of Water in Florida” survey. Taken by 749 Florida residents, the survey assessed public opinions related to water quality and quantity issues in Florida. Upon evaluation of the results, there seems to be some disconnect about residents knowing and being aware of the watering restrictions for yards in their area and whether or not the restrictions apply to them. In 2010, 93% of residents living in Florida resided in one of the four water management districts with year-round water restrictions. But according to this survey:

- 53% said they do not have to abide by water restrictions for their yard
- 47% said they do have to abide by water restrictions for their yard

Our local water management district (WMD), the St. Johns River WMD, is one of those districts with year-round mandatory watering restrictions that specify which days you may water your lawn. These days depend on whether you have an odd or even numbered address, and the time of year. These restrictions apply to all counties in the St. Johns River WMD, including Brevard County. Four of the five WMDs in Florida have year-round watering restrictions. Only the Northwest Florida WMD does not have year-round water restrictions (this district is located in the panhandle of Florida).

If we use the 93% number of people who live in a WMD that has year-round water restrictions, then the majority of the people who responded to this survey question should live in an area of the state with water restrictions, although less than half actually indicated that they do.

Watering restrictions exist because freshwater is a finite resource and public use of water is one of the largest groups using and taking freshwater from local resources here in Florida. Landscape irrigation alone represents the single largest use of water from municipal water supplies. Reducing the amount of water used to water the landscape is one of the best ways to conserve water, and cutting back on irrigation is the single most significant step most households can take to help conserve Florida’s water for future use. Also, turning your sprinklers off when it’s raining, even if it’s your day to water, is important for conserving water and not using excess water on your lawn. Check out the [Florida Friendly Landscaping™ Principles](#) to learn more.

Here are the rules specifying the **days when you may water** if you live in the St. Johns River WMD:

Time of Year	Homes with <u>odd</u> numbered or no addresses	Homes with <u>even</u> numbered addresses	Nonresidential properties
Daylight Saving Time	Wednesday/Saturday	Thursday/Sunday	Tuesday/Friday
Eastern Standard Time	Saturday	Sunday	Tuesday



## Water Conservation

- Daylight Saving Time: Second Sunday in March until the first Sunday in November
- Eastern Standard Time: First Sunday in November until the second Sunday in March
- An odd numbered address is one that ends in 1, 3, 5, 7, or 9
- An even numbered address is one that ends in 0, 2, 4, 6, or 8
- Water only when needed and not between 10am and 4pm
- Water for no more than one hour per zone
- Restrictions apply to private wells and pumps, ground or surface water, and water from public and private utilities

Here is an example of the use of the rules if the number of my house is 3695:

- If the current date falls in the week of February 1<sup>st</sup>, I can water my lawn for no more than one hour per zone on Saturdays, only when needed, and not between 10am and 4pm.
- If the current date falls in the week of August 1<sup>st</sup>, I can water my lawn for no more than one hour per zone on Wednesdays and Saturdays, only when needed, and not between 10am and 4pm.

For more information please view the following websites

PIE Center Website <http://www.piecenter.com/water>

Odera, E., & Lamm, A. (2015). Public Opinion of Water in Florida. PIE2012/13-06. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education. [http://www.piecenter.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Water\\_Year3\\_ReportFINAL1.pdf](http://www.piecenter.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Water_Year3_ReportFINAL1.pdf)

St. Johns River Water Management District Watering Restrictions website  
<http://floridaswater.com/wateringrestrictions>

South Florida Water Management District Water Restrictions website  
<http://www.sfwmd.gov/portal/page/portal/xweb%20-%20release%203%20water%20conservation/year%20round%20irrigation%20rule#countylist>

Southwest Florida Water Management District Water Restrictions website  
<http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/conservation/restrictions/swfwmd.php>

Suwanee River Water Management District Water Restrictions website  
<http://www.srwmd.state.fl.us/index.aspx?nid=337>

Northwest Florida Water Management District website <http://www.nwfwmd.state.fl.us>

Florida Friendly Landscaping™ Program website <http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>