



For More Information, please
visit the Orange County
Stormwater Program website at
www.ocwatersheds.com

To report a spill,
Call the Orange County 24-hour
Water Pollution Problem
Reporting Hotline
1-877-89-SPILL (1-877-897-7455)
(For emergencies, dial 911)

The tips contained in this brochure provide useful
information about how you can keep excess
runoff from carrying pollutants to the storm drain
system. Please visit the Orange County Stormwater
Program at www.ocwatersheds.com/Publiced for
more resources. Other important resources include:

Municipal Water District of Orange County
www.mwdoc.com

University of California Master Gardeners of
Orange County
www.uccemg.com

UC Cooperative Extension / OC Water Quality &
Water Resources
www.ucanr.org/sites/urbanwatermgmt/



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Help Prevent Ocean Pollution:

Tips to Prevent Overwatering

The Ocean Begins at
Your Front Door



Tips to Prevent Overwatering

What is Overwatering?

Overwatering is the use of irrigation in exceedance of the water demand of a landscaped area.

In Orange County, 60-70% of water used by residents and businesses goes to irrigation and other outdoor uses. By utilizing water resources more efficiently, more potable water may be available for other uses and will not cause urban runoff.



How Does Overwatering Lead to Pollution?

Even during the hottest summer months, you can often see water runoff going into our storm drains and into our waterways. This runoff is usually the result of overwatering of lawns. The water carries trash, motor oil, pet waste and other pollutants into our storm drains, which flow untreated to the ocean. Water runoff both pollutes our waterways and wastes water.

IT'S THE LAW! If you live in Southern Orange County, runoff from landscape irrigation that enters the street and catch basins is prohibited. Please contact your city for more information about what you can do to prevent overwatering and urban runoff.

Lawn Watering Needs

- During the fall and winter months, your lawn needs far less water than during the summer. Adjust sprinkler controls to water less during winter months.
- If your blades of grass spring up after you step on them, they are adequately watered.
- If your grass is a vibrant green and is not pale, it is receiving enough water. If your lawn becomes less verdant, it may need nutrients and not water. If possible, seek assistance from a gardening professional.
- Overwatering during fall and winter months can saturate soils and lead to lawn disease.

When is the Best Time to Water?

- Watering early in the morning before sunrise will reduce water loss due to evaporation.
- Wind tends to die down in the early morning, so the water will get to the lawn as intended.

How do I Irrigate Most Efficiently?

- Adjust the direction of your sprinkler heads so water does not spray on sidewalks, driveways or roads. By simply adjusting the direction of your sprinklers you can save water, prevent water pollution from runoff and keep your lawn healthy.
- Use an irrigation timer to minimize runoff and maximize water absorption. Water districts often provide irrigation schedules to determine the best water scheme for your yard (e.g. Irvine Ranch Water District Always Water Smart weekly irrigation schedules).
- Consider using smart irrigation controllers. Smart irrigation controllers have internal clocks as well as sensors that will turn off the sprinklers in response to environmental changes. If it is raining, too windy or too cold, the smart irrigation control sprinklers will automatically shut off.
- Consider replacing your sprinkler heads with rotating sprinkler nozzles. Rotating nozzles water more uniformly and efficiently, reducing your outdoor water use by up to 30%.
- Check with your local water agency for available rebates on irrigation controllers and other water efficient devices.
- Water by hand. Instead of using sprinklers, consider watering your yard by hand. Hand-watering ensures that all plants get the proper amount of water and you will prevent any water runoff, which carries pollutants into our waterways and wastes water.
- Fix leaks. Nationwide, households waste one trillion gallons of water a year to leaks. If your



garden hose is leaking, replace the nylon or rubber hose washer and ensure a tight connection. Fix broken sprinklers immediately.

Be Careful With Pesticides and Fertilizer

- Never apply pesticides or fertilizer when rain is predicted within the next 48 hours.
- Read labels and use only as directed. Do not over-apply pesticides or fertilizers. Apply to spots as needed rather than blanketing an entire area.
- Utilize least toxic alternatives to pesticides to manage lawn and garden pests where possible. Pesticides are transported via runoff to waterways and can be harmful to aquatic organisms. Visit www.ipm.ucdavis.edu for more information about pest management practices.



Native Vegetation and Maintenance

- "California Friendly" plants or native vegetation can significantly reduce water use. These plants often require far less fertilizers and pesticides, which are two significant pollutants found in Orange County waterways. Replacing water "thirsty" plants and grass types with water efficient natives is a great way to save water and reduce the need for potentially harmful pesticides and fertilizer.
- Please see the California Friendly Garden Guide produced by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and associated Southern California Water Agencies for a catalog of California friendly plants and other garden resources at www.bewaterwise.com/Gardensoft.