

COMSTOCK ESTATES IRRIGATION SYSTEM

How does Comstock Estates irrigation water work?

- Comstock Estates obtains its irrigation water from the Elmwood Lateral of Grand Valley Irrigation District. **This is not potable water.** Comstock Estates accesses this water through a pipeline and controls it by a master inlet valve at the North end of the subdivision. Typically, irrigation water is turned on and made available to homeowners in mid-April and turned off in mid-October.
- Water flows through the entire subdivision through a series of underground pipes. Each house is connected to the closest branch line which provides water via a stand pipe to the surface pump and filter system that then can be utilized to irrigate lawns/gardens. 312 homes are connected to this system; one bad or broken valve requires the whole system to be shut down until repairs can be made.

What do I need to know about the irrigation system in my backyard?

- If you are new to Grand Valley irrigation systems, talk to a neighbor to get a few pointers.
- For the majority of homes in Comstock, each homeowner's system was put in at the same time the home was built and as a result the configurations vary widely so there is not one explanation that would suit all systems.
- Each homeowner should become familiar with their particular system. **The above-ground systems (surface pump, stand pipe, and filter) are the responsibility, both in terms of maintenance and cost, of the homeowner.** Numerous sprinkler and irrigation companies can be hired by the homeowner to help inspect and maintain the above-ground system.

What general maintenance is required for my irrigation system?

- **In April**, before the main inlet water is turned on:
 - The system should be checked for any damage and any repairs should be made either by the homeowner or an irrigation company of their choosing.
 - Ensure the valve to your system is in the **CLOSED** position to avoid flooding your yard.
 - Refer to "What is the process for the April water turn-on day?" below for more explicit instructions.
- **In October**, after the main inlet water is shut off, it is the responsibility of the homeowner to properly prepare the system for winter. Refer to "What is the process for the Fall Irrigation Shut Down" below for more explicit instructions.
 - To avoid frozen and damaged pipes, compressed air can be used to blow water from the pipes, both surface and underground, so no water remains.
 - Various sprinkler/irrigation companies and individuals in the valley can do this service for a charge or homeowners can get equipment and do it themselves; however, most home air compressors cannot provide the volume of air (CFM) required to completely remove the water.
- **During the winter**, when the main inlet water is off, the main valve to your system should remain partially open until the spring start-up process
- **During irrigation season**, filters will need to be cleaned.
 - The irrigation water in the Grand Valley is occasionally full of sediment and debris due to upstream runoff. The screen on our pipe head at the main ditch is only able to trap large debris like branches, long grasses, and the like (this is common). This screen at the pipe head is cleaned regularly to ensure we maintain a steady volume and pressure in our water distribution system. Anything smaller needs to be filtered by the Homeowners system. Occasionally, the HOA experiences excessive sediment buildup in some of our distribution lines, which the HOA will flush and vacuum as needed.
 - Since there are a variety of configurations and types of filters in our community, we can't describe every system here, but a neighbor may offer helpful pointers for maintaining the filter. It is preferable to have 2 sediment screens which increase in mesh count/decrease in micron size in your system, although many homeowners only have 1. The final mesh count should be in the range of 60 to 100 depending on your sprinkler nozzle type.
 - The frequency of flushing and disassembling the screens for cleaning depends on the amount of sediment in the incoming water supply and how often and for how long the homeowner/renter waters.
 - A properly functioning sediment screen setup should not allow any sediment to get to sprinkler heads (at least not anything big enough to plug them up). Plugged sprinkler heads may indicate sediment is bypassing the screen elements, possibly through a hole in the screen or a leaky or missing O-ring.

How will I know when the irrigation water will be turned on or off?

- Signs will be posted at all three entrances to the Comstock Community and email blasts from Comstock Estate's subscription service will indicate when the main inlet valve is turned on and off for the season.
- Signs will also be posted intermittently and email blasts from Comstock Estate's subscription service will indicate throughout the irrigation season if irrigation water needs to be turned off/on for repairs to the main irrigation system or individual homeowner's above-ground systems.
- The website homepage (comstockhoa.net) will also announce all instances where the irrigation water is scheduled to be turned on or off.
- If you would like to receive emails from the Comstock Estates subscription service about irrigation water issues, sign up for the subscription service on the website (<https://comstockhoa.net/subscribe/>).

What is the process for the April "water turn-on" day?

- The HOA will notify the Homeowners in advance as to what date the irrigation water will be turned on via entryway signage and email if you have subscribed for email alerts at <https://comstockhoa.net/subscribe/> This generally takes place on a weekend.
- PRIOR TO the HOA startup date, please ensure your main supply valve is CLOSED and INSPECT IT for any cracks or damage. The opening of the HOA main valve pressurizes the underground system and any single failed Homeowner main valve will force the shutdown of the entire HOA irrigation system (312 homes).
 - If you need to conduct repairs to your main valve and/or standpipe prior to the HOA water-on date, please contact the HOA via <https://comstockhoa.net/contact-us/> or phone the HOA Manager (Lori Wood) at 970-812-4051, to ensure that you have sufficient time to complete your repair prior to HOA system pressurization.
 - If you have a main valve emergency and the HOA water needs to be turned off, please contact the HOA Manager (Lori Wood) at 970-812-4051.
- On the morning of the irrigation water turn on, Chuck's Sprinkler Services will be onsite to perform the opening of the main valve in the morning.
- Each homeowner should check mid-morning of the water turn-on day to see if your water has arrived by turning your valve on.
 - If it seems to be working fine, you can turn off your valve and then open it when you intend on using the water for your yard
 - If your system springs a leak or is **not** working, Chuck's Sprinkler Services will have several crews and trucks available in the area to perform immediate repairs to systems that exhibit leaks on start up.
 - **Please contact Chuck's Sprinkler at 970-243-6294 for these immediate repairs on that day.**
 - Some leaks or system problems may require an immediate shut down of the main inlet system to complete repairs. Start-up and shut-downs put stresses on our system, and we would like to minimize these as much as possible. This would also reduce disruptions to homeowners trying to water their yards.
 - If you will be out of town the weekend the water is turned on, please arrange for a neighbor or trusted friend to turn on and test your system. The same neighbor or friend could then arrange for repairs and access, if needed.

What is the process for the Fall shut down of the irrigation system?

- Each October, posted signs and email blasts from Comstock Estate's subscription service will indicate the day that the irrigation water will be turned off – this generally takes place on a weekend.
- **CRITICAL:** After the HOA irrigation water has been turned OFF and the underground system allowed to drain (approx. 24 hrs), each Homeowner **must OPEN their main supply valve** in order to drain any residual water out of the internal components of their valve.
 - Water trapped in a valve **WILL freeze** and expand which will cause the valve body to crack. In most cases, this will not be apparent until Spring startup when the cracked valve fails catastrophically and the entire HOA system must be turned off in order for the Homeowner to conduct the repair.
- Each Homeowner should have their irrigation system drained and blown out with compressed air in order to prevent the freezing and rupture of their lines, valves, and sprinkler heads.
 - Several companies in the Grand Valley provide this service. Please schedule them ahead of time because they are very busy during shutdown time and a freeze may occur before they can service your system.

- A homeowner may choose to do his/her own system blow out. Most home air compressors can provide enough pressure (~30–70 PSI); **however, many cannot provide the volume of air (CFM) required to completely remove the water.** CFM requirements are dependent on individual zone demand. All zones including those not in use must be blown out.

What if an early freeze is approaching before the HOA irrigation water is turned off?

- Close your main valve. Depending on how cold and for how long the temperature remains below freezing, you may need to take additional precautions to prevent the main valve and standpipe from freezing. Many times, a blanket and/or a heavy cardboard box to trap the ground heat in with the main valve will suffice. For additional protection, wrap an electric heating pad snugly around the main valve and protect it from wetness. It ONLY needs to keep the main valve and standpipe above freezing; so the warm or medium setting should be more than plenty.
- Open all of the downstream valves and spigots in your system. This will help drain as much water as possible. The ideal is to drain the water out of all the above ground plumbing. Underground valves and lines should be OK provided the ground does not freeze deep.
- Remove your primary and secondary sediment screens. Screens in individual sprinkler heads do not necessarily need to be removed unless your sprinkler manufacturer advises to do so.
- Drain your pump housing. There will be at least 1 but likely 2 pipe plugs or drain valves on your pump housing. Remove or open these and allow the water to drain out. Once drained, replace / close the plugs or keep them out until the system is blown out.
- Remember to OPEN your main valve After the HOA water is off and drained.

What if I am having problems with my irrigation system?

- If you are having problems, contact the HOA Manager (Lori Wood) at 970-812-4051 or use the website contact form (<https://comstockhoa.net/contact-us/>). Or directly contact one of several companies in the Grand Valley. Chuck's Sprinkler (970-243-6294) is most familiar with Comstock Estates irrigation system.

What if I need the water turned off immediately?

- If it is an emergency, and you need the water turned off immediately, call a Board Member for help. Please call the Board Members in the order they appear.
 HOA Management: Lori Wood 970-234-5674
 HOA President: Jim Jackson 314-973-8498
 HOA Secretary: Andrea Withrow 303-908-1781
 HOA Treasurer Sam Russo: 970-462-2018
 HOA Members-At-Large:
 Joan Robinson 414-975-5109
 Kali Sacharski 262-370-5857

Questions?

- If you are new to Grand Valley irrigation systems, talk to your neighbors to get a few pointers. Questions about your irrigation system, please call as follows:
 Chuck's Sprinkler: 970-243-6294

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