

## **Caldwell Municipal Irrigation District - General Information, Frequently Asked Questions, & Suggestions**

Website: [www.cityofcaldwell.org/departments/irrigation](http://www.cityofcaldwell.org/departments/irrigation) Email: [water@cityofcaldwell.org](mailto:water@cityofcaldwell.org)

**\*Pay bill by phone: 208-718-5593 \*Payment questions: 208-455-3000 opt.1 \*Service/Billing questions: 208-455-3070 opt.2**

**Service Business Hours: Mon-Fri 7am – 5pm After Business Hours Emergency Only: 208-250-1638**

- **Irrigation Season Start & End Dates:** \*Dates are subject to change \*Depending Upon Availability of Water: We anticipate receiving irrigation water to our pump stations & turning them on between \***April 15<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup>** & will be shut off between \***October 1<sup>st</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>** of each season. \*Customers may experience low pressure or water being on & off for the first couple of weeks while maintenance crews test lines. \***CMID will shut the lines off if repairs need to be made, so patience is requested.**
- **Why do I have to pay an irrigation assessment bill?** The assessment you pay each year is for the water right that comes with the property and is regulated by State Code. Most land within the boundaries of CMID is under contractual obligation for the expense of the maintenance of the dams, canals, and ditches, as well as the pressurized irrigation system. The pressurized system includes the maintenance of piping, pumps, motors, and electricity. (Ord. 2504, 7-6-2004)
- **What does my irrigation assessment bill consist of?**  
Administration Assessment: the administrative costs associated with operation of CMID.  
Base Assessment: based on the City's cost to deliver the irrigation water. This is based on the acreage of the entire lot, regardless of the irrigated area.  
Pressurization Assessment: based on the City's cost to operate irrigation pump stations and pressurizing the irrigation water before it is delivered to customers.
- **What if I do not pay the irrigation tax?** CMID levies an irrigation tax against all lands in the district that are unpaid. Payment is due in full by April 1<sup>st</sup> of each active year. It is important for you to understand that Idaho Law requires you to pay irrigation taxes just as you are required to pay property taxes. CMID works under Idaho statute title 50-chapter18, 50-1801 -50-1835. If you do not pay your assessment, the district will file a tax lien on your property. If assessments are not paid within three years after recording the delinquency at the County Recorder's Office, Idaho Statue 50-1821 requires the City Clerk of City of Caldwell to issue to the district a tax deed to the property. To avoid the potential loss of title to the property through tax deed sale, the landowner must pay all unpaid liens or assessments. The purchaser of a tax deed at a tax deed sale holds all rights and title that the irrigation district acquired through the assessment and delinquency proceedings. Once the sale is complete and a deed of sale is delivered to the purchaser, any further action is between the landowner and the purchaser, not the landowner and the irrigation district.
- **Why have my rates increased even with additional users being added?** User rates and fees have increased for a variety of reasons. Over the past several years, nearly every domestic commodity has seen cost increases. The following industrial and operation costs have impacted city utilities significantly: increased wages (skilled labor), operation and maintenance costs, equipment and material costs, necessary technology upgrades, contractor and consultant costs, and power costs.
- **How are rates determined?** Rate increases are derived from in-depth studies performed by the city to determine the appropriate revenue to maintain levels of service for current and future operational costs. Recent annual studies have prompted annual increases for fiscal years 2024 and 2025.
- **Will my bill increase every year by this same amount?** Unlikely. As in-depth studies forecast current and future revenues and provide predictability, the percentage of rate and fee increases should decrease over time. There are several internal and external factors that contribute to the final analysis and assessment of establishing the rates and fees each year.
- **For Safety's Sake:** The water provided is for **Irrigation Use Only! Under no circumstances should the irrigation water be used as drinking water!**
- **In an EMERGENCY:** Go to your irrigation box and close the hand valve. This prevents the water from entering your irrigation system. \*Shutting off the sprinkler timer does not stop the water.\* If your hand valve is broken and you

cannot shut the water off, call us and we will send a technician out to close the City's valve or isolate the mainline. There is no charge for this service. Do Not attempt to shut off the City's valve, if you break it, you will be charged for the repair. If your shut off valve is broken, we advise you to get it replaced by a licensed plumber or landscaper as soon as possible. This will enable you to stop the water quickly and prevent property damage.

- **Low Pressure or No Irrigation Water:** If you are experiencing low pressure on no irrigation water, it may be that our pump station is down. Please check our website at [www.cityofcaldwell.org/departments/irrigation](http://www.cityofcaldwell.org/departments/irrigation) for outage updates or call our office 208-455-3070 option 1. If the pump station is on and you have low pressure, please clean your filter first, and if this does not resolve the issue call our office and we will troubleshoot over the phone.
- **Property Owners:** Are responsible for maintaining & repairing their own service line (past the city's valve) such as their own sprinkler system control boxes, sprinkler heads, filters, and the winterization of their private sprinkler system.
- **Odd/Even watering days:** CMID Recommends watering every other day. This will help with pressure and keep pump stations from shutting off due to high demand & over pumping the water right. Addresses ending with an odd number should water on odd days and addresses ending with an even number should water on even days. Some types of sprinkler timers have an odd/even setting. Select this and set watering times. It is important that Common Lots follow this schedule as well. **Watering schedules are up to the HOA & Residents to manage together.**
- **Is the City going to enforce Odd or Even watering days?** **NO.** The City recommends an odd/even watering schedule. The only way the city could enforce/monitor this is to raise the rates and hire more employees.
- **Peak watering times:** 5am – 9am – Please consider watering during non-peak hours to reduce the amount of water used at one time and causing low pressure or pump shut down.
- **Who owns the canals & ditches:** CMID DOES NOT own or control the canals or ditches. These are owned & maintained by various irrigation districts or may be privately owned.
- **Who owns the irrigation pump stations & main irrigation lines:** CMID owns & maintains the irrigation pump stations & main irrigation lines. CMID will make repairs on customers' property if the main water line has broken. CMID will not repair a customer's service line.
- **Pounds of pressure:** CMID tries to maintain a 50psi at 9 gallons a minute throughout the irrigation system. Customers should design their system accordingly. (This may fluctuate daily, based on demand).
- **Water rights:** Are based on acreage served – 1 minor's inch per acre = 9 gallons a minute per acre.  
**\*Examples are for comparison use only**  
**\*Water Rights Example:** Subdivision with 106 homes, 35.21 total acres = 3 houses per acre. The water right is 1 minor's inch per acre or 9 gallons per acre per minute. Total acreage is 35.21 acres, which equals 316.89 gallons per minute. (2-3 houses per acre)  
**\*Comparison Example:** If everyone waters at the same time 106 houses X 9 gallons per minute = 954 gallons per minute. This is over pumping the water right and causing high demand, low pressure in the system and pump shut down.  
**\*Example:** If homes are set to water every other day as recommended: 53 houses X 9 gallons per minute is 477 gallons per minute. This is still over pumping the water right. This is why we recommend odd/even watering days, and watering times spread throughout the day.
- **Why does the pump shut down if we over pump?** The pumps are designed with a float system, so if water falls below a certain level the pump/motor will shut down to prevent damage to the system. Peak hours are 5-9am & 8-10pm. The water right runs 24 hours a day 7 days a week. If everyone sets his or her sprinklers to run at the same time this causes high demand, low pressure and can over pump the water right shutting the system down. To prevent this from happening, users need to adjust their watering times to non-peak hours spread throughout the day/night. You can water during the heat of the day just increase the watering time 5–10 minutes for evaporation purposes. You can water at night just reduce the watering time to prevent fungus growth.

- **If a pump station shuts down During Normal Business Hours:** It will not be a priority to restart the pump station if we are working on domestic or irrigation leaks, repairs etc. CMID will address it as soon as we have a service technician available.
- **If a pump station shuts down after dark: This is considered a Non-Emergency.** If a pump station shuts down after dark CMID does not consider this an emergency and will not go out to turn a pump station back on. This is for our safety, as some of our stations require us to check head gates etc. CMID will come out in the morning to restart the pump station.
- **Overwatering:** Can lead to no root system, fungus, and mold growth, dead or splotchy lawn, pooling, and mosquito problems.
- **How to prevent overwatering:** First, check your sprinkler settings. Most new homes that have laid new sod are set to water on program A, B and C and come on several times a day, for extended periods. This is fine for new sod, but as it establishes a root system, the watering time should be reduced until you reach the every other day recommendation. Most homeowners work so they do not know their system comes on three or four times a day, flooding neighbors etc. Check your sprinkler setting and set your system as needed. Most new homes have the user manual taped to the wall above the sprinkler unit in the garage. If it is not there, locate the model number on the unit, go to the manufacturers' website, and download it or visit YouTube for how to videos. Most sprinkler systems are set up to use more than 9gpm. To learn how many gallons per minute you are using – you can check your sprinkler heads. Most pop ups are 1-3 gallons and will be marked at the nozzle. Rotary heads usually will say on the nozzle.
- **My neighbor is overwatering and flooding my yard. What can I do?** First talk to your neighbor and explain they are overwatering/flooding your yard. Work together to come up with a plan/solution. If the neighbor is resistant to compromise, **CMID as a one-time courtesy** will send out a technician to speak with them or drop off a doorhanger with information regarding the issue. CMID will not shut off their water. **If the overwatering persists this will become a civil matter between you and your neighbor.** It is your decision if you want to take legal action against your neighbor. You may call Police Dispatch at 208-454-7531 and they will send out an officer to look into the problem.
- **Will the City fine for wasting water/water running down the street?** **Malicious Or Willful Waste Of Water:** It shall be unlawful for any irrigation water user to waste water or allow it to be wasted by imperfect water stops, valves, leaky pipes, or improper adjustment of sprinklers, or to permit the malicious or willful consumption of water for no beneficial use. The city will make a visual determination of where water has been wasted and shall notify the user of that determination. It shall then be the user's responsibility to make the necessary repairs, or to institute actions that will correct that situation within thirty (30) days of the city's notification to the user. All costs incurred for repairs shall be the responsibility of the user. (Ord. 2504, 7-6-2004)
- **Maintenance on your irrigation system:** At the start of the season and once a month, check your irrigation system. To do this turn your system to the manual setting and press start. Check your sprinkler heads. Make sure that they are working properly and watering the lawn. If not, adjust the sprinkler head. Watch the water. If you notice water running over the sidewalk at 15 minutes then cut the watering time back to 12 minutes. Water run-off means your lawn has met its absorption rate. Check to make sure that the sprinklers that adjoin your lawn with your neighbor's lawn is not pooling and causing standing water. If you notice water is pooling, you can reduce the watering time on this station. If you are unable to cut back the time due to the size of yard and or sprinklers on the station, you can replace the sprinkler head with one that puts out one or three gallons per minute. \*Check the filters in the pop-up sprinkler head and clean. If they are plugged this could restrict water flow and can cause dead patches in your yard and/or pooling. \*Flushing your sprinkler lines: Remove a sprinkler head from the furthest point of the water inlet. If the irrigation entry point is in the back yard, you would remove a sprinkler head on either side of your driveway, and if the irrigation entry is in the front yard, you would remove a sprinkler head from the furthest point in the back yard. Once you have removed the sprinkler head, manually start the station and let the water run until it cleans up, put the sprinkler head back on and run as normal. \*Clean your filter. To do this close your hand valve, open the hose bib to bleed off the pressure, then close it and remove the filter housing. Inside the

filter housing is a mesh screen, remove this screen and clean it. Tip - clean this outside using a scrubber brush/bottle brush. Make sure you put the screen in exactly how it was removed. The bottom of mesh to bottom of filter or opening to opening. If you put it upside down, it will prevent you from getting irrigation water.

- **Sprinklers stuck on:** Go to your green irrigation box and locate and close your hand valve. You may have a wheel valve, or you may have a hand valve that has a red or blue handle, or a brass ball valve. Both types have 1/4" turn for off and on. If the valve is crossed like a "T" this is closed. If it is in line with the pipe, it is "Open." Close your hand valve and open the hose bib to bleed off the pressure, then close the hose bib and wait for the system to decompress. If you hear the sprinkler solenoid shut down, you know the system has decompressed. You can open the hand valve slowly to test if the sprinklers come on again. If the sprinklers come back on, close the hand valve, wait a couple of hours, and try again. \*The cause behind sprinklers sticking on could be a wiring issue, the solenoid is bad and needs replaced or it has dirt/debris keeping it from closing all the way. There are many tutorials on YouTube about cleaning, repairing, and replacing solenoids.
- **Winterizing:** When having your irrigation system blown out in the fall, please make sure the company doing so does not close the city's curb-stop valve, but instead closes your shut off valve. Also, make sure the hose bib is closed. If both are left open when the water is turned on in the spring, this could cause undetected flooding on your property and adjacent lots. CMID's curb-stop valve should only be closed in the event of an emergency to isolate your system. \*If CMID has to come out and open the city's curb-stop valve, there will be a \$25.00 fee added to your following year's bill.

- **Example Pictures:**



- **Line Locates:** There are buried irrigation main lines on your property. Call before you dig: **Dig Line 208-342-1585** Call at least 2 working days before you plan to dig. If you do not call, you are responsible for all damages! As per Idaho Codes 55-2201 - 55-2210.
- **Easement Authority of the City:** Article 17 Irrigation Utility (Ord. 2504, 7-6-2004) The city, through its authorized representative, bearing proper credentials and identification, shall be permitted at proper and reasonable hours of the day, to enter all properties to which irrigation water is furnished from the city irrigation system for testing or for any other purpose necessary for the proper administration of the city irrigation system in accordance with provisions of this article. Also, the city, through its authorized representative bearing proper credentials and identification, shall be permitted to enter all private properties through which the city holds an easement for the purpose of inspection, observation, repair, maintenance, or any other purpose or function reasonably related to the city irrigation system. All entry and subsequent work, if any, within said easement shall be done, in a work like manner. There is an irrigation easement on your property. In the event of a leak on the main line, the easement allows our crew access to make any necessary repairs. Please do not place a shed or plant trees within the easement. If you place a shed in your backyard and you are unsure of where the easement is, please call our office 208-455-3070 option 2. Please do not plant trees/shrubs near your irrigation control box or the city's valve as this could damage your system, pipes etc.
- **A Board of Corrections:** Will be available March 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> between 8:30am – 4:00pm at the City of Caldwell Water Department located at 305 W Chicago St, if you would like to discuss modifications regarding your property.
- For additional information/outages, please visit our website: [www.cityofcaldwell.org/departments/irrigation](http://www.cityofcaldwell.org/departments/irrigation)