



RECYCLED WATER GUIDE #1:
PRESERVING ELBERT COUNTY'S
WATER SUPPLY

UNDERSTANDING INDEPENDENCE'S RECYCLED WATER SYSTEM

May 2021

WHAT IS RECYCLED WATER?

Recycled water is highly treated wastewater that can be used for many non-potable purposes and is regulated by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (Regulation 84). The Independence Water and Sanitation District's (District) recycled water is treated to high levels and can be used for the irrigation of parks, open spaces, and customers' yards.

FYI, recycled water is not "gray water." Gray water is untreated water from showers, clothes washers, and non-kitchen faucets (and not dishwashers or toilets). While gray water use is allowed in Colorado, it is not utilized in Independence.

HOW CAN I USE RECYCLED WATER?

Presently, customers in Independence can use recycled water for the irrigation of lawns, trees, shrubs, and other landscaping plants.

Do not use recycled water for:

- Drinking
- Children's toys and wading pools
- Vegetable garden irrigation
- Hot tubs
- Washing of cars, driveways, home siding, etc.
- Outdoor fountains or water features

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF USING RECYCLED WATER?

Independence's drinking water comes from deep underground aquifers. Every drop that can be preserved helps ensure a reliable drinking water supply for Independence and our Elbert County neighbors. In Colorado, outdoor irrigation can account for approximately 50% of all household water usage. Consequently, if we can use recycled water for irrigation, Independence residents can make a huge contribution to sustaining our local water supplies.

IS RECYCLED WATER SAFE?

Physical contact with recycled water is not known to have any negative effects. However, you should use it for its intended purposes only. Recycled water goes through high-level filtration and multiple disinfection processes. Independence's recycled water is regularly tested to ensure it meets all health standards.

Recycled water has been used in Colorado for decades, including at several parks, sports fields, golf courses, and recreational areas. Furthermore, it has been used in many other states for similar purposes, including residential landscape irrigation. Those states have similar regulatory standards and required safety practices to Colorado.

HOW DO I CONNECT MY PROPERTY TO THE RECYCLED WATER SYSTEM?

It's already in your street and has a service to your property. Throughout the streets, there are separate pipelines that deliver recycled water from the District's facilities. Every home in Independence has a recycled water service that can be connected to the landscape irrigation system. Once connected, each property's irrigation system will function similarly to a standard irrigation system with a timer, buried irrigation lines, spray heads, and a valve box.

However, it's important to know that each property's irrigation system must follow a few standard design features:

- All buried irrigation lines, sprinkler heads, and valve box lids must be the color purple. Purple is the industry standard for recycled water and lets people know that the yard has a recycled water supply.
- Spray from sprinkler heads should be directed away from the sidewalk, driveway, patio, sitting areas, play equipment, sandboxes, house, fencing, and neighbors' yards.
- Do not overwater or allow water to run off your property.
- Wash your hands with soap and water after maintaining the irrigation system or being in contact with recycled water.

The steps to install your irrigation system can be viewed in Guide #2 ("Steps for Landscaping Plan Approval and Installation").

The procedures to follow when using your irrigation system can be found in Guide #3 ("Customer Responsibilities").

AM I REQUIRED TO USE RECYCLED WATER?

Everyone's participation in the recycled water program is important to ensure Independence and Elbert County have a reliable drinking water supply for the long term. So yes, using the system is required in Independence.

HOW MUCH DO I PAY FOR RECYCLED WATER?

Customers are charged less for recycled water than for drinking water. For pricing, refer to the current Rate and Fee Resolution.

WHEN CAN I IRRIGATE WITH RECYCLED WATER?

Independence has an outdoor watering schedule, similar to other Colorado utilities. Independence's outdoor watering schedule is as follows:

- Addresses ending in even numbers: Monday, Wednesday, Friday
- Addresses ending in odd numbers: Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday
- Watering hours: between 7:00 PM and 10:00 AM on designated days

Outdoor watering is not permitted on Sundays or between 10:00 AM and 7:00 PM.

Conservation techniques can be viewed in Guide #4 ("Outdoor Watering Tips and Techniques").