

Code of Practice: Irrigated Public Open Space (IPOS)

Aim

The aim of the Code of Practice: Irrigated Public Open Space (IPOS) is to provide tools and reporting models necessary to implement best practice irrigation management in the provision of public open space such as sports fields, parks and reserves.

Objective

To provide fit for purpose turf based on efficient irrigation management and sound horticultural practices. To deliver on this, subscribers to the code will need to make a commitment to: **MEASURE** → **MONITOR** → **MANAGE**.

Overview

The code can be used by providers, practitioners and regulating authorities to set policy, manage resources and regulate water use in the provision of IPOS. It provides a management framework for best practice turf and irrigation management practices for all irrigated public open space, including that managed by Local Government, the Education sector and other IPOS managers. It forms the basis by which the industry can demonstrate efficient, effective resource management in the provision of IPOS. While the principles contained within the code can be applied to all aspects of irrigated public open space the code specifically addresses irrigated turf rather than trees, landscape and ornamental gardens.

Benefits

The code brings significant benefits not only to the subscriber but to the community and environment in a broader context. These benefits may be summarised as:

- Fit for purpose turf
- Significant water savings translating into reduced watering costs
- Increased flexibility for the irrigator in the case of water restrictions
- Recognition of the level of irrigation efficiency in assessing exemption applications in the case of water restrictions
- Efficient irrigators are not penalised for efficiencies already demonstrated
- Community recognition/accountability/demonstration of efficient watering practices employed
- Potential aversion of public health and safety issues – particularly in the case of school ovals and sporting grounds
- Increased amenity levels associated with appropriately irrigated public open space

Where will the water savings come from?

Water savings will come from:

- System scheduling during the shoulder periods either side of the peak season – significant savings are also generally available at smaller sites where system constraints are not so much of an issue
- Efficient irrigation systems – particularly older systems, were poorly designed resulting in significantly greater water use than would otherwise be required
- Ongoing monitoring and reporting of irrigation performance and adjustment of irrigation scheduling to match climate conditions

Further information:

IPOS Administration
7424 3753
iposadmin@sawater.com.au
www.sawater.com.au
May 2010

The process

There are six steps to the process within the code:

1. Implement a strategic approach to irrigation management underpinned by a policy statement and commitment to appropriately resource and manage the irrigation of the site under control
2. Ensure that the systems are functioning to the appropriate performance standard with periodic system audits and ongoing regular maintenance
3. Ensure that an appropriate horticultural maintenance program is in place to maintain soil structures and turf nutrient requirements
4. Determine the baseline irrigation requirement that using long term average climatic data is used to set the monthly irrigation schedule and consumption
5. Amend the determined irrigation schedule on a regular basis to account for climatic variance to the long term average. This will ensure that the turf is receiving the required water to maintain it at the predetermined quality level
6. Monitor irrigation water consumption against irrigation requirement and report on irrigation efficiency and turf quality

Implementing the code

While the formulas used to determine how much water is required to maintain a site at the appropriate standard seem complicated you do not have to be technically minded to implement the code. An individual may not have all the skills required to comply with the various aspects of the code. However, this should not serve as a deterrent to implementation as either training is available or contractors can be used to fill the gaps. For example a groundsman will have the horticultural knowledge relating to turf maintenance but may not be an approved IAA auditor. While courses can be undertaken to become accredited there are many contractors able to provide those services which will only be required periodically. In short:

1. Read your meter
2. Check your consumption against your water budget for the site
3. Access Bureau of Meteorology data for your area and adjust your irrigation schedule accordingly if evaporation has been significantly greater or less than the long term average for the month
4. Visually inspect the site to ensure turf standard is consistent with that required and that the irrigation system is functioning properly through periodic testing
5. Report on irrigation efficiency and 'fit for purpose' quality of the turf

Water allocation for irrigation of public open space

Receiving an allocation for irrigation of public open space gives you more flexibility to water as your turf requires. For this to work effectively SA Water requires the following conditions to be met:

- Irrigate only between 8pm and 8am
- Keep within determined monthly water allocations
- Provide SA Water with monthly meter readings with consumption details (reported at the end of each month using the supplied IPOS reporting template)
- Completion of an irrigation audit by set date (if not already completed within the past five years)
- Implementation of recommendations from the irrigation audit

How do I apply for a permit exception?

IPOS permit application forms are available for download from the SA Water website or by request from IPOS Administration (please see contact details below).

Resources

The Code of Practice – Irrigation of Public Open Space (IPOS) is available for download from the SA Water website.

Alternatively hard copies of the code are available on request from IPOS Administration (please see contact details below).

Training/accreditation

- TAFE SA
- Irrigation Association of Australia

For further information contact IPOS Administration by email: iposadmin@sawater.com.au, visit the SA Water website at www.sawater.com.au or contact your local council (Parks and Gardens) or Parks and Leisure Australia.

Further information:

IPOS Administration
7424 3753
iposadmin@sawater.com.au
www.sawater.com.au
May 2010

