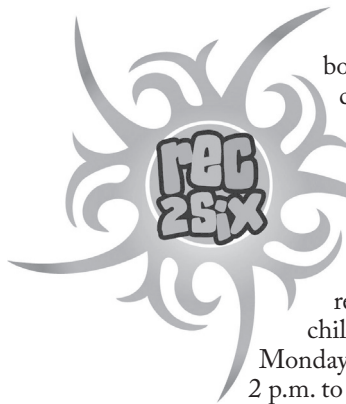


A Few Simple Steps Can Protect Pipes & Your Wallet

With our comparatively balmy winter weather, we forget that on rare occasion, it does get cold enough in Hillsborough County for water pipes to freeze. Frozen water pipes can burst, causing tremendous damage and leaving property owners with costly repair bills. Here are a few tips to avoid the hassle:

- Protect pipes, especially if they are exposed or the house or building insulation is insufficient.
- Homes and buildings with crawl spaces are particularly susceptible to wind and freezing temperatures, so outdoor pipes should be protected from the elements.
- Secure water meter covers so the meter and surrounding pipes are not exposed.
- Insulate or cover exposed backflow prevention devices on fire lines and irrigation systems.
- Disconnect any outside water hoses from spigots, as water trapped inside can freeze and crack the hose.
- If pipes do freeze, temporarily shut off the supply of water to your house. Never use an open flame to thaw out a pipe.

A New, Affordable & Fun Afternoon Program For Children



Are your children bored and often driving you crazy after school? The Hillsborough County Parks, Recreation and Conservation

Department offers a new way to play. Rec2Six is a new

recreation program for children grades K - 5, offered Monday through Friday, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., at 18 recreation

centers throughout Hillsborough County. The weekly rate is \$38. Reduced rates of \$30 and \$20 per week are available with a current school reduced or free lunch letter.

Rec2Six improves a child's quantity and quality of physical activity, motor skills, movement knowledge, and peer interaction that measures fitness improvements throughout the year. The program also provides seasonal sports, fitness activities, art programs and special activities.

Registration for a local Rec2Six program is open weekdays from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the participating centers. For more information, visit www.Rec2six.org.

Watering Restrictions Reminder

Irrigation of established lawns and landscaping is allowed two days a week in Hillsborough County.

Take note, however, that restrictions could change if our weather conditions warrant. It's always a good idea to check water restrictions regularly – a citation means a penalty starting at \$100 for the first offense.

For complete information on the restrictions, including rules for watering-in lawn treatments and new sod, visit www.hillsboroughcounty.org/water, call (813) 275-7094 for a recorded message, or contact the Water Conservation Team at (813) 272-5977, ext. 43991, during regular business hours.

In unincorporated Hillsborough County and the City of Tampa, the current watering schedule is:

- **Addresses ending in 0, 1, 2 or 3** - Mondays and Thursdays
- **Addresses ending in 4, 5 or 6** - Tuesdays and Fridays
- **Addresses ending in 7, 8 or 9**, locations with no address, and locations with mixed addresses (such as office complexes and shopping centers) Wednesdays and Saturdays

All watering must be done before 8 a.m. or after 6 p.m.

If you have friends or family members who have their own wells, do them a favor and let them know that the restrictions apply to most water sources, including private wells, and ponds or lakes that are used as alternate irrigation supplies.



COMMUNICATOR

Published quarterly by the Public Utilities Department. For more information about County programs, services and activities, call the Hillsborough InfoLine at (813) 272-5900, or visit the County's website at www.hillsboroughcounty.org

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Winter 2012

COMMUNICATOR

Keeping You Informed About County Government

Less Is More When Watering In Winter Months

Cooler weather means lawns need less water.

The Hillsborough County Public Utilities Department joins the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) in reminding residents who irrigate their lawns to skip a week of watering during our cooler winter months.

According to research by the University of Florida, grass doesn't need to be watered as often during the cooler months. A half-inch to three-quarters of an inch of water every 10 to 14 days is sufficient. Overwatering in the winter can encourage pests and disease in a lawn.

Your lawn will tell you when it needs water. Following the appropriate two-day-a-week sprinkling schedule for your address, water when:

- Grass blades are folded in half lengthwise on a third of the lawn.
- Grass blades are blue-gray.
- Footprints remain on the lawn for several minutes after walking on it.

Skipping a week of irrigation will help conserve drinking water supplies needed for critical uses during the dry season. SWFWMD estimates that if everyone in their 16-county region skipped one week of irrigation

(Continued on inside)



It's possible to have a beautiful yard, even in the winter, by using Florida-friendly landscaping principles.

IN THIS ISSUE...

- New Rec Program For Kids
- Projects Improve Water Quality
- Protect Your Pipes This Winter

Small Projects Will Make Big Impact On Water Quality



The work is taking place in several neighborhoods.

Nobody likes a dead end, including Hillsborough County's Public Utilities Department.

There is a fair share of pipelines in our water distribution system which dead end. Developers may have built only what was required to service their new construction. Or, new growth occurred around where the lines existed.

Water in dead-end lines can stagnate, causing poor odor and taste. It's also harder to maintain mandated disinfectant levels in these lines. To ensure our customers receive the highest quality water possible, utility crews must regularly flush the pipelines, using large amounts of water and labor. Dead-end lines also don't provide as many options as a looped system for avoiding service interruptions should a pipeline need repair.

That's why we've embarked on the Countywide Potable Water Main/Distribution Lines Renewal and Replacement Project, a long-term program to improve water quality by connecting certain lines which now dead end.

Several projects have been identified in neighborhoods throughout our service areas. The projects include new or replacement pipelines, interconnects of lines and new fire hydrants, with construction lasting a week to three months depending on what needs to be done. In some cases, the construction of new pipeline segments will provide an opportunity for those residents who are currently served by private drinking water wells to connect to the County's utility system if they choose.

In areas where the work may be more disruptive, public meetings are being held to include residents in the process and answer any questions they may have.

The renewal and replacement program is being funded through the Water Enterprise's Capital Improvement Program.

Avoid False Alarm Fines

Did you know that in unincorporated Hillsborough County, you can be fined if the security system on your house, business or other property repeatedly triggers a false alarm?

By County ordinance, fines start at \$75, and can go up to as high as \$500 per incident. Property owners who fail to pay the fines may find themselves summoned to appear before a Special Magistrate who can assess additional penalties, including a lien placed against the property.

Fines for false alarms add up to more than \$1 million a year in Hillsborough County. Code Enforcement offers these tips for short-circuiting false alarms:

- Use care when entering your code into the keypad.
- Make sure everyone with a key to your home or business knows how to operate the security system, including houseguests, temporary employees, maintenance workers and cleaning staff.
- Close and lock all doors and windows tightly.
- Keep pets, balloons, fans and space heaters away from motion sensor areas.
- Fans, heaters, air conditioners and open windows can create drafts that may set off motion sensor alarms.
- Regularly clean insects and spider webs away from sensors.
- Wait a few moments after activating the system to ensure the security system is armed properly.
- Enter and exit before delay times expire.
- Call the alarm company if you are doing any remodeling, installing new phone systems, or fumigating.
- Have the alarm system checked each year.

EPC Announces New On-Line Permit Tracking System

The Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) of Hillsborough County has launched a new online Permit Application Tracking System.

EPC handles more than 1,000 requests each year for permits that impact the air, water and soils in Hillsborough County. These impacts are authorized with conditions through various agency permits. Prior to this new tracking system, applicants and the public had limited access to an individual application status unless they contacted EPC directly. This new tracking system allows residents



Projected used oil recycling and blending plant permitted for construction in the Port of Tampa.

and businesses to check on the daily status of any environmental permit application processed by the EPC at any time, using the Internet.

The system was specifically set up to provide users with quick,

convenient access to all current projects through a variety of search options. It was designed using in-house staff and launched in less than six months.

The system reflects the streamlined application processing at EPC which has been organized into seven basic steps. Those seven steps are displayed in this online system. The displays are updated frequently as each step in the review is completed, and include information such as the date of receipt, project type, EPC processor contact information, inspection/review status, and final action dates.

All open applications and those that have been closed within the last 90 days are available to the user. See for yourself by going to www.epchc.org, and click on the Status of Permit Applications icon.

Less Is More When Watering In Winter

(Continued from front)

this season, an estimated 1.9 billion gallons of drinking water can be saved.

Most of the region experienced a disappointing summer rainy season. In addition to entering the dry season, drier-than-normal conditions are expected to continue through the spring. SWFWMD's region is under a Phase I water shortage alert, raising awareness about dry conditions and preparing utilities and local governments for potential future action.

GET A FREE RAIN GAUGE!

Wondering just how much water fell on your lawn during the most recent rainstorm? Find out with a rain gauge, available for free from the Hillsborough County Public Utilities Department. Pick up your rain gauge at:

- **Northwest Customer Service Center**
15610 Premiere Drive, Northdale
- **Brandon Customer Service Center**
Brandon Support Operations Complex
332 N. Falkenburg Road (just south of Animal Services)
- **Administration**, 925 E. Twiggs St., downtown Tampa