

## Turf

Thinking about installing new turf? There are a few things to consider before getting started. Read this fact sheet for helpful tips, as well as information about our turf watering exemption process, which you'll need to follow if you're installing or establishing new turf during water restrictions.

### Helpful tips

To give your lawn a great start and to ensure it remains as water efficient as possible, consider the following tips when installing and establishing new turf.

#### Choose your grass wisely

Choose species of grass that will be more tolerant to dry conditions and require less water than other varieties. Speak to your local turf supplier about which grass would be the most resilient for your outdoor area.



*The average household uses around 50% of water outside, mostly on the lawn.*

#### Get your topsoil condition right from the start

Different types of soil hold moisture differently and impact how your lawn will grow. Improving the topsoil before laying new turf will help ensure your turf is more tolerant to dry weather and retains moisture and nutrients for longer. This means your lawn won't require watering as regularly and will stay healthy longer. Speak to your local landscape or turf supplier for more information.

#### Water your grass for longer less often

Giving your grass a good soak every now and then rather than a small one every day will encourage your grass to send roots deep into the soil, away from the evaporative zone on the surface. Your grass will subsequently become more resistant to dry weather as the deeper roots will have access to water for longer than surface roots.

#### Don't spray in the middle of the day

Watering in the early morning or late afternoon when the temperature is cooler means less water will be lost to evaporation. This is a more efficient use of water and will be more beneficial for your plants. We recommend watering before 9am or after 4pm.

### **WARNING!**

**No turf watering exemptions will be granted during level 4 and 5 water restrictions.  
Plan carefully.**

## Ensure your automated watering system is working properly

Timers on automated watering systems can easily become inaccurate and waste a lot of water each time they're used. Observe your system when it turns on and manually time the watering cycle to make sure it's watering for the correct amount of time.

Maintaining your system and regularly checking for leaks will also ensure it continues to function effectively. Be sure to check the jets are positioned accurately so the water goes on your grass and not the road or driveway.

If you're considering purchasing an automated watering system, look for smart options with rain and soil moisture sensors so you aren't watering unnecessarily.

## Consider alternative water sources

Installing a rainwater tank and using the rainwater it collects to water your lawn will reduce your reliance on town water and save you money on your water bill.

Reusing the greywater from your bathroom, laundry or kitchen is also an economical way to water your lawn. Reusing greywater can be as simple as collecting the water from your shower or sinks in a bucket. Alternatively, you can pursue more permanent options such as having greywater diversion systems or greywater treatment systems installed, which require a licensed plumber.

In any case, there are health and safety risks to be considered when using greywater. To find out more, visit <https://smartwateradvice.org/how-to-save-water/garden/greywater/>



*Greywater can be collected in a bucket and used to water your lawn.*

## Consider the size of your lawn

New turf requires around 10-20 litres of water per square metre to get established and will have ongoing watering and maintenance needs. Think carefully about how much lawn you really need as every square metre will cost you water, money and time.

To save water and cut down on maintenance, consider installing alternatives such as rain gardens, rockeries, drought-tolerant gardens and wicking vegetable boxes in your yard.

### **WARNING!**

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Plan carefully.**

## Plant with the weather

Newly installed turf requires a lot of water and can dry out easily on long hot days, so it's best to lay it when the weather is mild and there is regular rain, such as in autumn or spring.

Look at the forecast and try to install your turf ahead of predicted rain so that nature can give you a hand getting it established.



*Spring and autumn are considered the best seasons for laying turf in Australia.*

**IMPORTANT: When water restrictions come into effect you will need to apply for a watering exemption to water your new turf. Refer to the section below for more information.**

## Applying for a turf watering exemption

Before applying for a turf watering exemption during water restrictions, please read the following frequently asked questions carefully.

### **Q: When will I need to apply for a turf watering exemption?**

If you're installing turf during water restrictions and using town water to water it, you'll need to apply for a turf watering exemption. Exemptions will only be given while level 1, 2 or 3 restrictions are in place. No exemptions will be given during level 4 or 5 restrictions, so plan carefully.

### **Q: Is it better to wait until after water restrictions have been lifted to install my turf?**

Yes. Water restrictions limit the amount of time we can use water outside our homes. Your new turf will establish much better when conditions aren't so dry and the community will appreciate your effort to conserve water during this challenging time.

### **Q: What does my turf watering exemption allow me to do?**

If you are granted a turf watering exemption, you will be permitted to water for 12 consecutive days from the date you purchased your turf. During this time, you will be exempt from whatever time limits are imposed for the current level of water restrictions; however, we still recommend watering before 9am and after 4pm in line with our permanent water conservation measures. If you are granted an exemption, you must retain your receipt and a copy of your exemption for inspection purposes.

No exemptions will be granted leading up to and during level 4 and 5 restrictions and a total ban on outdoor water use will be enforced at this time.

**Q: We laid our new turf before water restrictions were introduced and are getting it established. What can we do?**

If you are still using water to establish your new turf when water restrictions begin, you will need to apply for a turf watering exemption. You must have a copy of the receipt of purchase and submit this with your application.

The 12-day exemption will be given from the date your turf was installed, not from the date water restrictions began. After 12 days, you will be required to follow water restriction rules in accordance with the rest of the community. Please familiarise yourself with these rules at <http://www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/waterrestrictions>

**Q: Can I use a sprinkler or watering system?**

In line with our permanent water conservation measures, we recommend using a handheld hose with a trigger nozzle instead of a sprinkler or watering system as this will give you greater control over the amount of water you use on your turf.

**Q: Why do I have to apply for a turf watering exemption for my new turf during water restrictions?**

During a drought we enforce water restrictions across the entire community to conserve the limited amount of water we have. If you don't apply for a turf watering exemption, you will be subject to these restrictions, which may affect your ability to establish your turf effectively. Alternatively, if you don't apply for an exemption and choose to ignore the restrictions, you could be fined for non-compliance. Applying for a turf watering exemption will ensure you are complying with our water restrictions while still giving your turf the best chance of survival.

**Q: Do I need to apply for a turf watering exemption if we're not in water restrictions?**

No. However, we encourage everyone to follow our permanent water conservation measures.

**Q: How do I apply for a turf watering exemption?**

Visit <https://www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/Services/Water-and-sewer/Water-restrictions/Residential-water-restrictions>, select the current water restriction level tab and follow the instructions under 'New turf' to apply for an exemption. You will need a copy of your receipt for your new turf to complete the application.