Reclaimed Water

Answering Your Questions About Tampa’s Reclaimed Water

Using reclaimed water for irrigation helps maximize Tampa’s drinking water supply.

Tampa’s primary drinking water source is the Hillsborough River reservoir. During the annual dry season, typically March through June, rainfall decreases and irrigation demand increases cause the reservoir water level to drop. Irrigating with reclaimed water helps to ensure a sufficient quantity of quality drinking water for future generations.

Why reclaimed water?
With an ever-growing population and a finite supply of available drinking water, finding new water supply sources is critical. One way to conserve is to use reclaimed water for irrigation. In fact, water conservation and reclaimed water use are statewide alternative water supply initiatives supported by the Florida Legislature. Residential water use studies show that more than 50 percent of residential water use in Florida is for watering lawns and landscapes. Using reclaimed water clearly offers a proven method for helping conserve our drinking water supplies.

Reclaimed water is the final product of a multiple stage advanced wastewater treatment program. Some nitrogen and phosphorous elements that work as fertilizers are retained in the reclaimed water making it an ideal solution for landscape irrigation.

Tampa’s Howard F. Curren Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant on Hooker’s Point produces an average of 61 million gallons of reclaimed water per day. Through Tampa’s reclaimed water project, some of that high-quality reclaimed water is now available to certain neighborhoods for irrigation purposes.

Is the water safe?
Yes. Reclaimed water is treated, continually monitored and thoroughly tested to ensure that it meets the stringent requirements of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). Unlike most reclaimed water that is treated only twice, the reclaimed water produced at Tampa’s Howard F. Curren Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant goes through three major treatment processes before being delivered to the customer. For detailed information regarding the quality of Tampa’s reclaimed water, log on to www.TampaGov.net/ReclaimedWater.

Reclaimed water may be used for:
- irrigating your lawn and landscape.
- filling decorative ponds and fountains.
- irrigating fruit trees and gardens containing edible foods that will be peeled or cooked before serving.
- supplying a commercial water-cooled conditioning system.
- indirectly irrigating fruit trees and gardens containing edible foods that will not be peeled or cooked (reclaimed water should not come in direct contact with the edible part of a plant).

Reclaimed water may not be used for:
- drinking.
- filling swimming pools or hot tubs.
- connecting to a dwelling for toilet flushing or other household use.
- interconnecting with your drinking water pipeline.
- water play or recreation involving contact with reclaimed water.
How do I connect to Tampa's reclaimed water system?

Before connecting your irrigation system to Tampa’s reclaimed water, you must first detach and permanently uncouple all connection points between your irrigation system and the potable (drinking) water system. Once this is complete, you may then connect your irrigation system to the reclaimed water meter. You have the choice of doing the work yourself, or hiring a licensed irrigation or plumbing contractor. A permit must be obtained by the person who will complete the connection before any work is performed. The City will inspect the work upon completion to ensure the connections to the potable (drinking) water and reclaimed water meters comply with all applicable state and local building codes, as well as FDEP rules.

May I connect a hose to my reclaimed water?

Yes. You may purchase a reclaimed water hose bibb and choose to either install it yourself or have it installed by a licensed irrigation or plumbing contractor. The reclaimed water hose bibb must comply with Florida Building Code/Plumbing, as well as with all City of Tampa and FDEP rules.

Will the reclaimed water leave rust stains?

No. Unlike water from most shallow wells, reclaimed water is colorless, virtually odorless and free from the minerals that can cause concrete staining.

Does the reclaimed water have an odor?

For most people there is no noticeable odor. However, because everyone's ability to detect odors is different, some people may detect a slight musty odor when the water is being used.

What equipment will be installed on my property?

If you sign up for reclaimed water, the following items will be installed on or adjacent to your property:

- A reclaimed water meter box with a purple cover that has a “Do Not Drink” warning on it;
- A reclaimed water meter;
- A new potable water meter with a backflow prevention device;
- A small purple circle placed on the street in front of your property identifying you as a reclaimed water customer.

When should I use reclaimed water?

Reclaimed water can be used anytime. However, to maximize the efficiency of the reclaimed water delivery system, it is best to spread the use out evenly over time. In an effort to obtain an even load on the system seven days a week, the City suggests an irrigation schedule for reclaimed water customers. For more information, please call (813) 274-8811.

Will I be charged for the reclaimed water?

Yes, you will be charged the reclaimed water rate for each unit (748 gallons) of reclaimed water that you use. This will be shown as a separate line item on your City utility bill. For rate information, log on to www.TampaGov.net/ReclaimedWater.

Must I disconnect my irrigation system from my well?

Yes. Connections between the reclaimed water system and any other public or private system are not allowed. Additionally, if you are using your well for drinking purposes, you may no longer do so unless the well is located at least 75 feet from the area irrigated with reclaimed water.

Who should I contact if I have further questions?

You may visit our Web site at www.TampaGov.net/ReclaimedWater or call (813) 274-8811.