



TURF TIP TIME #13 with the NJTA: Low and Slow for Golf Irrigation Winterization

Everyone loves the Disney movie *Frozen* (except parents who have watched it repeatedly since it came out in 2013), but no one loves frozen irrigation valves, pipes, or sprinkler heads. Don't take the risk of allowing water to expand into ice within your irrigation system. Those arctic cubes can cause parts of your system to crack or burst and destroy your sprinkler system. Exploding pipes can also be very dangerous as shards of PVC become shrapnel.



It is now mid-October. Temperatures are dropping and that means it is time to blow out sprinkler systems.



Low Pressure

When using air to blow water out of irrigation systems, turfgrass managers should regulate compressor air pressure by keeping it **low**, between 35-50 psi. Exceeding 50 psi could result in severe equipment damage and personal injury.

During winterization, compressed air travels through the piping system at a much higher velocity than water. Trapped water pockets that break loose during winterization will travel rapidly through the pipe and generate a tremendous impact on whatever they stop against. Pipes, fittings, sprinklers, and valves can be damaged when this occurs, not to mention the potential personal injury to a customer if something breaks.

Slowly Displace Water

In addition to low pressure, it is important to strategically open lines to **slowly** displace the water. Start by attaching the compressor at the highest point possible and introducing air to the system to force water out of the low point drains. Then, close high point vents from highest to lowest points until no water is present from the low point drains. Turn



on each sprinkler head until the nozzle is releasing just a light mist and do your best to maintain continuous flow and pressure. Close drains from highest to lowest points.

Activate each sprinkler only once! Subsequent activations with no water in the sprinkler can cause excessive pressure spikes.

Overall, avoid expensive irrigation system repairs by properly winterizing now. Don't forget that low and slow is the way to go.



NJTA's TURF TIP TIME Brought to You By:
Rick Krok, Storr Tractor Company

Rick earned a degree in plant science from Rutgers University. For almost twenty years, Rick Krok has specialized in irrigation systems as a Territory Manager for [Storr Tractor Company](#). If you have any questions, contact Rick at rckrok@storrttractor.com.



NJ Green Expo

December 10-12, 2019

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The Borgata Hotel, Atlantic City, NJ

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Early Registration Closes Monday, November 11

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