



THE CHALLENGE

As Floridians, we face the critical challenge of supplying enough water to meet the needs of a growing population in the most economical way possible.

Through reuse, or the beneficial use of reclaimed water for nondrinking water needs, many municipalities are delaying or eliminating expensive water plant construction. Numerous communities in Florida have been using reclaimed water for many years as a key part of their integrated water resources management plans.

In Orange County, we have been using reclaimed water since 1986. With applications that include urban and agricultural irrigation, power plant cooling, and wetlands creation and enhancement, we are recognized as one of the largest users of reclaimed water in the state.

Today, we are continuing to expand our use of reclaimed water, making it available for irrigation of residential lawns and green spaces. This guide is intended to answer questions about reclaimed water, including its safety, how it should be used, and how it will affect you.

WHAT IS RECLAIMED WATER?

Reclaimed water is highly treated wastewater. It has a good, clear appearance, is nonstaining and odorless, and is bacteriologically safe. It contains low levels of nitrogen and phosphorus, which are beneficial to plant and turf growth and may reduce the amount of fertilizer needed to maintain lawns and landscapes.

IS RECLAIMED WATER SAFE?

Reclaimed water must meet strict standards established and regulated by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. These standards require high levels of treatment, including filtration and disinfection, and continuous monitoring of water quality. Orange County's reclaimed water system is monitored and tested for quality 24 hours a day.

Drinking reclaimed water is not allowed under current regulations and ordinances; however, there is no known danger to an individual's health from contact when reclaimed water is used for its intended purpose.



For more information about Orange County's Reclaimed Water Program, please visit www.ocfl.net/CrossConnection, email Reclaimed.Water@ocfl.net, or call 407-836-6970.

Para más información, por favor llame al Departamento de Servicios Públicos del Condado de Orange y pida hablar con un representante en español. El número de teléfono es 407-836-6970.

Reuse

Orange County's Reclaimed Water Program
Customer Guide



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CAN YOU USE RECLAIMED WATER FOR GROWING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES?

The primary use for reclaimed water is landscape irrigation, but you may also use it to irrigate fruit and vegetable gardens. In-ground sprinkler systems must be used for reclaimed water irrigation. Orange County does not allow the use of hoses or spigots for irrigation with reclaimed water. Fruits and vegetables that are usually peeled (such as citrus), skinned, or cooked (such as potatoes, beans, and squash) can be irrigated. Reclaimed water cannot be sprayed directly on fruits and vegetables that are eaten raw and are not peeled or skinned prior to eating (such as lettuce and tomatoes). Drip irrigation systems must be used for irrigating these types of crops with reclaimed water.



Special considerations regarding the use of reclaimed water

THINK PURPLE! - All pipelines that Orange County constructs to deliver reclaimed water are purple or have special purple tape or markings. For your existing irrigation system, standard white PVC pipe is acceptable.

SPIGOTS - Orange County does not allow spigots on the residential reclaimed water system.

SIGNS - In areas using reclaimed water, Orange County will install signs at entrances to subdivisions and commercial properties, as well as public gathering areas. County signs located inside commercial properties will be installed by the owner with county staff guidance.

CROSS CONNECTION CONTROL - Connecting the reclaimed water system to drinking water or sewer systems is prohibited. The purple color-coding should help you identify the reclaimed water pipe.

IRRIGATION WELLS - Existing irrigation wells must be permanently disconnected from the irrigation system once reclaimed water service has begun or must be

outfitted with a county-approved double check backflow prevention device to keep reclaimed water from entering the well. A county-approved reduced pressure backflow prevention device must also be installed on all drinking water connections when a well is on the property.

OVERSPRAY - Your sprinkler system must be adjusted to minimize overspray onto paved surfaces, into swimming pools and spas, and onto adjacent properties.

OVERWATERING - Avoid overwatering your lawn. Reclaimed water should not be allowed to pool, puddle, or run off your property. Avoid watering during rainstorms. The reclaimed water supply is not unlimited and should not be wasted or overused.

OTHER PROHIBITIONS - Reclaimed water cannot be used for human or animal consumption, inside dwellings for any purpose, to fill swimming pools and spas, for vehicle washing, or to cool residential air-conditioning systems.

DO YOU HAVE TO USE RECLAIMED WATER FOR IRRIGATION?

If reclaimed water service is currently available to your property, you should use reclaimed water for irrigation. The county prohibits the use of drinking water for irrigation when reclaimed water service is available. New developments that are near the county's reclaimed water system must use reclaimed water for irrigation if required by development approvals. You can find out if reclaimed water is available for your property by calling the Orange County Utilities Customer Service Division at 407-836-5515.

WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR WATER AND SEWER BILL AFTER YOU HOOK UP TO RECLAIMED WATER?

Customers using reclaimed water for irrigation should have lower water and sewer bills than those who continue to use drinking water for irrigation if they do not overuse the resource. The county has adopted customer rates for reclaimed water that are set at a cost less than what you would pay for using the same amount of drinking water. For more information on the rates that may apply to you, contact the Orange County Utilities Customer Service Division at 407-836-5515.

In the long term, your use of reclaimed water allows for drinking water plant capacity to be stretched further and more of the water produced to be actually used for drinking and household purposes. This will help keep our future water bills low since local water treatment plant expansion may be deferred.

WHAT IS THE RECLAIMED WATER PRESSURE?

Irrigation systems should be designed for a reclaimed water pressure between 40 and 60 pounds per square inch. Pressures will vary throughout the system depending on customer demands and time of day.

WHAT OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES ARE ASSOCIATED WITH YOUR RECLAIMED WATER SYSTEM?

You are required to have a county-approved backflow prevention device installed on your drinking water system before you can receive reclaimed water. This device is installed next to your drinking water meter to prevent reclaimed water from entering the public drinking water system should you accidentally cross connect the pipelines. Orange County Utilities will periodically test your backflow prevention device to ensure it is working properly.

SHOULD YOU CONSERVE RECLAIMED WATER?

Yes! Reclaimed water is a valuable resource. Water efficiently, utilize mulch to conserve water, and use rain sensors where possible.

