

Big Freeze Aftermath: Give Your Irrigation System a Checkup

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The winter storm of the century swept across Texas this past week and brought with it untold devastation. While we work to recover in its aftermath, there are a few things you can do to your irrigation system now to avoid bigger problems later.

First off, you want to shut off the water supply to your irrigation system. This is important because the freezing temperatures may have damaged pipes or components in your irrigation system.

Start by locating your backflow preventer (also called a double-check assembly). It's usually located near the water meter and housed in a big rectangular box with a green



lid (some backflow preventers are above ground). Once you find it, remove the lid and find the two levers on either end of the device. Rotate one or both of them one-quarter turn (or 90 degrees) so that the handle of the lever is perpendicular with the water pipe. See how in our irrigation shut-off video – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9wAyEo-01GLM&feature=youtu.be>.

Secondly, it's a good idea to turn off your irrigation system controller and leave it off until you have the opportunity to thoroughly check and prepare it for reactivation in the spring.

Lastly, before you turn the system back on in the spring, run every zone to thoroughly check for any broken nozzles or heads. To do this, you'll need to turn the levers on the backflow device back to the "on" position (parallel with the water pipe). Then turn on your irrigation system controller.

As you run through each zone, keep an eye out for problems such as low pressure, which could signify a potential leak. If you find any problems, contact a licensed irrigator to come out and correct any issues before leaving your system on to run.

Once you've run through each zone, be sure to also check your irrigation system controller for proper date, time and scheduling since prolonged periods without power can sometimes clear or reset your controller's settings to factory defaults.

Of course, if this all sounds too daunting or you feel you need a little help, you can always call a licensed irrigator to schedule an irrigation consultation.