



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NORTH OKANAGAN

BOARD POLICY NO: BPOL-015

External Wildfire Sprinkler and Irrigation Use Policy	
Approval Date:	September 11, 2024
Amendment Date(s):	

PURPOSE

This Policy is to regulate the use of External Wildfire Sprinklers and the use of Irrigation Sprinklers during a wildfire threat and identify when and how the use of these systems is deemed an unauthorized use as per RDNO bylaws.

The intent of this policy is to:

1. Preserve water integral to structure firefighting and firefighter safety during a wildfire event,
2. Prevent damage to water utility infrastructure, and
3. Outline enforcement procedures.

POLICY

1. For the purposes of this Policy:

External Wildfire Sprinkler: means a water conveyance device(s) to distribute water, either automatically or manually, mounted externally on structures in, on or around a property, for the primary purpose of use during fires. This definition includes conventional residential / commercial / agricultural sprinklers and perforated hose.

Irrigation Sprinkler means a water conveyance device(s) to distribute water, either automatically or manually, mounted externally of structures in, on or around a property, for the primary purpose of for the watering of plants. This definition includes conventional residential / commercial / agricultural sprinklers and perforated hose.

Municipal Water System means a water utility owned and operated by the RDNO and refers specifically to Greater Vernon Water (GVW), Silver Star Water (SSW), Grindrod Water (GRW), Mabel Lake Water (MLW) and Whitevale Water (WWW).

2. Any property owner who chooses to install an exterior wildfire sprinkler(s) **MUST NOT** connect to an RDNO Municipal Water System. Municipal Water Systems are not designed to support the flows required to operate these sprinklers on mass.

3. Any property owner with residential / commercial / agricultural Irrigation Sprinklers **MUST NOT** leave the sprinklers running during an evacuation of any area within the Municipal Water System service area unless specifically instructed **in writing** to do so by an RDNO Utilities Department Manager.
4. All water usage prior to or after an evacuation will be billed the existing water consumption rate and be bound by bylaw flow restrictions or be included in a property's allocation use for agricultural properties. Water use is subject to all water restrictions in place and additional fees and fines for unauthorized use.
5. Water use for any purpose will not receive consideration for a rate adjustment unless specifically instructed **in writing** by an RDNO Utilities Department Manager for a request to irrigate from a private water connection for wildfire protection.
6. External Wildfire Sprinklers shall only be operated by professional firefighters. This should be with the use of above ground, temporary roadside bladder and portable pumps but if connection directly to a Municipal Water System is required, firefighting personnel should be in contact with an RDNO Utilities Department Manager or designated representative as soon as possible.
7. All residential wildfire sprinkler systems shall limit the total flow of all sprinklers to 5 gal/min (0.3 l/sec) and connect all sprinklers to a single firefighting rated ¾" hose (¾" garden hose thread) that is easily identifiable and accessible at ground level for firefighting crews to connect.
8. Property owners may be liable for any damage caused by the installation, operation and water damage of unauthorized use of External Wildfire Sprinklers and Irrigation Sprinkler use.
9. Property owners are responsible for maintaining, servicing and testing of External Wildfire Sprinkler systems, adequate drainage on the property, and meeting any requirements of their private insurance coverage.
10. The RDNO takes no responsibility for the use of External Wildfire Sprinklers and Irrigation Sprinklers for wildfire protection and will not be liable for the use, operation or property damage during enforcement of this policy.
11. The RDNO takes no responsibility for losses incurred by the water use restrictions outlined in this policy or liable for the use, operation, loss of revenue or property damage during enforcement of this policy.
12. Owners connecting External Wildfire Sprinklers to a Municipal Water System will be subject to bylaw fines.
13. All External Wildfire Sprinklers operating from a Municipal Water System will be immediately disconnected and will incur bylaw fines, including but not limited to unauthorized use fines and operator service fee for turn off and turn on.
14. If any unauthorized connection or use of an External Wildfire Sprinkler system is identified, firefighters or utility operators will record the property, shut off flows, and

the property owner will be subject to fines, unauthorized use fines and operator service fees as outlined within the following bylaws, as amended:

- *Greater Vernon Water Use Regulation Bylaw No. 2545, 2014; and/or*
 - *Small Utilities Rates and Regulations Bylaw No. 2867, 2021; and/or*
 - *RDNO Cross Connection Control Regulation Bylaw No. 2651, 2014; and/or*
 - *Ticket Information Authorization Bylaw 2908, 2021*
15. If any unauthorized use of an Irrigation Sprinkler system is identified, firefighters or utility operators will record the property, shut off flows to the Irrigation Sprinkler, and the property owner will be subject to fines within the following bylaws, as amended:
- *Greater Vernon Water Use Regulation Bylaw No. 2545, 2014; and/or*
 - *Small Utilities Rates and Regulations Bylaw No. 2867, 2021; and/or*
 - *RDNO Cross Connection Control Regulation Bylaw No. 2651, 2014; and/or*
 - *Ticket Information Authorization Bylaw 2908, 2021*