

## **Roseheart Home Sprinklers Service and Repairs Responsibilities Policy**

The following policy is designed to help Roseheart homeowners transition from the previous times of warranted sprinkler systems to today's post-warranty period. It details the responsibilities of the homeowner and of the yard care company. Additionally included are answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) and an example of a notice of inspection.

**1. Homeowner responsibilities.** The HOMEOWNER is solely responsible for the operation and maintenance of his/her sprinkler system. It is the responsibility of the homeowner to:

- A. replace sprinkler pop-ups and rotors that are clipped or broken due to their having remained in the up or extended position after a watering cycle. These are malfunctioning heads, and need replacing. Responsibility for replacing them is part of homeowner maintenance.
- B. ensure that the home's sprinkler controller is in good working order, i.e. has the correct date, time, and programs set in the unit's memory.
- C. ensure the proper operation of valves, piping, wiring, and all other components of the home's sprinkler system so that the sprinkler's operation complies with irrigation statutes.
- D. have the backflow prevention valve tested and the test results filed with the city annually.
- E. notify Association Management Services of damages believed to have been caused by the yard care company personnel, and allow the company to investigate before repairs are made. If responsibility is not agreed upon between the homeowner and the yard care company, the Roseheart Board of Directors shall make the final decision with the assistance of a trusted, sprinkler systems authority.

**2. Yard care company's responsibilities.** It is the yard care company's responsibility to:

- A. exercise vigilance, making every effort to avoid damage where possible to sprinkler components.
- B. replace or repair sprinklers and their associated piping which are damaged while in the retracted position. Crushing damage can be caused by heavily stepping on or driving large machinery over, the down-positioned or retracted sprinklers.
- C. check controllers for proper operation on an approximately monthly basis during the irrigation season and notify the homeowner of any operability discrepancies. (See Atch)
- D. not change settings on homeowners' sprinkler controllers (reserved for authorized personnel).
- E. investigate homeowners' complaints of damage, and when the lawn care company is responsible, promptly ensure that repairs are made by authorized personnel.

### 2 Attachments

- 1. FAQ Answers; Background and Discussion
- 2. Sprinkler inspection results notice

## **Atch 1. FAQ Answers; BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:**

### **What warranty has been provided by the landscape and lawn care company?**

Since the inception of Roseheart, Memo's Landscape and Lawn Care has been our yard maintainer. Although the Roseheart builder's sprinkler system warranties expired after one year, Memo's continued to take responsibility for ten years for any sprinklers breakage, regardless of cause. Whenever one of the mowers was suspected of damage to a pop-up or rotor, Memo's crew repaired the damage at no cost to the homeowner. However, like other components of our homes, sprinkler age, deteriorate, and need replacement. In short, the warranty has expired.

**What did we receive with our homes' sprinkler systems?** Sprinklers in Roseheart contain several types of heads and numerous components.

**Bubblers.** Bubblers are flood heads for watering small areas to irrigate tree roots or bushes where wetting foliage tops is not desired.

**Brush risers.** Brush risers are static watering heads on stalks, placed in flowerbeds for watering medium-sized areas where retracting the head is not needed.

**Pop-ups.** Pop-ups are retracting sprayers for medium-sized bed and turf areas. They are comprised of three main parts: 1. A body that has a screw cap containing a wiper bushing to clean the riser; 2. A riser with a spring to lift and retract the spray head or nozzle; 3. A nozzle or spray head that emits the streams of water for various patterns and distances.

**Rotors.** Rotors are retracting sprayers that are geared to rotate, much like an oscillating room fan. They have increased piping size and water flow to irrigate large turf areas.

**Valves.** Supplying water to the pop-ups and rotors are zone valves that regulate flow to the various heads, a master valve to make them rise up to do their job, and an anti-syphon or backflow preventer valve.

**Controller.** Running the whole show is the sprinkler controller mounted on the side of the house. The controller has an electronics package inside that sends commands by wire to a master valve and then to the zone valves to turn everything on and off.

**Rain Sensor.** A sensor mounted nearby tells the controller when there's been enough rain o skip its watering cycle.

### **Why do sprinklers fail?**

The main reason is age. Risers get scratched and roughened by sand, soil, and rocks. When a pop-up or a rotor becomes balky and doesn't want to retract on its own, it's telling you that it's failing. Due to wear and tear the wiper bushing is no longer cleaning the riser. The riser has become scored and rough. It sticks when the roughness overpowers the spring. When a zone won't turn on or off promptly, it's is telling you that its valve is failing or that the controller is signaling improperly. The valves have electric solenoids that turn them on and springs to make them close. Any of these components WILL eventually become compromised and will fail.

The second reason for failure is physical damage. Heavy equipment or a boot heel can cause crush damage to even a new pop-up or rotor. Damage will not be a broken riser like you see in the case of sticking, but will be deeper, down at the stem or in the piping underneath.

### **How long do sprayers and rotors last?**

The pop-ups and rotors originally installed in Roseheart have a life expectancy of about five to seven years. Their actual life varies, depending on soil type, water hardness, how deep they're buried by added soil, whether the riser is in direct contact with soil or grass, etc. Replacement pop-ups and rotors are of superior quality and can last twenty years.

Valves live about eight to ten years. Their life is affected by water hardness, tiny rocks naturally in the water, and other debris in the water system such as glue particles that break loose over the years and flow downstream to collect in various places like valves. When they fail they can often be rebuilt in place but sometimes must be replaced. Their electric solenoids can be replaced in place.

Sprinkler controllers. Our contractor-installed, Irritrol Rain Dial controllers last about ten years and are now wearing out. They usually cannot be repaired. Replacement controllers have been much improved over the years and can last indefinitely.

**NOTE:** In Roseheart's common areas we are finding that we now have to replace about 10% of our pop-ups and rotors each year. That percentage has been growing each year, and we expect the trend to continue upwards until we get all 2,200 units replaced. Our zone valves also fail periodically and must be rebuilt. Additionally, 16 of our 24 controllers in the common areas have been replaced due to failure.

#### **Why do my irrigation parts get clipped or broken?**

The lawn care crews diligently try to avoid risers stuck in the up position, but the risers are black plastic and are not always easy to spot, especially when the grass is tall and the sprinkler unit is stuck just below the grass line. When valves fail it's NOT because of anything Memo's guys did or didn't do; it's because their internal parts fail, usually due to water system debris flowing downstream and collecting over time in the mechanism or because an electric solenoid fails.

**What's been the repair history policy?** The yard care men has been great about fixing broken sprinklers. However, due to aging of the units and the ever increasing numbers of pop-ups and rotors that are failing, we homeowners can no longer require the crews to be responsible for repairs or replacements unless the damage is due to crushing damage.

**Who's authorized to make repairs?** It has been determined that repairs of homeowner's systems are, by Texas State Statutes, required to be done by the homeowner, the homeowner's personal maintenance person, a friend of the homeowner or by a Licensed Irrigator (LI). Our lawn care company is not a Licensed Irrigator.

**All about Sprinkler Controller Inspections.** The yard care team has checked our controllers on our homes approximately monthly during the irrigation seasons to be sure they are working as expected. They will continue to check for proper operation on this schedule if homeowners desire, and they will notify if there are problems. They are not allowed by Texas State Statutes to make changes to the controller. That is an area that is reserved to the homeowner, the homeowner's personal maintenance person, a friend or an LI.

### **What can/should the homeowner do to keep systems healthy?**

- Watch for sticking pop-ups and rotors. When you see them sticking upright after your watering time, you can spray them with WD-40 and push them back down as a short-term fix. Plan to replace them as soon as time allows. They cannot be repaired.
- - Check your sprinkler controller after thunder storms and/or power outages. Direct or even nearby lightening can damage or cause the controller go to default numbers. Know how to work your controller and how much time you keep on each watering zone. Alternatively, have an LI come around regularly to check the system. If you are knowledgeable about your system consider helping out your neighbor. It's legal to help a neighbor so long as there's no profit involved.
- Watch for overspray and runoff onto the street. Adjust nozzles or get them adjusted to avoid this.
- Consider replacing existing nozzles with low-flow, MP Rotators. These nozzles put out less water, far less atomized spray, and are more wind resistant, yet they accomplish the same level of irrigation.
- Change the controller clock backup battery at least annually if so equipped. A suggested time to do this is when changing smoke alarm batteries.
- Check the Roseheart website at <http://www.RoseheartHome.com> to get the names of homeowner-recommended irrigators.
- Have your system checked at least annually. A licensed Irrigator (LI) can balance your system to get the right amount of water to the right places, adjust where there's overspraying into the streets, save water, and save you money.

**Atch 2. Example Sprinkler Inspection Results Notice**



**Email:** <http://memoslandscaping.com> **Tel:** 210-404-1404

Our lawn mowing personnel have on \_\_\_\_\_ (date) inspected your sprinkler system as a courtesy service to you.

**Please have adjusted or repaired the following components**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Sprinkler controller- the weather resistant box on your outside wall
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sprinklers (popups and rotors) in the yard, or
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other troubles, such as leaks \_\_\_\_\_ or rain sensor difficulties \_\_\_\_\_.

We recommend that you call your LI (Licensed Irrigator) sprinkler specialist to have your system serviced and make the necessary adjustments or repairs. Do so as soon as you reasonably can in order to remain in compliance with Texas and San Antonio water statutes.

Thank you for allowing us to be your Lawn Care Contractor.