

# HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

## Preparing Sprinkler Systems For Cold Weather

(NAPSA)—Home irrigation and sprinkler systems need to be protected from cold weather. As the weather cools, prepare your sprinkler system from freezing temperatures.

Here are some tips from the irrigation experts at Rain Bird that, if followed, should help prevent costly damage to your irrigation system over the long cold winter:

- **INSULATE YOUR ASSETS**—Shut off the water supply to the irrigation system and protect the main shutoff valve for your irrigation system against freezing. Make sure it is wrapped with insulation (foam insulation tape and a plastic bag). If you do not have a main shutoff valve, install one and consider it a preventative investment. Any above-ground piping needs to be insulated as well. Self-sticking foam-insulating tape or foam insulating tubes commonly found at home supply stores work well.

- **STAY IN CONTROL**—If you have an automatic system then you will need to “shut down” the controller (timer). Most controllers have a “rain-mode” which simply shuts off the signals to the valves. The controller continues to keep time, the programming information (start times, valve run times, etc.) isn’t lost, and the clock continues to run. The only change is that the valves will not activate. An alternative to using the rain-mode is to simply shut off the power to the controller. However, if you do, you’ll need to reprogram the time and potentially all your



**It's important for homeowners to take steps to keep their sprinkler systems from freezing.**

other settings when the weather warms up.

- **DRAIN THE PIPES**—Remove the water from the pipes and sprinklers so that it won't freeze and break the pipes. There are several ways to drain your pipes: the manual drain valve, the automatic drain valve or the compressed air blow-out method. Since there could be potential safety risks, contacting an irrigation specialist is recommended.

- **PROTECT FREEZING PREVENTERS**—Insulate backflow preventers and valves if they are above ground. You can also use insulation tape for this. Do not block the air vents and drain outlets on backflow preventers.

Consult an area irrigation specialist before you attempt to winterize your system. For more irrigation tips or information visit [www.rainbird.com](http://www.rainbird.com).