

# Switching a turf sprinkler zone to drip irrigation



Drip irrigation is the most efficient irrigation equipment available for watering shrubs and perennials. Swapping out a zone of grass for low-water shrubs and perennials can reduce water-use in that area significantly. Read on to learn how to make the switch.

## Drip tips

- Drip is a low-volume type of irrigation that delivers water directly to the plant roots.
- Drip irrigation requires a lower pressure (approximately 25 – 30 p.s.i.)
- Turf zones typically run at 50 – 60 p.s.i.

## There are several ways to convert a turf zone to drip irrigation

### Switch the valve.

1. Swap the turf valve for a drip valve.
2. Connect drip line to the new valve.
3. Abandon the old turf zone downstream from the old valve.

### Cut into the lateral.

1. Expose a large section of the lateral line upstream of any branching.
2. Cut the lateral line, install a pressure regulating filter (30 p.s.i.).
3. Attach drip line to regulator.
4. Install 6" round valve box over pressure regulator.

### Use a retrofit kit.

1. Dig up and expose all heads on the zone at lateral line attachment.
2. Swap out turf sprinklers for retrofit kit(s). Attach drip line.
3. Cap all other heads on the zone.
4. Test the zone before burying everything.

### Where to install retrofit kits.

Be careful not to leave behind long runs of dead-end pipe underground. Even after proper winterization of the irrigation system, there is potential for water to become trapped in a dead-end pipe, causing freeze damage over winter.

#### Where

Select heads furthest away from the sprinkler zone valve and/or at the lowest point of the sprinkler zone (Figure 2).

#### Why multiple?

Unless upon further investigation, we don't always know what the pipe looks like underground. To avoid dead-end pipes, install retrofit kits on either side of the end of an irrigation zone to allow water to release at all points during winter sprinkler blow-out.

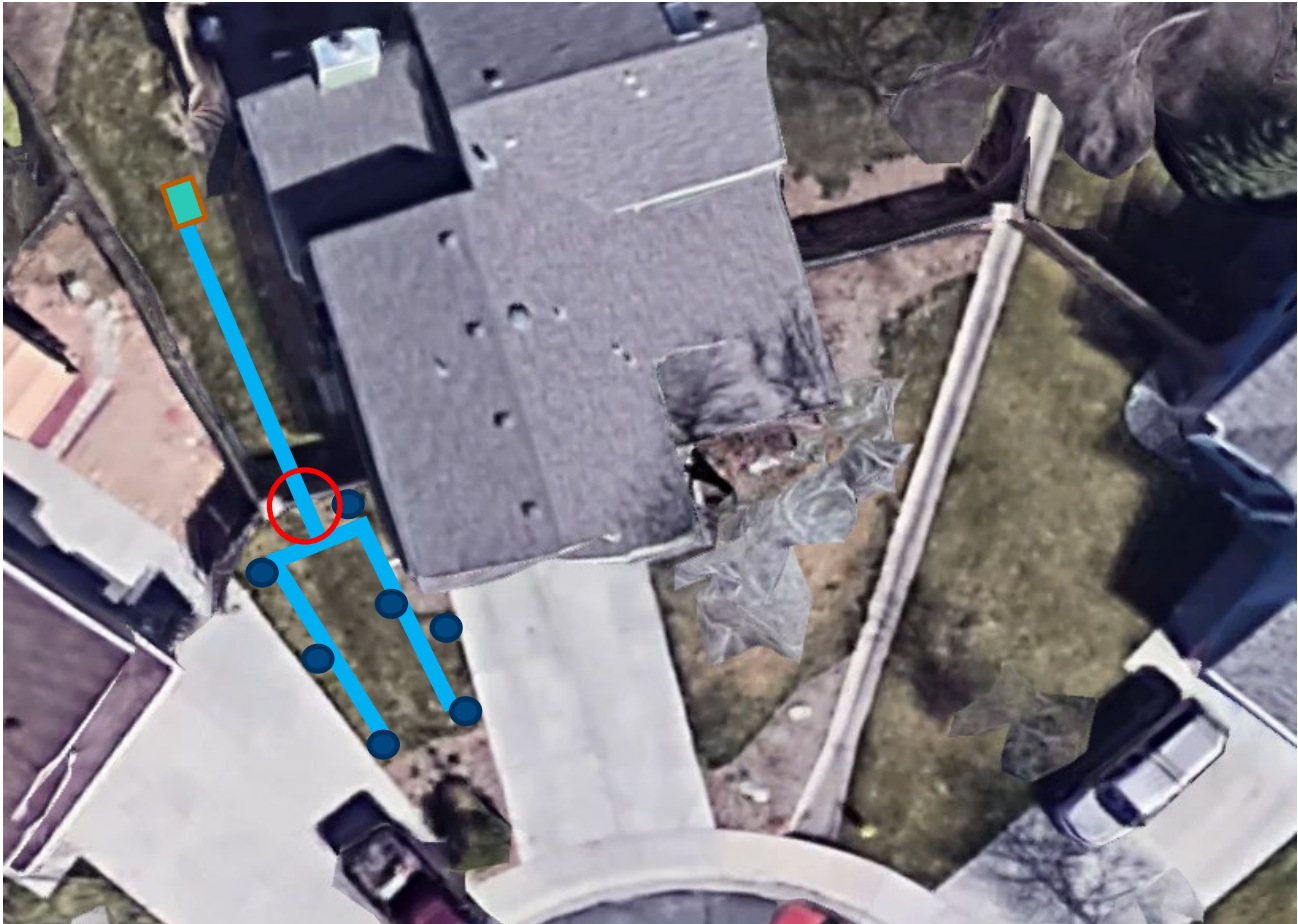


Figure 1: Blue lines represent lateral lines underground. Blue circles represent turf sprinkler heads. Pressure regulator should be installed prior to the lateral line branching in different directions.

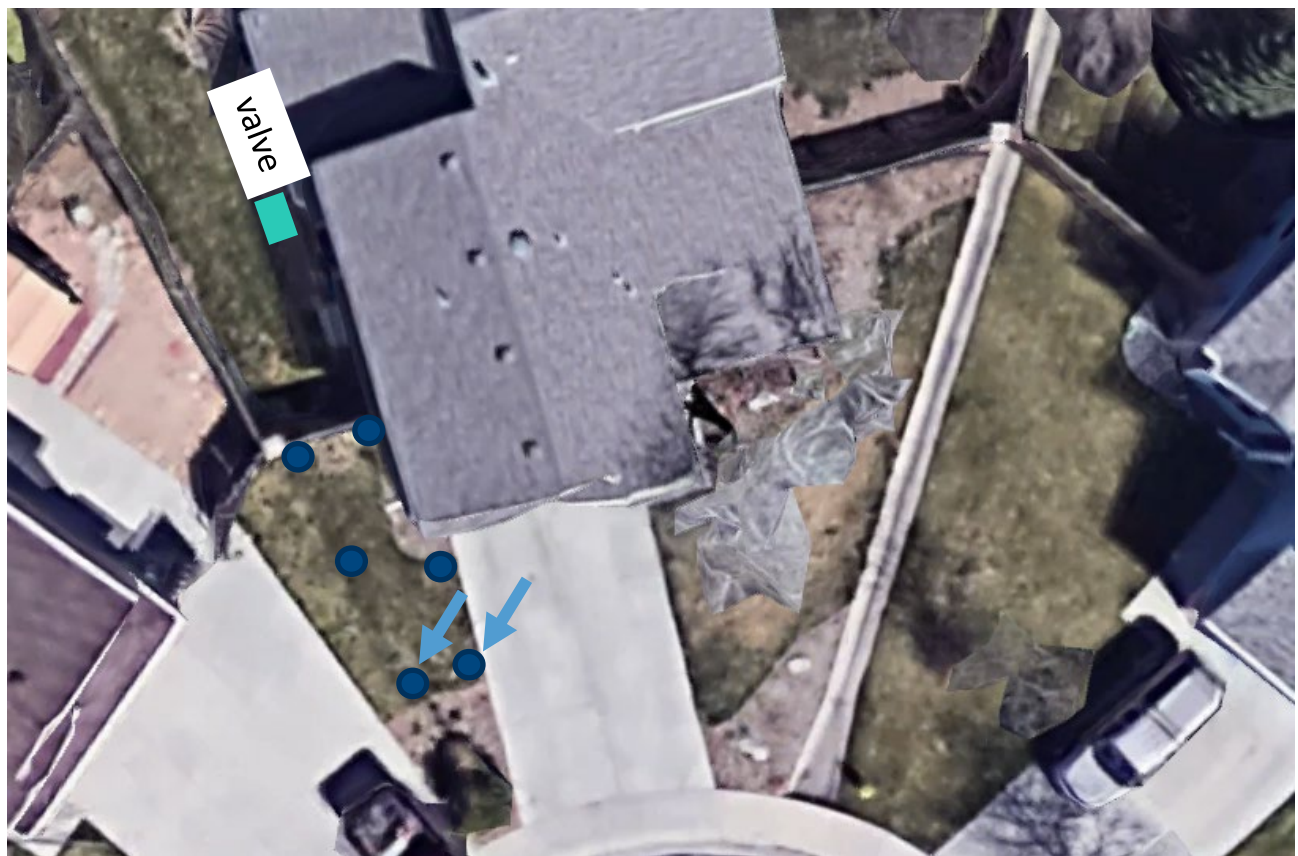


Figure 2: Retrofit kits should be installed on the heads furthest away from the zone valve to avoid water getting trapped on either side of the zone over winter.