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LAWN CARE GUIDE

New Sod Watering Plan

A printable, step-by-step guide for establishing a healthy lawn in Delta, Ridgway, Montrose, and surrounding Western Colorado communities.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- ✓ Watering stages & schedule
- ✓ Nutrition guidance
- ✓ Zone calibration tracker
- ✓ Care checklist
- ✓ Recommended tools
- ✓ Troubleshooting guide

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Serving Montrose, Delta, Ridgway &
Western Colorado since 1995



Your Sod Watering Schedule

Use this as a starting schedule, then adjust based on soil-depth test, weather, and how firmly the sod is rooting.

"New sod does not need guesswork. It needs consistent moisture, even coverage, and a gradual transition from frequent watering to deep root development."

— Alpine Property Services lawn care guidance

Your 30-Second Start

Water Right Away 1

Start watering as soon as the sod is installed.

Check Beneath the Sod 2

Lift one edge and confirm the soil is moist several inches down.

Adjust by Conditions 3

Sun, wind, heat, slope, and sprinkler output all change the schedule.

Watering Stages

STAGE	WATERING GOAL	STARTING RHYTHM	WHAT TO CHECK BEFORE CHANGING
Installation Day	Settle sod tightly against soil and begin hydrating the root zone.	Water immediately after installation. Recheck edges, seams, and hot zones later that day.	Soil under sod should be moist, not muddy. Watch for runoff from slopes or pavement edges.
Days 1–7	Keep sod and underlying soil consistently moist.	Usually 2–4 short cycles daily in hot, dry, windy, or high-sun conditions. Start early morning.	Lift one edge. Soil should feel moist several inches down. Add a short daytime cycle only when heat or wind dries the sod early.
Days 8–14	Maintain moisture while checking for early root attachment.	Often 1–2 cycles daily, depending on moisture and weather.	Use a gentle tug test. If sod lifts easily, it is not ready for a major reduction in watering.
Weeks 3–4	Shift from surface moisture to deeper root development.	Water less often but run each cycle longer after the sod resists a gentle tug.	Confirm water reaches deeper soil without pooling. On slopes, use cycle-and-soak timing.
Weeks 5–8	Transition into a normal lawn-care routine.	Use deeper, less frequent watering. Adjust for rainfall, heat, soil, and turf response.	Lawns should be rooted, firm underfoot, and responding evenly across the whole area.

How Long Should Each Sprinkler Zone Run?

There is no safe universal minute count. Spray heads, rotor heads, pressure, slope, soil, and sprinkler spacing change how much water reaches the sod. Use the process below to create the right run time for your property.

Start with a Test Cycle 1

Run one zone long enough to wet the sod and begin soaking the soil below.

Check the Root Zone 2

Lift a sod corner. You want evenly moist soil several inches below the turf, without mud or pooling.

Record the Zone Time 3

Write down the minutes that produce the right result, then recheck after hot or windy days.

Cycle-and-soak on slopes or compacted soil: Run a short cycle, pause long enough for water to absorb, then repeat. This reduces runoff and helps water move into the root zone.

Important: This is an educational starting plan. Your exact run time must be calibrated to your sprinkler output and soil absorption. Do not keep new sod muddy, and follow any sod-supplier instructions or local watering restrictions.



Care, Nutrition, and Tools for New Sod

Good water management is the first priority. The care steps below protect root development, prevent damage, and help your new lawn move into a stable maintenance routine.

Care Checklist

- Limit foot traffic.** Keep pets, children, mowers, and equipment off the sod while it is weak and still rooting.
- Sharp mower blade, first cuts high.** Do not remove more than one-third of the leaf blade at a time.
- Inspect seams and edges daily.** These areas dry faster, especially near pavement, fences, and rock.
- Do not rely on color alone.** Check the soil below the sod before adding water or cutting back.
- Wait to mow until sod resists a tug.** New sod should be anchored and ground should feel firm, not soggy.
- Monitor problem zones separately.** South-facing lawn, slopes, and turf near concrete may need a different schedule.

Nutrition Guidance

WHEN	WHAT TO DO	WHAT TO AVOID
Before Installation	A soil test is ideal before sod goes down. It helps identify nutrient needs and avoids applying products that the soil does not need.	Do not expect fertilizer to fix poor drainage, uneven irrigation, compacted soil, or poor soil-to-soil contact.
During the First 2–4 Weeks	Focus on even moisture, root attachment, and low stress. Follow the sod supplier or installer if they provided a specific starter-fertilizer plan.	Avoid weed-and-feed products, herbicides, and aggressive fertilizer applications while roots are establishing.
After the Sod Is Rooted	Use a modest, slow-release lawn fertilizer only when the turf is established and actively growing, ideally based on a soil test. Water it in lightly.	Do not fertilize heat-stressed, drought-stressed, or soggy turf. More fertilizer is not a shortcut to faster rooting.

Recommended Tools

TOOL	WHY IT HELPS	HOW TO USE IT
Hose timer or irrigation controller	Keeps frequent watering cycles consistent during the first two weeks.	Program short cycles first, then lengthen and reduce frequency after rooting begins.
Hose-end sprinkler or tuned in-ground system	Provides even coverage without dry seams or missed corners.	Overlap spray patterns slightly and inspect edges, narrow strips, and hot zones.
Moisture probe or long screwdriver	Helps verify moisture below the sod when lifting an edge is impractical.	Check several locations. Resistance or dry soil indicates the root zone is not receiving enough water.
Catch cups or straight-sided cans	Shows uneven sprinkler output between zones.	Place several in the lawn, run a timed cycle, compare collected water, then adjust heads or schedules.
Rain gauge	Helps you account for rain instead of watering on autopilot.	Track rainfall and adjust the schedule when the soil is already adequately moist.
Sharp mower	Makes the first mow cleaner and reduces stress on newly rooted turf.	Wait until the sod is anchored. Keep the first cuts high and avoid mowing soggy ground.

Your Printable Sod Watering Tracker

Use this sheet to record sprinkler run times, soil checks, weather changes, and root development.

Zone Calibration Log

ZONE / AREA	SPRINKLER TYPE	TEST RUN MIN.	SOIL MOIST 3-4 IN. DOWN?	ADJUSTMENTS / NOTES
Zone 1			Yes / No	
Zone 2			Yes / No	
Zone 3			Yes / No	
Zone 4			Yes / No	
Zone 5			Yes / No	
Zone 6			Yes / No	

First 14 Days: Quick Daily Check

DAY	MORNING WATER	EXTRA HEAT / WIND CYCLE	SOIL CHECK	TUG TEST / NOTES
1	__:__	__:__/ N/A	Moist / Dry / Soggy	
2	__:__	__:__/ N/A	Moist / Dry / Soggy	
3	__:__	__:__/ N/A	Moist / Dry / Soggy	
4	__:__	__:__/ N/A	Moist / Dry / Soggy	
5	__:__	__:__/ N/A	Moist / Dry / Soggy	
6	__:__	__:__/ N/A	Moist / Dry / Soggy	
7	__:__	__:__/ N/A	Moist / Dry / Soggy	
8	__:__	__:__/ N/A	Moist / Dry / Soggy	
9	__:__	__:__/ N/A	Moist / Dry / Soggy	
10	__:__	__:__/ N/A	Moist / Dry / Soggy	
11	__:__	__:__/ N/A	Moist / Dry / Soggy	
12	__:__	__:__/ N/A	Moist / Dry / Soggy	
13	__:__	__:__/ N/A	Moist / Dry / Soggy	
14	__:__	__:__/ N/A	Moist / Dry / Soggy	

Troubleshooting Guide

WHAT YOU SEE	LIKELY ISSUE	FIRST MOVE
Curled edges or opening seams	Dry sod or missed irrigation coverage.	Check soil beneath the edge. Verify sprinkler overlap and add water only where moisture is lacking.
Blue-gray or dull turf	Water stress, often in heat-exposed areas.	Inspect soil and check high-sun zones separately from shaded lawn.
Puddles, runoff, or muddy footprints	Cycle is too long, too frequent, or the soil is not absorbing water fast enough.	Shorten the cycle, use cycle-and-soak timing, and inspect drainage or slope issues.
Sod shifts or lifts easily after 2 weeks	Roots may not be establishing, or soil-to-sod contact is weak.	Continue close moisture monitoring and consult a professional if coverage or installation quality is uncertain.

Need Help With Your New Sod?

Whether it's weak sprinkler coverage, dry spots, sod establishment, or long-term lawn care — Alpine Property Services can evaluate irrigation performance and build a practical plan for your property.

(970) 765-5904

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Educational guide only. Results vary with sod type, weather, soil condition, irrigation design, and installation quality. Follow the sod supplier's instructions and all local watering requirements.