

IRRIGATION DAMAGE PROTOCOL MINI TRAINING

July 29, 2026



TYPES OF IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

Drip Irrigation

- Brown plastic tubes, thin walls, at or near the surface

Sprinklers

- Black plastic tubes, thicker walls, typically buried 8-12" underground, can vary in size quite a bit, we only have one size of tubing for these.

Soaker hoses

- Thin tubes, on the surface
- We do not have parts to repair these



HOW DO YOU KNOW A SITE HAS IRRIGATION? WHAT TO LOOK FOR.

- Plastic valve covers for in-ground irrigation systems in the lawn or garden.
- Puck-like plastic sprinkler heads, often along the edges of the lawn.
- Irrigation tubing near the soil surface, usually around the plant bases.
- Wet soil, pooling water, moss. When seeing these types of conditions, investigate further





HOW TO DIG IN A GARDEN WITH KNOWN IRRIGATION?

- Probe a potential planting spot with a trowel before digging with a shovel
- If the spot is clear of irrigation lines proceed with the shovel
- If the spot has irrigation lines and the size of the plant is rather large the Lead should contact the AM
- If the spot is workable with smaller plants and has irrigation lines proceed with digging the hole with a trowel

OOPS! I HIT A LINE

- Say something immediately. Even a small nick in a line can lead to bigger issues once the line is pressurized.
- Let your Lead know ASAP that you hit a line. ALWAYS let someone know that there is damage
- The Lead will assess if it is fixable on our part. If it's a larger line, the Lead will contact the AM, then they can notify the client
- What did the shovel feel like when the line was hit?



Don't panic! Grab the Irrigation Repair kit from the bottom of the locker.

The repair process should only take a few minutes.

If you are unsure whether the repair can be performed with the supplies that we have on hand, contact Lisa or LD.

*If a lot of digging needs to occur, it may be best to flag the cut and wait until all the digging is done before attempting a repair. If multiple cuts are made, it may not be feasible to repair them all, and better to call in reinforcements to do larger scale repairs or replacements.





HOW TO FIX AN IRRIGATION LINE

- **Cut Out the Damage**
Clear away dirt or mulch surrounding the break. Use your pruner to cut out the bad spot. Make a clean, even cut on either end.
- **If the gap is small:** Use a single coupler to reattach the cut ends.
- **If the gap is long or a section was removed:** Cut a piece of replacement tubing with a few inches of extra length and use two couplings to splice it into the line. You can always trim off the excess before you install the second coupler if needed.
- **NOTE –** avoid cutting too close to a drip hole as that's where the flow emitters are located.

Attach the Couplings

Firmly push one end of the tubing onto the barbed end of the coupling. Instead of pushing straight in, use a wiggling, back-and-forth "walking" motion to get the tubing fully over the barbs until it hits the center stop.

Pro Tip – The tubing can be hard to work with. If you are adding tubing, set the piece of extra tubing on the dash of the truck to warm up for a few minutes. Use your body heat from your hands to warm up the existing tubing cut ends to make it easier to slip them over the coupler.



Not enough coverage on the coupler to withstand water pressure, need to meet in the middle.



AND FINALLY....

- Replace the irrigation line as it was originally, buried or not, under mulch, etc. Use staples if needed to help secure it in place.
- Use a flag to mark the spot so that the client is aware.
- Include in the Client notes email that a line was cut and repaired, and that a flag was placed so they are aware of the location.
- Record the products used on the Visit Sheet
- Fill out a non-injury incident report
- ALWAYS communicate if you have damaged a line
- Understand that it does happen and learn from the experience

OTHER DAMAGE TO IRRIGATION

In winter, exposed irrigation could be chewed by critters or bust if not drained properly.

