

How to look after a brand-new lawn

Practical care for newly laid turf, including watering, first mowing and signs of poor drainage

PART OF THE CHECKSURE HOMEOWNER KNOWLEDGE BASE



Buying a new home



Handover



Snagging



Warranties



Home maintenance



Heating and ventilation



Electrical safety



Gardens



Building standards



Connectivity



Energy efficiency



General advice

The short answer: fresh turf needs consistent moisture, very little traffic and careful first mowing while its roots establish. Water according to the turf and weather rather than a fixed calendar. Standing water that persists, widespread settlement, contamination or turf laid over poorly prepared ground may indicate a drainage or construction issue rather than ordinary lawn care.

CheckSure's Homeowner Knowledge Base draws on practical experience of building, inspecting and resolving defects in new homes. Our aim is to explain what homeowners should reasonably expect, what may require further investigation and what steps they can take next.



Figure 1. New turf needs suitable watering, limited traffic and careful first mowing while its roots establish.

Why a new-build lawn needs special care

Turf is often one of the final finishes installed on a housing plot. It can look complete at handover even when it was laid only days earlier. The shallow roots have not yet knitted into the soil beneath, so the turf can dry, move or shrink at the joints more quickly than an established lawn.

The first few weeks

A new lawn is still establishing roots and may have been laid shortly before you move in. Treat the first few weeks as an establishment period: limit wear, water according to the weather and look for signs that indicate a ground-preparation problem rather than a gardening problem.

- Check moisture beneath a corner of turf soon after moving in. Water if the turf or soil below is drying.
- Keep people, pets, furniture and play equipment off the lawn as much as possible until the turf is firmly rooted.
- Water early or late in the day when evaporation is lower, unless immediate watering is needed to prevent drying.
- Avoid creating puddles. The aim is even moisture through the turf and into the prepared soil, not saturated ground.
- Follow any Temporary Use Ban or local water-company restriction. New turf exemptions vary and may require evidence or permission.

There is no reliable universal schedule such as “water twice a day for two weeks”. Season, wind, shade, rainfall, soil and turf condition all change what is needed. Lift a corner gently during the earliest stage or use another non-damaging check recommended by the turf supplier.

The first mow

Wait until the turf has rooted firmly enough that a corner resists a gentle lift. Mow only when the surface is reasonably dry and can carry the mower without rutting. Use sharp blades on the highest suitable setting and remove no more than about one-third of the grass height. Collect heavy clippings from a young lawn.

Continue with frequent light mowing rather than allowing the grass to become very long and then cutting it short. Change direction and avoid sharp turns that can tear new turf.

Feeding, weeds and seasonal care

Do not rush to apply feed, weedkiller, moss treatment or seed. Products differ and young turf can be damaged by the wrong dose or timing. Ask the turf supplier what was applied before delivery and follow the chosen product's label. Hand-remove isolated weeds only when this will not disturb the new roots.

Waterlogging: care problem or build problem?

Soft ground immediately after heavy rain does not automatically prove a defect. New gardens can also be affected by compacted subsoil, poor falls, blocked drainage routes, buried construction debris or insufficient topsoil. Persistent standing water, sewage smells, water entering the home or repeated flooding in ordinary weather needs prompt investigation.

- Record the affected area with dated photographs and note recent rainfall.
- Check whether water is flowing from a neighbouring plot, downpipe, path or hard surface.
- Do not puncture unknown ground, dig near services or install drainage before the developer has inspected.
- Report concerns promptly during the developer's aftercare period, especially if turf is dying, levels direct water towards the home or the garden cannot be used after normal rainfall.
- See GAR-002 for what good preparation below the grass should normally achieve.

Common problems

Brown or curling edges

The turf may be drying or the joints may have opened. Re-wet evenly and press loose edges into contact with moist soil without stretching the turf. Severe or widespread failure should be photographed and reported.

Yellowing

Possible causes include excess water, poor drainage, low nutrients, disease or turf laid too long after cutting. Do not assume fertiliser is the answer until moisture and rooting have been checked.

Uneven or sunken areas

Minor settlement can become visible as soil consolidates, but depressions that hold water, create trip hazards or reveal poor preparation should be recorded before top-dressing or relaying hides the evidence.

When to contact the developer or a specialist

- turf was already dry, dead, loose or badly gapped at handover;
- water remains for prolonged periods after ordinary rainfall;
- levels appear to direct water towards the building;
- there is significant settlement, rubble, contamination or inadequate soil beneath the turf;
- drainage outlets are blocked or missing; or
- the lawn fails despite reasonable, documented establishment care.

Key takeaways

- Check the turf and soil, not a fixed watering calendar.
- Keep traffic low until roots have established.
- Mow high with sharp blades and remove no more than about one-third.
- Document persistent waterlogging, poor levels or ground-preparation concerns before altering the garden.

EXPLORE FURTHER Explore the CheckSure Homeowner Knowledge Base for related guidance on buying, inspecting and looking after a new home. Please visit checksure.co.uk/knowledge-base/

Sources & References

Royal Horticultural Society — How to lay turf; How to mow a lawn; Lawn care for drought. Primary horticultural guidance.
<https://www.rhs.org.uk/lawns/lawns-from-turf>
 Ofwat — Hosepipe bans and non-essential use bans. Current restriction context.
<https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/households/conservingwater/water-restrictions/>

Need help with your new home?

Contact CheckSure for an independent assessment of your new home.



Email admin@checksure.co.uk
WhatsApp 07533 917477
Website checksure.co.uk



COPYRIGHT AND PERMITTED USE. © 2026 CheckSure Ltd. All rights reserved. Website content may not be reproduced without permission, except as permitted by law. Content Use and Copyright Policy: checksure.co.uk/content-use-copyright-policy/

ABOUT THIS PRINT EDITION. This edition reformats CheckSure website content for comfortable A4 reading and printing. Website navigation and related-article links are not reproduced. The article text, headings, figure captions, sources and copyright notice follow the approved hardcopy order.

Please consider the environment before printing this document. Retain and share the secure digital copy wherever practical.
 Print only when a paper copy is genuinely needed.