

Performing an **Irrigation System Evaluation** can help residents set a seasonal watering schedule and identify the need for system repairs and upgrades.

## YOU WILL NEED

- Irrigation Evaluation template on the next page
- Calculator
- Stopwatch
- Marker flags (*optional, can buy at hardware stores*)

## DIRECTIONS


1. **Open the meter lid and clear any debris away from the meter face.** Be careful. Meter lids are heavy. Hardware stores sell keys to help lift them.
  - On most meters, each number around the meter face represents one gallon of water. You may have a **leak** if the meter turns when you are not using any water in the house.
2. **Log current controller settings** on the evaluation template including: scheduled days to water, station start times, and program start times (*refer to your manual for help*).
  - Controllers typically have scheduling capabilities that allow multiple programs and start times. Check each program (*A, B, C, D*) thoroughly to see if other programs and/or start times are running.
3. **Start a test program** that will run each station for 1 or 2 minutes.
  - Many controllers have a “test” feature. If yours does not, set a program with one minute station times and run that program manually.
4. **Go to the meter and use a stopwatch to get the gallons per minute (GPM)** of each station as the test program runs.
  - After a station pops up, time the meter for 30 seconds. Multiply that number by 2 to get the GPM for that station. You may notice a rush of water during station transitions. Wait to time the meter until the transition is complete and the heads are fully popped up.
5. **Go back to the controller** and start another test program.
6. **Check each station.** Make notes about plant material, sun exposure, and head type.
  - Also note any problems, including areas of deficient coverage, misting (*which can mean high operating pressure*), and direct overspray onto impervious areas.
7. **Use the above information to develop a seasonal schedule** for the landscape and calculate how much water it will use. Be sure to follow the current **water restrictions**.
  - Start with the suggested run times below and make changes as needed. Try decreasing time for shady, native, and adapted areas or turn those off for now. Add time (*if necessary*) for plants with higher water needs.
  - Use Austin Water’s **Irrigation Runtime Calculator** to get detailed recommendations based on conditions in your yard.

### Suggested Run Times Per Cycle (minutes)

<b>Plant Type</b>	<b>Spray Heads</b>	<b>Rotor Heads</b>	<b>MSMT Heads</b>	<b>Drip</b>
Turf Grass	8-12	18-25	30-35	30
Planter Beds	6-10	10-15	15-20	20-30

8. **Make any necessary repairs and install system upgrades.** **Rebates** may be available for water-efficient upgrades.

# IRRIGATION EVALUATION TEMPLATE

		Current Schedule								New Schedule																		
		Program		Start Times & Watering Day						Program		Start Times & Watering Day																
		A	B	A	B					A	B	A	B															
Evaluation Date:		Run Times		Gallons Per Cycle						Run Times		Gallons Per Cycle																
Station #	Plant Material/Sun Exposure/Head Type	GPM	Program A	Program B	Program A	Program B	Broken Head	Broken Nozzle	Misalign/High Pressure	Clogged Nozzle	Low Head	Misalign/High Head	Obstructed Head	Overspray	Pipe Leak	Poor Coverage	Tilted Head	Wrong Nozzle	Valve Problem	Notes	GPM	Program A	Program B	Program A	Program B			
1			x		=																	x			=			
2			x		=																		x			=		
3			x		=																		x			=		
4			x		=																		x			=		
5			x		=																		x			=		
6			x		=																		x			=		
7			x		=																		x			=		
8			x		=																		x			=		
9			x		=																		x			=		
10			x		=																		x			=		
11			x		=																		x			=		
12			x		=																		x			=		
13			x		=																		x			=		
14			x		=																		x			=		
15			x		=																		x			=		
16			x		=																		x			=		
Texas Occupations Code, Chapter 1903, states that only a licensed irrigator or the property owner may work on a property's irrigation system.		Cycle Total		=		<b>Additional Notes:</b>																			Cycle Total		=	
		Cycles Per Month		=																					Cycles Per Month		=	
		Program Total		=																					Program Total		=	
		Monthly Combined Use		=																					Monthly Combined Use		=	