

Irrigation Checklist

- Do your sprinklers overspray onto the sidewalks, patio, driveway, or street? Adjust spray pattern, relocate sprinkler heads, or change spray nozzles.
- Are your sprinkler heads misting? This indicates a high water pressure problem. Adjust or install a new pressure regulator. Set pressure per the recommendation of the sprinkler manufacturer, usually between 40 and 50 pounds per square inch (psi).
- Are spray patterns blocked? Trim back vegetation or raise the sprinkler heads as needed; this will increase the uniformity of application.
- Do you have broken sprinkler heads? Replace as soon as possible or install a temporary cap. Replace sprinkler and nozzle with one that matches those on the existing circuit.
- Do you have mismatched sprinkler nozzles or heads? Precipitation rates and performance vary greatly between manufacturers. Replacements must match sprinkler heads on the same circuit. Mixing types or brands wastes water.
- Are separate irrigation circuits provided for drip, spray, rotor heads, and micro-misters? Provide separate circuits for different irrigation types; this will save water and make for healthier plants.
- Does the sprinkler spray pattern (for lawns) reach the adjacent head? Adjust spray pattern, replace nozzle, or relocate sprinkler head.
- Do you find moss or mushrooms growing around your plants? Your plants are being overwatered. Reduce your watering time a few minutes each week until your plants start to show signs of stress. Then increase your watering time slightly until the stress is eliminated.
- Are your high- and low-water-use plants mixed together on the same irrigation circuits? Group plants with similar water needs on the same circuit.
- Do you have mulch around your shrubs, trees, and flowers? Providing a 2-inch layer of mulch will substantially reduce water use and weeds. Mulch also increases water infiltration into the soil.
- Do you have excessive thatch buildup in your lawn? This condition inhibits water infiltration into the soil and is usually caused by overwatering or over-fertilization.
- Is your soil saturated after only watering for a few minutes? Does water run off your slopes? You probably have a clay soil, and water is absorbed very slowly. Shorten your watering times and use multiple start times to allow the water to soak in to avoid runoff.
- Are the stations at your irrigation controller labeled? Label each station appropriately. For example: drip for groundcover, spray for lawn, micromisters for flowers. A site map is a helpful tool in determining watering schedules for each station.
- Do you have basins around your newly planted trees and shrubs? Basins help direct water to the root ball, if drip irrigation is not used.

