

Landscape Irrigation
A Consumer's Guide to Landscape Irrigation in Texas

Can I design, install, or repair my own irrigation system?

Yes, but you should talk to your local water purveyor to determine the requirements for your area. You may be required to have:

- ✓ A permit;
- ✓ A licensed irrigator, installer (installer works under the direct supervision of an irrigator), or plumber connect your irrigation system to the public water supply; and
- ✓ A test of the backflow prevention device.

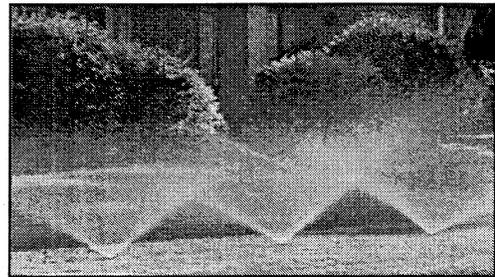
Your irrigation system should meet (at a minimum) state requirements for:

- ✓ Spacing emission devices (sprinkler heads) according to the manufacturer's recommendations;
- ✓ Water pressure – your irrigation system should not operate below or above the manufacturer's published specifications for the equipment being used;
- ✓ Spraying water only on landscaped areas, there should not be any water sprayed over impervious surfaces;
- ✓ A rain or moisture shut-off device or another technology (required in most Texas counties); and
- ✓ An isolation valve to turn off the water in case your irrigation system leaks.

Additionally, the Public Drinking Water rules require an appropriate backflow prevention device.

What should I look for in an irrigation system that will conserve water?

- ✓ Discuss your landscaping needs and plans with a licensed irrigator.
- ✓ Newly established landscaping will require more water than an established area.
- ✓ Your irrigation system should not spray water on concrete, wood, stone, brick, or other hard surfaces such as sidewalks, streets, driveways, fences, or walls.
- ✓ Use drip irrigation systems in small areas.
- ✓ Grassy areas typically use more water than landscaped beds, so you should plan separate irrigation zones for those areas.
- ✓ Discuss with the irrigator how long your irrigation system should run.
- ✓ Make sure there is correct water pressure for your irrigation system to produce large drops of water. Mist will evaporate. Follow manufacturers' recommendations on pressures.
- ✓ Understand how a rain or moisture sensor works to conserve water.

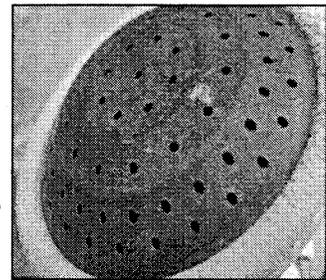


What can I do once my irrigation system is installed?

- ✓ Water only after the top two inches of the soil has dried out. You can use a soil probe to determine soil wetness.
- ✓ Watering one inch of water or more every five to seven days promotes deep roots. Grasses and shrubs will become more drought tolerant.
- ✓ Adjust the run time and frequency on the automatic controller monthly based on changing rainfall and temperatures.
- ✓ Trim overgrown shrubs or grass that may obstruct the spray pattern.
- ✓ Check sprinkler heads to remove dirt or debris that may clog nozzle heads.
- ✓ Once a month, run the sprinkler system on a short cycle and make any adjustments that may be needed.
- ✓ Consult a licensed irrigator if the irrigation system requires repair.

Did you know?

- ✓ In the next 50 years, Texas faces a critical water shortage. Texas may have a water deficit of 16%.
- ✓ The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the typical single-family suburban household uses at least 30% of their water for landscape irrigation. Some experts estimate that more than 50% of landscape water used goes to waste due to evaporation or runoff caused by over watering.
- ✓ Texas irrigators must be licensed by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.
- ✓ Working with a licensed irrigator to design, maintain, and operate an efficient irrigation system will help you conserve water and save money.



How can I find a licensed irrigator?

Go to www5.tceq.state.tx.us/ocelolwe/ (the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's Licensing Database) and enter either the license number or the last name and first initial of the licensed irrigator. The license number should be nine characters and begin with LI (for example: LI0098765). You can also search the database for licensed irrigators in your city or county.

Licensed irrigators must use their license number in all advertisements.

Ask to see the irrigator's license. All irrigators will have a pocket card showing the license number.

See www.tceqirrigator.info for additional information.