



Sprinkler systems might seem convenient, but an improperly programmed irrigation controller is one of the most common causes of a high-water bill. Take "control" of it and you'll save money and water.

Use these worksheets to help you understand your controller's current settings and then make water-saving adjustments to your system and watch your water bill go down!

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Locate the manual for your irrigation controller to help you walkthrough how to access programming settings. If you don't have a physical copy, search the manufacturer's website for an electronic version.

Quick Reference Guide

Most irrigation controllers use the same basic tools: programs, days, start times and run times.

Program

Programs tell your controller exactly when and how long you want to water. You can also program multiple schedules. Each program includes settings for watering days, start time and run times.

- Your screen will usually display a letter to represent different programs such as A, B or C.
- Many controller displays can only show one program at a time, so it's necessary to patiently look at *all* the programs every time you check the controller.
- Any program with a day, a start time and a zone run time can usually be considered active.

Watering day

The specific, programmed days of the week or intervals (e.g., Mon/Wed/Fri, every 3rd day, or odd/even dates) when your automatic sprinkler system is authorized to run its cycles.

- The watering days feature allows you to set the days of the week to run the sprinklers.
- Most controllers allow you to set multiple watering days for each program.

Start time

The time of day the controller begins to run a program irrigation cycle.

- The start time sets the time of day to run the sprinklers.
- Most controllers allow you to set multiple start times for each program.

Run time

How many minutes each zone or station will water.

Zones

Independently controlled sections of a landscape's irrigation system, managed by a single valve to deliver tailored watering to plants or turfgrass with similar needs.



My Current Irrigation Program

Go to your controller and let's record all your current programs and settings using the worksheet table below. Repeat these steps for each program on your controller.

- 1** Write down your first **program**.
- 2** Fill in your program **watering day(s)**.
- 3** Fill in the program **start time(s)**.
- 4** Count the **number of days** you are watering every week for this program.
- 5** Count the **number of start times** for this program.
- 6** Multiply the number of days you are watering by the number of start times you are watering.

Total it all up: Add up all the weekly watering times for each program to learn how many cycles per week you're running your irrigation system.

1 Program	2 Watering Day(s)	3 Start Time(s)	4 # of Watering Days		5 # of Start Times		6 Number of weekly watering cycles per program
				X		=	
				X		=	
				X		=	
				X		=	
				X		=	
Total cycles per week							

Need help filling out the table? Examples and blank tables for planning setting adjustments on the next page.

How many days are you currently watering per week?

Go to your controller and let's record all your current programs and settings using the worksheet table below. Repeat these steps for each program on your controller.

Need to Make Changes?

As you are setting your controller, keep in mind these recommendations from SAWS on watering:

1. Water only one day per week.
2. Water only one start time per week.
3. Set the start time for 5–10 a.m. (morning) or 9 p.m.–midnight (evening).

Know When to Water During Drought Restrictions

Watering rules limit landscape irrigation during times of drought. Learn more about watering rules, including permitted hours and your designated day at saws.org/drought.



Examples

Below is an example of typical controller settings. Based on these settings, this sprinkler system would actually run five times every week!

Step 1 Program	Step 2 Watering Day(s)	Step 3 Start Time(s)	Step 4 # of Watering Days	Step 5 # of Start Times	Step 6 Weekly Watering Times
A	Mon, Fri	5 am, 10 am	2	2	4
B	Mon	5 am	1	1	1
C	None	None	0	0	0
D	None	None	0	0	0
				Total	5 times/week!

For this homeowner, the following settings would be sufficient for their landscape and would reduce the amount they are watering.

Step 1 Program	Step 2 Watering Day(s)	Step 3 Start Time(s)	Step 4 # of Watering Days	Step 5 # of Start Times	Step 6 Weekly Watering Times
A	Mon	5 am	1	1	1
B	None	None	0	0	0
C	None	None	0	0	0
D	None	None	0	0	0
				Total	1 times/week!

Now let's adjust your controller settings. Remember you only need one start time and one watering day per week.

How much water will you save by fixing your controller today?

Step 1 Program	Step 2 Watering Day(s)	Step 3 Start Time(s)	Step 4 # of Watering Days	Step 5 # of Start Times	Step 6 Weekly Watering Times
				Total	



Get in the Zone: Don't Water More – Water Wiser!

Adding extra days to your irrigation system's schedule won't quench your landscape's thirst. But it will soak your water bill.

Efficient watering depends not just on how long you water, but what and how you water. Identifying the specific watering needs of plants in each area is beneficial to your landscape (and your wallet).

Turfgrass in full sun needs more water than turfgrass in shaded areas, while plants in landscape beds typically require much less water, if any.

Understand Your Irrigation System

Run each zone for a short 2-minute test cycle and fill in the table below. Pay careful attention to whether the irrigation emitters are working properly and make a note if the emitters are leaking, broken or spraying onto hard surfaces (aka over-spraying).

During your test of each zone, record the following in the matching columns of the worksheet:

- **Location:** Where the zone is watering.
- **Sun, Shade, or Mixed:** Does the zone water an area in full sun, full shade or mixed.
- **Irrigation Emitter Types:** The types of irrigation emitters in the zone (i.e. spray, drip, rotors)
- **Plant Material:** What plant type is watered in the zone (i.e. turfgrass, shrubs, flowers)
- **Notes:** Make any notes if the zone is not working properly.
- **Recommended Water Time:** See below for details.

Zones Map

Consider creating a map identifying where each zone is located on your property. Zone maps are a great visual aid when you want to make quick adjustments.



Use this table for completing the recommended watering times based on emitter type, plant material and sun exposure type for each zone.

This is a basic starting schedule; you can adjust up or down based on personal experience.

Emitter Type	Plant Material	Shade	Sun
Rotor	Turfgrass	25 min	35 min
Spray	Turfgrass	15 min	20 min
Spray	Bed	12 min	18 min
Drip (12" spacing, 0.9 gals/hour emitters)	Bed	12 min	18 min
Drip (18" spacing, 0.6 gals/hour emitters)	Bed	40 min	50 min

Below is an example of how to fill in the recommended watering time for each zone.

Zone #	Location	Irrigation Emitter Type(s)	Plant Material	Sun, Shade, or Mixed	Notes (overspray, leaking, or broken)	Recommended Weekly Watering Time
1	Front, right yard	Spray heads	Turfgrass	Sun	Overspray	20 min
2	Front garden bed	Drip system, 12" spacing, 0.9 gph	Shrubs/ flowers	Shade	Good	12 min
3	Front, left yard	Spray heads	Turfgrass	Shade	Broken head	15 min
4	Backyard	Rotors	Turfgrass	Mixed	Good	30 min
Total Minutes per Week						77 mins