



Commercial Facility Assessment FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What Does the Inspector Look For?

What does the site inspection portion of the evaluation entail?

The physical inspection aspect of the Commercial Facility Irrigation Evaluations requires that the property have:

- Proper backflow installed
- No leaks in the irrigation system
- No broken irrigation emitters – spray heads, drip lines, etc.
- No broken or leaking spray nozzles or bodies
- No water spray from the irrigation system landing in a street or parking lot
- No runoff of 50 feet or more in a street or parking lot
- No ponding of ¼” or more in a street or parking lot
- No misting due to high water pressure

Does My Property Need an Inspection?

If a property does not have an irrigation system does it need to have an inspection?

No. This requirement only affects properties that have automatic irrigation systems and are on lots of one acre or more.

If a property has only four irrigation stations/zones or an irrigated area of less than one acre does it have to have an inspection?

Yes. Irrigation assessments are required of properties with lot sizes of one acre or more regardless of the size of the irrigation system.

Is drip irrigation exempted from the inspection?

No. Drip is **NOT** exempted from the Commercial Facility Irrigation Assessment inspection. Drip is only exempted from the time and day restrictions in Conservation Stage and Drought Response Stage One, Two, and Three.

If I am not going to run my irrigation system ever, do I need an irrigation assessment?

No, but you must submit a Compliance Form to Austin Water prior to the due date specifying such action.

If this is a new property that has already gone through the irrigation permitting and inspection process does it still need to go through this program?

No. An irrigation inspection necessary for the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy will satisfy the requirements of the Commercial Facility Irrigation Assessment program for a period of two years from the date of the Certificate of Occupancy.

I have athletic fields on the property. Are those exempted from the assessment?

No. Athletic fields are only exempted from the watering schedule. They still need to be inspected as part of the Commercial Facility Irrigation Assessment Program.

Authorized Irrigation Inspectors

Who can perform the irrigation evaluation?

Only an Austin Water Authorized Irrigation Inspector can perform the irrigation evaluation. See www.WaterWiseAustin.org for a current list of Austin Water Authorized Irrigation Inspectors.

Can Licensed Irrigators (State of Texas) act as inspectors for property owners?

No. Only an Austin Water Authorized Irrigation Inspector can perform the evaluation.

Can an irrigation company directly hire an inspection company to inspect properties that they maintain?

Yes. An irrigation company can contract with an *independent* inspector to conduct irrigation assessments for properties they manage. An inspector that is regularly employed by an irrigation company cannot inspect properties maintained by that company. Inspectors are prohibited from inspecting properties which they, or the company they work for or are affiliated with, sells, designs, installs, maintains, alters, repairs, services, or provides consulting services relating to an irrigation system.

How does one become an Austin Water Authorized Irrigation Inspector?

One must first be licensed by TCEQ as an Irrigation Inspector, and then additionally become authorized by Austin Water. The Austin Water Authorization entails a class and test ensuring that the inspectors are familiar with local irrigation regulations. Call 974-2199 for information on class availability.

Evaluation Due Dates

How do I know when my evaluation is due?

Austin Water will mail a packet to properties at least six months prior to the inspection due date that specifies when the inspection must be completed and paperwork received by Austin Water. Dates are set by the property's zip code. See the zip code assignments at www.WaterWiseAustin.org.

How is the evaluation due date determined?

The inspection due date is determined by Facility Evaluation Zone. Austin Water has divided the city into six separate Facility Evaluation Zones. There are several zip codes to each zone. Zip code inclusion within a Zone is determined by the number of commercial properties within that zip code. Each Zone has a similar number of commercial properties.

I have multiple properties in the same zip code and only those with an even address received a packet explaining the program and the due date for the property. Why did I not receive a packet for the odd address properties?

Properties have been separated into zones comprised of specific zip codes. There are six zones within the city. Even addressed properties have due dates in even numbered years. Odd addressed properties have due dates in odd numbered years.

How are addresses determined?

Property addresses are based on the lot's location address at the County Appraisal District.

What happens if the evaluation paperwork is not turned in by the due date?

If Austin Water does not receive the irrigation evaluation documentation or a completed Compliance Plan by the due date, the property will be subject to an initial documentation submittal violation fee of \$200 followed by a \$25 per day late fee for every day the documentation is late past the due date.

What If My Property Does Not Pass?

What if my property does not pass the inspection?

Inspections can be performed up to 90 days prior to the inspection due date. These 90 days allow time for repairs and re-inspections if needed to bring a property into compliance. Additionally, if a property cannot pass the inspection they can submit a Compliance Plan explaining how the irrigation system will be managed to be in compliance.

What if my irrigation system does not pass 100%?

Some properties will not have irrigation systems that pass the inspection 100% and may need to decide where they wish to allocate funds and which zones will run and which will not. These properties will need to submit a Compliance Plan detailing which irrigation stations will operate and which will not. If part of the irrigation system does not pass the inspection that part cannot operate.

Does this mean that if I have one broken sprinkler I cannot run my irrigation system?

No. Each irrigation station/zone irrigates a specific part of the property and is controlled by a single valve. The total irrigation system is made up of numerous irrigation stations/zones. The inspection will check for code violations on each station/zone and pass or fail each station/zone. Some stations/zones will pass and some may fail. A broken head will fail the specific station/zone it is in, but not the rest of the irrigation system.

Compliance Plans

What is a Compliance Plan?

A Compliance Plan communicates to Austin Water a property's intent to:

- Not operate any portion of the irrigation system
- Operate a portion of the irrigation system

A property may want to submit a Compliance Plan if they don't normally operate the irrigation system, or would like to budget future irrigation repair work and focus current irrigation repairs on key areas such as entrances, etc. A Compliance Plan will remain in place until such time that an updated Compliance Plan is received by Austin Water or the entire property has passed the Commercial Facility Irrigation Evaluation.

A Compliance Plan must include:

- Property owner's name and contact information
- Property's address
- A map of the property showing areas where irrigation will occur and areas where it will not

- Corresponding documentation from an Austin Water Authorized Irrigation Inspector showing that the areas to be irrigated have passed the irrigation evaluation

Are maps required for all properties?

No. Maps are not required if 100% of the property's irrigation system passes the inspection. Maps are a required part of a Compliance Plan that communicates to Austin Water which irrigation stations/zones will be operating and which will not. A Compliance Plan is only needed when parts of the irrigation system fail the inspection.

What happens if I run my sprinkler system outside of the parameters of my Compliance Plan?

Properties operating portions of their irrigation system that have not been shown to be up to code by passing their irrigation assessment or being part of the operating portion of a Compliance Plan may be subject to fines of \$200 per occurrence.

If I have an existing compliance plan and want to update it and bring additional irrigation zones online, how do I do that?

To bring sprinkler zones into operation that are not supposed to operate as part of your current Compliance Plan, one must have the additional zones inspected and passed by an AWU Authorized Irrigation Inspector and submit an updated Compliance Plan showing which zones will be coming online and attach the inspector's report showing that these have passed the inspection. You only need to have the new zones inspected, not the entire irrigation system.