

To perform an irrigation evaluation yourself, you will need several items:

- An evaluation template
- A Calculator
- A Stopwatch
- Marker flags (optional, can be purchased at hardware stores)

When you are ready to perform the evaluation, follow these steps:

1. Open the meter lid and clear away any debris from the meter face.
  - Be careful. Meter lids are heavy; keys to help lift the meter lid can be purchased at hardware stores.
  - The meter should not be turning if water is not being used in the house.
  - Each number around the meter face reflects one gallon of water on most meters.
2. Log the current controller settings (refer to the manual for assistance), including:
  - Scheduled days to water
  - Program start times (it is possible to have multiple)
  - Station run times

\*Check each program (A, B, C, D) to verify whether other programs are running.
3. Start a test program that will run each station for 1 or 2 minutes.
  - Many controllers have a “test” feature available on the controller.
  - If there is no “test” feature, 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 of 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. Evaluate each station making notes about:
  - Plant material
  - Sun exposure
  - Head type

Also make note of any problems you notice in the irrigation system, including:

  - Areas of deficient coverage
  - Misting which can indicate high operating pressure
  - Direct overspray onto impervious areas
7. Use the above information to determine a good seasonal schedule for the landscape. Use the GPMs to calculate just how much water your irrigation schedule will use.
  - Decrease time on native and adapted areas (or turn them off for the time being) and add time (if needed) to higher need plants.
  - Take advantage of shady areas by decreasing time on those stations.
  - Start with recommended run times and make adjustments as needed.
8. Finally, install upgrades and make necessary repairs.

### **Suggested Run Times Per Cycle**

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