



Alternative Compliance Pilot Program Frequently Asked Questions

1. How are properties selected?

Applications will be numbered in order of their receipt by Austin Water. A random numbers list will be generated to determine which applications are selected for participation. Five participant spaces will be reserved each application period for properties with irrigated areas equal to or less than 3 acres. These “small property” applications will undergo a random selection by themselves. Properties with irrigated areas greater than 3 acres will go through a separate random selection for the remaining ten spots. If a property applying for a “small property” slot is determined to have an irrigated area greater than 3 acres, the property will be removed from the accepted list. Selected applications determined to be incomplete or ineligible will be removed from the participation list and the next application on the randomly generated list will be selected for review until all participation slots are filled. If any of the selected properties fail a site inspection (see below), the next property of that size will be chosen from the randomized list until all slots are filled or until the inspection period has expired.

2. Does the property need to have an irrigation-only meter?

Yes. The irrigation system must be supplied by one or more Austin Water irrigation only meters and the meter(s) has to have been installed and in use for at least three years. Three years of prior water use history allows for data comparison.

3. Does the property have to use an ET controller?

No. Properties are allowed to use any appropriate technology from standard programmable controllers to ET controllers.

4. I manage multiple properties in close proximity to one another. Can I submit one application and count them all as one property?

A property will be defined as a contiguous tract of irrigated land that is supplied by water accounts held in the same person/company’s name. For example, two adjacent office buildings share a parking lot and common area. There are two separate irrigation-only meters on site supplying two separate irrigation systems. Since both water accounts are in the property owner’s name, and the irrigation systems water adjacent landscaping, this could be submitted as one property. If the water accounts showed different account holder names, despite being managed by the same property management or irrigation company, the property would be considered as two separate properties. Homeowner’s Associations will be considered on a case by case basis.

5. What does the site inspection entail?

The inspection can last up to 2 ½ hours, and like the large property variance, the site inspection is conducted to ensure that the irrigation system is in compliance with the permanent water use restrictions defined in Austin City Code Chapter 6-4-12(B), Water Waste Prohibited. Site inspections will also be used to identify discrepancies between the submitted site map and the actual irrigated area.

We will ask you to run a selection of zones throughout the property, primarily around streets, parking lots, and other hardscapes. If you don't have a remote controlled system, 2 people are necessary to run the system, one to run the controller and one at the zone being watered. We want to see the system running as it is currently programmed, or as you plan on running it under this program. So if a zone runs for twelve minutes, we want to see it run for twelve minutes. If you run multiple zones at a time to control high pressure and misting, we want to see multiple zones running.

The property will fail if critical items are witnessed during the site inspection: spray landing in street or parking lot, runoff/ponding, misting, pipe leak, broken emitter, and/or broken nozzle/body.

6. How is the square footage I submitted verified?

Upon acceptance to the program, staff will use aerial images and GIS to verify square footage. Staff determination of irrigated area is final. The property's official water budget will be sent to the applicant within 5 business days of the site inspection.

7. How many properties can I submit per quarter?

You may submit as many properties as you would like, but keep in mind those systems must be able to pass a site inspection on the first attempt. A high failure rate will delay approval for other participants in the pilot study. All applications that are not accepted will have to be resubmitted each quarter.

8. What happens if Austin changes the water use restriction stage?

Austin's Drought Contingency Plan calls for a 15% reduction at drought response stage II. Water budgets will be prorated based on the day that the stage level changes and participants will be contacted with the updated budget.