



Irrigation Start-up Checklist

Now that spring is here, you may be thinking of starting up that irrigation system that has been moth balled for the winter. It is important to inspect all the valves, every sprinkler head, water line and to properly schedule the controller for a season of efficient watering. You may be more comfortable with a dedicated landscape maintenance professional to tune up your system, but you can complete the initial inspection. Following these simple steps now will go a long way towards saving you water and money and avoiding an irrigation meltdown in the future.

Ease into Water Flow

When restoring water to your system be sure to do so slowly. Opening the main water valve quickly can cause a high pressure surge that could result in damaged valves and burst fittings. Instead, open the main water valve to the irrigation in a slow and controlled fashion to gradually ease water flow and prevent a costly repair.

Inspect Above Ground Components

It is important to run a thorough visual inspection of the entire ground-level portion of your system. That means checking to ensure that sprinkler heads are not obstructed in any way. Spray heads that are damaged, buried, and blocked with plants, dirt, rocks or any other type of debris could mean the uneven flow of water. Also, be sure to check that no valves are leaking and that they turn on and off completely. After a long period of disuse there is the chance that the internal valve seal may have dried and won't seal and shut off completely.

Replace and Upgrade Old Parts

After completing the initial inspection, there may be components that need replacement or would be good candidates for an upgrade to bring your system back to maximum efficiency. Most commonly, nozzles and sprinkler heads can be retrofitted with more efficient newer technology such as rotating nozzles and pressure regulating sprinkler bodies. It may make sense to upgrade old outdated component to the newer "smart" products that are able to get water to your landscape in the most efficient manner.

Review and Schedule Your Irrigation Controller

Clean the cobwebs off the controller and find the operating manual for your irrigation controller. It is likely to need to be completely reset starting with the date and time. Change the back-up battery to eliminate the daily default watering schedule following a power outage and be sure to clear any old programs and start times so you can customize the new schedule to meet the existing landscape and upgraded irrigation system. Even with a new "smart controller" you still have to program the type plants, soil and irrigation (drip or spray) to create a basic watering schedule. Use the [Landscape Watering Calculator](#) to create a custom, printable watering schedule for your landscape.

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