



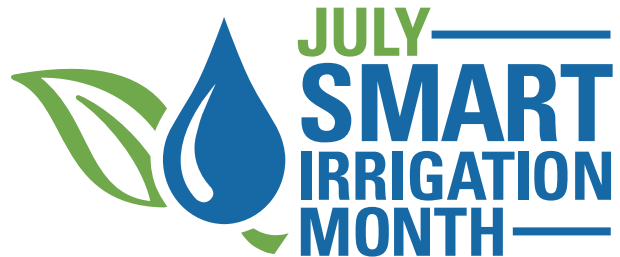
- **Smart Irrigation Month:
An Irrigation Checklist for Customers**

July is Smart Irrigation Month, a perfect time to think about the many ways you can encourage smart water use. After all, it's part of an irrigation contractor's job to recommend, install and service water-efficient irrigation components and systems. However, even the best irrigation systems may not use water efficiently if your customers aren't watching their systems for those minor glitches that can occur as a result of daily life. Helping customers use water wisely involves more than simply offering them efficient irrigation systems—it's also about how we teach them to take care of those systems when you're not there to do it for them.

It can be easy for contractors to forget that few people understand irrigation systems and their components as well as they do. That's why it's often a good idea to write down a few simple maintenance steps that your customers can follow on a monthly or weekly basis between service calls. The sample process outlined below can go a long way toward helping them keep their irrigation systems running efficiently and their landscapes looking great. Of course, while some customers may be capable of making minor adjustments or repairs on their own, others will still need your assistance. Even so, a checklist can allow any customer to quickly identify problems and get them fixed, saving both money and water.

- **Irrigation System Checklist**

- 1. Misaligned heads:** If any sprinkler heads are watering the street, patio, sidewalk or driveway, they've probably shifted from their original position and require a simple adjustment.
- 2. Obstructed heads:** Taller grass around sprinkler heads may block your intended spray pattern and prevent water from reaching your lawn or other plants. Make sure you have at least 3- or 4-inch pop-up sprinklers to fully clear taller grass. You may also need to trim back overgrown plant material that could block the spray.
- 3. Broken parts:** Sprinkler parts can sometimes be broken by lawnmowers or foot traffic. Replace any broken parts, being sure to match the spray pattern and distance for peak performance.





- 4. Clogged nozzles:** Dirt, small rocks or other debris can occasionally clog sprinkler heads. Clogged heads will need to be cleaned. For do-it-yourselfers, this involves turning off the zone, unscrewing the nozzle and then rinsing the nozzle and filter screen in some clean water. Once cleared, the nozzle and filter screen should be put back into place, checking to make sure the spray is aligned properly.
- 5. Head-to-head coverage:** For even, efficient watering, each sprinkler's spray should just reach the next sprinkler head. Under-spray may result in dry spots that can eventually turn brown, while over-spray wastes water. A simple adjustment should take care of this problem.

Send your customers a copy of your irrigation checklist, or give them a copy during your next visit. In addition to encouraging intelligent water use, walking customers through this simple process can also generate other benefits—fewer unscheduled service calls and greater customer satisfaction.



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