

# TIMING IS EVERYTHING

## How to Program Your Irrigation Controller



You can literally save thousands of gallons of water in your landscape, and save money on your water bill - with a *properly set* irrigation controller. However, automated controllers are only effective if they are modified on a monthly basis. In the area of irrigation controllers; “*You can't just set it and forget it*”. You need to change the watering schedules as plants become established, with the changing season, and when it rains. Here's an easy guide to make setting your irrigation controller easier.

### Basic Controller Features:

**Stations** control the valves that release the water to the irrigation **Zones** in your yard or garden. Put plants with similar water needs on the same station or zone. This allows for more efficient watering since all emitters and/or sprinklers on a single valve will run for the same amount of time. Multiple stations or zones allow you to customize watering amounts for different types of plants by allowing for different run times for different valves.

The **Start Time** is the time at which a specific valve will open to irrigate a station or zone.

The **Run Time** or **Station Duration** is the time, in minutes, a specific valve will stay open and therefore water a zone.

**Semi-Auto** lets you run through an entire program (A, B, or C) whenever you want a supplemental watering.

**Off** or **Stop** will stop programs from running until you toggle back to ‘Run’. Your programs will be saved. This is great during rainy periods.

The **Manual** button allows you to run a single valve for the amount of time you select. This is helpful when you want to tune-up your irrigation system and check for leaks, misaligned sprinkler heads, or clogged drip emitters.

A **Program** is where you store all of your settings. It consists of a set of stations set to specific start times and run times. Here, multiple programs A, B, & C allow you to run different valves on different days with different run times. Make sure each program runs stations with similar plant water needs to maximize irrigation efficiency.

## Some Programming Tips:

Group stations or valves that require the same watering frequencies on the same program (such as A, B, or C).

Enter only one start time for each program even when there are multiple stations or valves.

Enter different start times on different programs (A, B, C) to avoid overlap of water times.

Use multiple start times if excessive runoff is a problem. Use shorter runs, more often.

## Programming your controller:

1. For easy programming, first slide the "Set Program" (Figure 1) toggle to the middle, and then start in the upper left corner of your controller and move clockwise through the settings. Start with program A (Figure 2).

2. Set the dial to current time and use the +/- buttons to locate the current time of day. Turn the dial one click to the left and use the +/- buttons to locate the day of the week. You only have to do this once (Figure 3).

3. Turn the dial to the "valve run times" to select a station and use the +/- buttons to enter the amount of watering time for that valve, which sends water to a particular zone in your yard or garden (Figure 4).

4. Turn the dial to start times and use the +/- buttons to select time you'd like your irrigation to begin. You can have three different start times per day, but typically you only need one (Figure 5).

5. Now turn the dial to "schedule" the days you want your irrigation to run or the numbers of days to skip in between watering. Use the +/- buttons to enter this information (Figure 6).

6. Now repeat steps 3, 4 & 5 for each station/valve you are controlling, and program A is complete. Use programs B & C for other zones that require difference frequencies of watering, such as turf, new plantings, vegetable gardens, native plants, etc.

### Information provided by:

**Nipomo Community Service District's  
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