

## 5 Tips For Irrigation Design And Installation Efficiency

The logo for 'Turf' features the word in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A green grass blade graphic is integrated into the letter 'u'.The logo for 'Tree Services' is in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A small green leaf icon is positioned above the 'i' in 'Services'. Below the main text is the tagline 'Taking Tree Care to New Heights' in a smaller, italicized font.The logo for 'Turf DesignBuild' features the word 'Turf' in a small, orange, sans-serif font above 'Design'. 'Design' is in a black, sans-serif font, and 'Build' is in a large, bold, orange, sans-serif font.The logo for 'PLOW' is in a large, bold, blue, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly slanted to the right.

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Now is the time to inspect your clients' irrigation systems for winter shutdowns and it gives you a great opportunity to suggest major improvements or perhaps even totally new irrigation systems. The latest generation of sprinklers and controllers are significantly more efficient than systems installed even 10 to 15 years ago. This translates into healthier turfgrass and ornamentals and significant savings in water costs.

Therefore, an efficient irrigation system in these months is more important than ever. But as any landscaping and irrigation professional knows, that is not as simple as it sounds. Designing and installing an efficient system is a detail-oriented, thorough process that varies from client to client.

Remember these five tips for proper design and installation, and you will be on your way to irrigating efficiently and intelligently.

### **1. Zone your customer's land**

Before you do anything, you need to complete a detailed surveillance of your customer's terrain. No two yards are the same, and if you don't know the intricacies of your customer's space and plan accordingly, you will never achieve peak efficiency.

Carl Eggleston, a manager at [Spartan Irrigation](#) in Michigan, explained why it is so important to study the variations in your customer's landscape to complete a smart irrigation system installation. He recommends always marking out "zone" areas, whether that means more heavily wooded areas or areas with more plants.

Some other things to consider besides just plant material include "sun versus shade; north, south, east, west; low areas, etc.," Eggleston says.

## 2. One size does not fit all

In today's irrigation industry, landscapers, manufacturers and customers alike cannot stop raving about the newest efficiency tools on the market. Many even start discussing them before surveying the landscape. While these tools are making huge strides in improving efficiency, as Eggleston has discovered, they cannot produce the desired results if the basics of irrigation installation are forgotten.

After you understand your customer's space, figure out the best irrigation design for them and then start talking about which tools to use. While equipment will help, the basics are the foundation for efficiency.

"The main thing required is an attitude to want to learn how the different systems operate and the desire to offer the most professional service possible," explains Rick Robinson, president of [Stillwater Landscape Management](#) in Arizona. "Efficient and effective water management, whether on the client's site or remote, is more a commitment of time than it is a list of equipment or procedures."



## 3. Always be one step ahead

Just because the warmer months are the time when irrigation is most important for your customers' lawns, that does not mean that is when you should start preparing. In fact, it means the opposite.

Landscapers and irrigation system installers all over the country should start thinking about installation before the peak seasons, Robinson says. He has found that this is an essential step in the Phoenix climate where he operates and works with clients on irrigation design and installation.

"Always perform as much programming and installation of controllers prior to periods when water consumption is high. In 2016 in Phoenix the temperatures went from highs in the mid 90s to 116 degrees in a three day-period," Robinson says. "If your programming wasn't ready for that, it became obvious quickly."

## 4. Do remote research

According to Robinson, when it comes to tools that improve irrigation efficiency, it's rare to find an option that doesn't offer some kind of advanced feature. Therefore, it shouldn't be a smart tool you are looking for, but rather learn to determine which smart tool is right for your customer's irrigation design.

Just as you have to arrange sprinklers in different places for different clients and environments, your customers will not all need the same smart remote. Look at what's on the market and consider cost, features and efficiency.

"It seems that most all manufacturers have added useful features such as

cycle or soak, additional ports for sensors, 365-day capability, etc.," Robinson says. "Some have come out with major upgrades (i.e., flow management, two-wire capability, etc.), and still others have entered the market who weren't even in business eight or 10 years ago. Some of these offer the most affordable options in achieving remote water management."

## **5. Rules and regulations exist for a reason**

Just as more people get caught up with the newest remotes and other devices, and the more they neglect the basics, they also tend to forget the rules set by manufacturers and associations. These regulations are written so landscapers will use products effectively, which, in this case, means efficiently.

"Continue using proper design requirements suggested by the manufacturers and set by the [Irrigation Association](#)," Eggleston advises. "Add high-efficiency rotary nozzles, drip irrigation and smart controllers when possible."

The design and implementation of an efficient irrigation system is not limited to five simple steps by any means. It is a much more involved process and depends on your customers and their land. Following these tips, however, will lead you in the right direction to irrigate properly, especially in the warmer months when efficient water usage is more important than ever.

Remember these basics and plan accordingly to personalize your irrigation installation. Then both you and your customers will have an enjoyable and relaxing summer and fall.