QUICK FIXES & COMMON PROBLEMS

Sunken or tilted irrigation heads

Misting = pressure too high

Mixed head types in a zone

Broken or clogged nozzles

Valve won't shut off/on

Obstructions from plants or structures

➤ Tip: Monthly visual inspections help prevent water waste!

Helpful Tools

- Toothpick or Old toothbrush – To clear clogged nozzles
- Garden Gloves – Keep hands protected while inspecting heads or digging
- Irrigation Flags or Marker - Indicator for broken or problem areas

WANT MORE HELP?

EMAIL US

WaterResources@Cityofloveland.org

NEED A SECOND SET OF EYES?

Take advantage of Slow the Flow, a free sprinkler consultation offered by Resource Central in partnership with the City of Loveland.

➤ Get a custom watering schedule
➤ Identify inefficient zones
➤ Learn how to save water and still have a healthy lawn

Schedule your free appointment at:
resourcecentral.org/sprinklers

Available to Loveland water customers. Appointments fill up quickly in summer—book early!

lovgov.org/utilities

City of Loveland

OUTDOOR WATER ASSESSMENT GUIDE

A step-by-step guide to optimizing your landscape irrigation and saving water

Provided by the City of Loveland Water Resources

GET TO KNOW YOUR IRRIGATION CONTROLLER

Key Terms to Know

- Zone/Station: A group of heads or dripline that are all connected to the same valve.
- Program: Programs allow zones to be grouped together based on plant types that need watering at the same frequency. All zones on a program will share the same watering days and start times.
- Start Time: The start time dictates what time the first zone will run. All zones on that program will then run in sequence until each zone has completed its cycle.
- Run Time: How long each zone's cycle will be determined by the sprinkler head type. For example, rotors can run twice as long as spray heads and yet deliver the same amount of water.
- Watering Days: Programs can be set to run on specific days or at certain intervals, such as once every specified number of days.

➤ **Troubleshooting Tip: Controller vs. Backflow Shutoff**

Turning off your irrigation system at the controller stops the programmed watering cycles, but it doesn't stop water from flowing to the system. If there's a break underground or near the backflow, water can continue leaking even when the controller is off. To completely stop water from reaching your irrigation system—for troubleshooting or repairs—shut off the water at the backflow preventer valve.

SCHEDULE SMARTER WITH CYCLE & SOAK

➤ Watering all at once can lead to runoff — especially in clay-heavy Colorado soils. Instead, break watering into shorter cycles with time between to let water soak in.

Why It Works

- Reduces runoff and puddling
- Helps water reach roots instead of running off
- Promotes drought-tolerant landscapes
- Perfect for lawns, slopes, and clay soils

How To Do It

1. Determine total run time for each zone (e.g., 12 minutes)
2. Divide into 2–3 cycles (e.g., 4 minutes each)
3. Space cycles 30–60 minutes apart
    - Example: 4:00 a.m., 5:00 a.m., 6:00 a.m.

Efficient Irrigation

- Overwatering causes shallow roots and waste
- Water deeply and less frequently to build drought tolerance
- Water only before 10 a.m. or after 6 p.m. to reduce evaporation

When to Use Cycle & Soak

Lawns and sloped areas, Spray zones with runoff, Clay or compacted soils

Skip it for:

- Drip irrigation
- Low-water-use plantings

TRACK & PRIORITIZE YOUR ZONES

Step-by-Step:

1. Run each zone for 2 minutes using the test function on your controller
2. Walk the area and take notes — look for leaks, misting, poor coverage, or tilted heads
3. Use a sketch or aerial image (Google Maps works!) to map sprinkler head locations
4. Flag issues in the landscape with craft sticks, irrigation flags, or ribbon
5. Prioritize repairs — fix the biggest water wasters first!

➤ Tips for Success:

- Group heads by type within each zone
- Keep a notebook or digital record
- Mark your controller brand & model
- Use the Slow the Flow program if you're unsure

Lawn Watering Recommendations