

Florida Irrigation Calibration



Do you know how much water your irrigation system is putting out?



It is important to provide even coverage over your turf area so that one area does not receive too much or too little water. A common question among residents is how long they should run their system. Every yard is different! To find out what is best for your yard, you will need to calibrate your system using a “catch can” test in each zone. Keep in mind that how much water you need to apply also depends on your site conditions. If you have more clay or organic matter in your soil and it holds more water, then you will need less than the maximum $\frac{3}{4}$ inch of water. Also, it is best to water in the early morning (4-6 a.m.), so that you avoid creating conditions conducive for disease and the water doesn't evaporate. Here is more information on a “catch-can test”.


Do's & Don't's

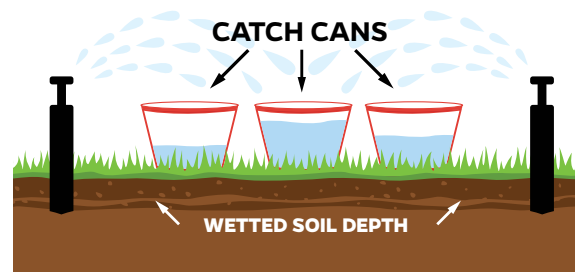
- ✓ Do follow local irrigation laws.
- ✓ Do have separate zones for beds & turf.
- ✓ Do calibrate your system at the time when it would regularly run.
- ✓ Do inspect your irrigation system regularly, especially before your drought season.
- ✗ Don't exceed $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ inch per watering
- ✗ Don't run your system in the middle of the day.
- ✗ Don't irrigate the sidewalk and other impervious surfaces.
- ✗ Don't waste water.

What is a “catch-can”?

A straight-sided container such as a cat-food or tuna fish can. You want several (10 or more) of equal size.

How do I perform this test?

Set the catch cans out. Run the system or hose-end sprinkler for 15 minutes per zone. Use a ruler to measure the depth of water in each container. Calculate the average depth per container from the measurements of all the containers in one zone. **Use this form to help you.**  If you notice there is no water or too much water in some cans, you will need to inspect your system more closely to find out why and if the help of a certified professional is needed.



Is there a difference if I use a hose attachment or if I have an in-ground system?

With the in-ground system, you will want to run one zone at a time. Place cans spaced out randomly in the zone. Repeat this with every zone. If you are using a hose attachment sprinkler, then place the cans out evenly in a straight line away from the sprinkler.

