Portland Water Bureau Irrigation Rebate FAQ

Who is eligible?
Any customer who has water service with the Portland Water Bureau is eligible to apply for irrigation rebates. The water account must be active and in good standing.

What are the rebates for?
Many Portland residents and businesses irrigate in the summertime leading to summer water use that doubles or triples. With proper installation, programming, and maintenance homeowners and businesses can incorporate these irrigation upgrades to save thousands of gallons of water annually.

How much is the rebate?

Rebate Type	Residential	Commercial/Multifamily
Multi-stream rotator nozzles	$3/head (up to 32 heads)	$3/head (up to 96 heads)
WaterSense-labeled Irrigation Controllers	$100/controller	$500/controller

How do I apply?
Please see details on the rebate form, available at **www.portlandoregon.gov/water/rebate**

How will my rebate be issued?
If your rebate form is approved, a rebate will be posted as a credit to the sewer/stormwater/water account for the property. Rebates are processed as they are received, but it may take a full billing sysle before the credit is posted to the account.

I'm a renter? Can I apply for the rebate?
If you have a Portland Water Bureau account, but rent the property where you live, you may still apply for the rebate. However, you MUST obtain the property owner's signature on the rebate form, and we will verify ownership when the form is processed. This is to ensure the property owner is aware of, and approves of, irrigation system modifications.

Will the City verify installation?
As part of the rebate process random inspections may occur.

Which models qualify for rebates?
A list of eligible nozzles and irrigation controllers for the rebate can be found on the Eligible Product List. The Portland Water Bureau (PWB) does not design, regulate or endorse irrigation or landscape products or companies. The irrigation equipment manufacturers listed are presented as a reference for irrigation control technologies that meet PWB program rebate requirements. Equipment from other manufacturers *may* also qualify but prior approval must be received in order to receive rebate.

Do products purchased through a third-party website qualify for rebates?
Qualifying products purchased online through a third party website (EBay, Amazon) and installed at a Portland property are eligible for rebate funds provided that the product purchased can be verified as

new and in its original packaging at time of purchase. Applications concerning a product purchased on a third-party website must be submitted with a receipt or confirmation identifying the item as new.

Who can I contact about the Outdoor Irrigation Rebate or other water conservation questions?
Call or email the Water Efficiency Program at (503) 823-4527 or conserve@portlandoregon.gov

What if my invoice is not itemized and the cost of the controller, nozzles and labor are combined into one lump sum?
The rebate is based on the actual cost of the controller. Obtain a revised invoice or sales receipt that shows the actual cost of the controller and submit it with your application.

What are multi-stream rotator nozzles?
Multi-stream rotator nozzles apply water more slowly and evenly than conventional sprayheads. This results in more efficient and effective irrigation and less water loss due to wind, evaporation and runoff. These types of heads are great for slopes and clay-like soils because they allow water to soak into the landscape instead of running off and being wasted.

Typical Fixed Sprayhead	Water saving multi-stream rotator nozzles
	
	

How do I know if I need multi-stream rotator nozzles?

If your existing system is currently using what are commonly known as "fixed spray heads" (small heads that spray a fan-shaped pattern of water) consider replacing them with multi-stream rotator nozzles for water savings.

Multi-stream rotator nozzles fit on most spray heads. Instead of a fixed stream of water, multi-stream rotator nozzles slowly deliver multiple rotating streams of water, reducing water waste. Since the water is applied more slowly, more water is able to soak into the soil.

Can I hire someone to install the nozzles and/or controller?

Yes. If you purchase nozzles or a controller from a landscape or irrigation contractor make sure to get an itemized invoice. **The rebate is only for the cost of the unit, not including labor.** The itemized invoice must have the brand and model name, and purchase price.

If you work with a contractor, consider one who is partnering with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) WaterSense program and has earned the necessary qualifications to properly install water-saving irrigation systems.

How do I know how many irrigation stations or zones I have?

Count the number of wires that extend from your timer to determine how many irrigation stations (also known as valves or zones) are managed by your timer. These wires are often multi-colored, and there is usually at least one white wire that is common to all stations. Exclude this common wire and the electrical cord from your total station count.

What is a WaterSense-labeled SMART irrigation controller?

Smart controllers act like a thermostat for your sprinkler system telling it when to turn on and off. They use local weather and landscape conditions to tailor watering schedules to actual conditions on the site. Instead of irrigating using a controller with a clock and a preset schedule, Smart controllers allow for more accurate, customized irrigation by automatically adjusting your landscape's irrigation schedule and water use in response to changing conditions. With proper installation, programming, and maintenance, homeowners and businesses can use Smart controllers instead of standard clock-timer controllers on their existing systems, and can save an average home nearly 8,800 gallons of water annually.

To earn the Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense label, landscape irrigation Smart controllers must be able to adequately meet the watering needs of a landscape without overwatering. As with all other WaterSense labeled products, WaterSense labeled controllers are third-party certified to ensure that they meet the WaterSense criteria for efficiency and performance.

The Environmental Protection Agency worked with a variety of stakeholders to develop criteria and performance measures for WaterSense-labeled controllers, based on the industry's Smart Water Application TechnologiesTM protocol for climate-based controllers. The weather-based irrigation controller specification also requires supplementary capabilities, such as multiple programming features, ensuring flexibility and adaptability to local weather conditions.

Learn more about WaterSense-labeled irrigation controllers here:

- Irrigation Association: SMART controller
- WaterSense-labeled irrigation controllers
- EPA WaterSense Draft Specifications for Weather-Based Irrigation Controllers

How do WaterSense-labeled SMART irrigation controllers save water?

The biggest benefit of smart controllers is their ability to automatically adjust watering schedules throughout the year. After initial set-up and some fine-tuning, smart controllers only need to be reprogrammed when there are changes to the landscape or irrigation. WaterSense-labeled controllers customize when and how much your landscape is watered which can help save water and reduce unnecessary use.

I already have an irrigation timer--isn't that saving enough water?

Standard irrigation timers are useful for scheduling when and how long your landscape is irrigated. However, unlike weather-based irrigation controllers, they don't self-adjust for seasonal or current weather conditions, nor do they react to leaks or other problems that may exist. These factors often contribute to wasteful over-watering if left unchecked.

What is a backflow assembly?

Backflow is a plumbing term for an unwanted flow of water in the reverse direction. A backflow prevention assembly is used to protect the public water supply from contamination or pollution due to backflow.

In water supply systems, water is normally maintained at a significant pressure to enable water to flow from the tap and shower for example. However, when pressure fails or is reduced as may happen if a water main bursts, pipes freeze or there is unexpectedly high demand on the water system, then such reduced pressure in the pipe may allow contaminated water from the ground, from storage or from other sources to be drawn up into the system.

How do I know if I have a backflow assembly on my irrigation system?

Backflow assemblies are required to be installed on the water service connections to all landscape sprinkler systems. Backflow assemblies must be tested annually by a state certified backflow assembly tester. Contact the Portland Water Bureau's Water Quality Inspection's Group for more information on backflow prevention: 503-823-3256

Do I have to have a backflow assembly on my irrigation system?

Learn more about the legal requirements for backflow prevention here:
http://www.portlandoregon.gov/water/article/326458