

## **Smart irrigation controllers Working concepts**

Note: The following concepts are meant to address situations where smart irrigation controller technology will be utilized; however, all of the requirements of section 373.62, Florida Statutes, will **not** be met.

### **I. Options for Definition**

“Smart irrigation controller” means an automatic timing device with nonvolatile memory used to remotely control valves that operate an irrigation system. Smart irrigation controllers are able to self-adjust and schedule irrigation events using either evapotranspiration (weather-based), soil moisture data, or flow data, or a combination of methods thereof.

Definition from Irrigation Association Model Irrigation Ordinance v. 1.0.

OR

“Advanced irrigation technology” – Would the use of this term help to differentiate between the statutory variance in section 373.62, Florida Statutes, and the situation we are trying to address here? Or is it better to choose a term that is recognized by the irrigation industry?

### **II. For those with an existing individual permit and an allocation for landscape irrigation**

- a. Background – Existing permittees who have an allocation for landscape irrigation currently have the following limiting condition: “All landscape irrigation shall be conducted in accordance with the times, days, and within the manner set forth in section 40C-2.042, F.A.C.” This means that permittees in the SJRWMD are limited to watering two days per week during Daylight Savings Time and one day per week during Eastern Standard Time.
- b. Letter modification to authorize additional watering days
  - i. The District would use the letter modification process to modify the above condition to authorize additional watering days when a smart irrigation controller is used.
  - ii. The letter modification would include the same limiting conditions as those noted in Section III.b.ii. below.
  - iii. No fee associated with letter modifications. This may help to incentivize conservation.

### III. For those that do not have an individual permit

- a. Background – In SJRWMD, authorization for sub-threshold landscape irrigation is handled through a general permit by rule. See 40C-2.042, F.A.C.
- b. Create new general permit by rule (GPR) to authorize additional watering days. Another option would be to create a noticed general permit (NGP). It should be noted that SJRWMD eliminated NGPs during CUPcon to reduce the number of permit types. In SJRWMD, creating a new NGP would increase permit types from two (individual and GPR) to three (individual, GPR and NGP).
  - i. The GPR or NGP would require the submittal of a notice which would include:
    1. Name, address and contact information of the person intending to use the GPR or NGP
    2. Make and model of the smart irrigation controller
    3. Certification statement from a licensed contractor that the smart irrigation controller had been installed in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications
  - ii. The GPR or NGP would be subject to the following limiting conditions
    1. A maximum of three days per week watering schedule
    2. No irrigation may occur between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 4 p.m. on any day
    3. Smart irrigation controllers must be used to adjust landscape irrigation schedules based on soil moisture or on climatic information.
    4. If the smart irrigation controller relies on the use of a soil moisture sensor or sensors, each soil moisture sensor must be located in the location that best represents the majority of the landscaped area(s) in order to optimize water use. Each soil moisture sensor controller shall be installed and operated in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications. Should language be added to reflect how appropriate zones are delineated?
    5. If the smart irrigation controller relies on the use of weather data, the controller must be installed and operated in accordance with the manufacture's specifications and in an area where there are no obstructions to rainfall or sunlight. For systems that rely on a subscription-based weather data system, the permittee must maintain the subscription to the weather database.

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6. The permittee shall insure that at all times the smart irrigation controller is functioning properly and is being operated in accordance with this general permit by rule.
7. The permittee shall post a notice on the irrigated property in plain view from the nearest roadway that states: "Irrigating with a Smart Irrigation Controller" and includes the address of the property where the smart irrigation controller is being used. The permittee shall remove the notice when no longer irrigating in compliance with this general permit by rule. Should a certain size/color sign be specified?
8. The permittee shall insure that the smart irrigation controller is inspected annually and is functioning properly.

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