

Alachua County Landscape Irrigation Efficiency Code FAQs

1. **Where does this ordinance apply?** All new irrigation systems (or modifications to at least 50% by area of existing systems) fall under the jurisdiction of this code. These standards currently apply within unincorporated Alachua County.
2. **Do I have to follow these standards if I install an irrigation system at my own house?** Yes, these standards apply to contractors installing and maintaining systems along with “Do it Yourself” jobs. Please call EPD staff at 352-264-6829 if you plan to install it yourself, as we will help you navigate the approval process.
3. **How does this process work?**
 - a. Submit the completed Review Form, Irrigation Sketch, Authorization to Access Property form, and applicable fee(s) to the Alachua County Environmental Protection Department (EPD) in person or online.
 - b. EPD will review the application within 14 days and send an approval once it can be installed.
 - c. Property owner or lawn care professional notifies EPD when work is completed and ready for EPD inspection or provides EPD with the self-inspection checklist.
 - d. For EPD inspections, we will notify property owner or lawn care professional if there is an issue.
 - e. If the system is not in compliance, a re-inspection fee may be required.
4. **What is the Authorization to Access Property form?** This form must be signed by the property owner (or their authorized agent) to give EPD staff permission to inspect the irrigation system after it is installed. It must be filled out for all jobs, even those that will be self-inspected, as EPD must randomly inspect some jobs to ensure compliance. You may fill out one form for each phase of a development, as long as you provide a list of the lots for which it applies.
5. **How do I self-inspect my own jobs?** If you provide your current Florida Irrigation Specialty Contractor license number or proof of current Florida Water Star Accredited Irrigation and Landscape Professional accreditation to EPD, you may self-inspect your jobs. You will not have to pay the inspection fee if you go this route. EPD will randomly inspect some jobs and may revoke your self-inspection status if sites do not comply with the ordinance.
6. **The Code requires no more than 60% of the landscaped area to be high volume irrigation. What is the landscaped area?** The landscaped area is the entire parcel excluding the building footprint, driveways, hardscapes such as decks and patios, and other non-planted areas. Natural woods are not considered part of the landscaped area; however just mulch without vegetation is part of the landscaped area. Landscaped area also includes water features and Florida-Friendly landscaped areas.
7. **Do you have any tips for providing a complete irrigation sketch?** In addition to the required elements in the Code, providing the following on your sketch will speed up staff review:
 - a. An Excel table with calculations for required information is provided on our website at www.alachuacounty.us/Depts/EPD/WaterResources/WaterConservation/Pages/Irrigation-Restrictions.aspx. Copying and pasting the completed table on your sketch is recommended.
 - b. In addition to showing the pipe line connections to zone valves, outlining and numbering each zone is recommended.
 - c. Providing GPM or GPH for each head type helps during the inspection in case there is any question about heads being high or low volume.

d. Use of a graphic scale with bars to represent distances helps in case the sketch needs to be enlarged and printed.

8. **What is the alternative compliance provision of the Code?** You may submit a proposal that does not adhere to the strict requirements of the code provided you explain the reasons. For example, a lot with a large area of natural woods left intact may have a small landscaped area in which to irrigate. To promote preservation of natural, unirrigated vegetation, in this case, more than 60% of the landscaped area may be permitted to be high volume through alternative compliance. Another scenario where alternative compliance may be approved is narrow areas between 4 and 10 feet where a double row of sprays may achieve head to head spacing, but in some cases, may result in too much water being applied. For side yards, the following language is suggested for alternative compliance: Side yards are proposed to be irrigated with a single row of sprays due to the narrow size (list width in feet). For right of ways, the following language is suggested for alternative compliance: “The right of way between the street and the side walk is proposed to be irrigated with a single row of sprays due to the narrow size (list width in feet).”
9. **Is this process on-line?** Yes, you may upload all required documents and pay applicable fees through the Alachua County Irrigation Professional Portal at secure.alachuacounty.us/Irrigation. Once you register, will get a log in and password for the site. You can pay multiple fees at once using the secure “shopping cart”. The site will NOT store your credit card information, so you will have to enter this information every time you “check out”. A 3.5% processing fee is applied for credit cards on-line.
10. **Will this slow down construction projects?** No, this process is separate from the permitting process and is not tied to the Certificate of Occupancy (CO) or building permit.
11. **How will this code be enforced?** EPD will take an education first approach during the beginning of the code implementation. Violations of the code may lead to written warnings, fines, and court appearances. Retrofitting of non-compliant irrigation systems may be required to achieve compliance.

Contact Information:

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Irrigation Efficiency Code Fees

Category	Fee Type	Amount
Residential	Approval (plan review)	\$50
	Inspection	\$85
	Re-inspection	\$50
Non-residential	Approval (plan review)	\$100
	Inspection	\$170
	Re-inspection	\$100