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CITY OF SANTA MONICA
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www.smeprd.org

Smart Irrigation Controllers Fact Sheet

Weather-based irrigation controllers (WBIC), sometimes referred to as *smart* controllers, decide for themselves when to water your landscape based on input from weather sensors. Because they can respond to daily weather changes, they are potentially much more accurate than traditional controllers that we preset for average conditions whenever we happen to think of it. The smartest of these controllers know, for example, when we have *June Gloom* in Santa Monica in the morning followed by a sunny afternoon and adjust the watering program accordingly. When it rains they take into account when and how much. Less sophisticated WBICs sense temperature and/or solar radiation but sometimes not rainfall. The simplest units rely on historical weather data to seasonally adjust the program.

Tests of WBICs show water savings in the range of 10% to 60% compared to conventional controllers. As with other electronic devices, WBICs must be programmed with care to realize their potential advantages.

There are two broad classifications of WBICs. Units that get their weather information from **on-site sensors** and those that gather their weather information from **off-site sensors**.

On-Site Sensor Units utilize additional devices that function like miniature weather stations in your garden to adjust the program. On-Site sensor units require the installation of both a controller and a sensor. The sensor is typically mounted on the eaves of your house and connected to the controller by a wire.

<u>Examples of On-Site Sensor Units</u>	<u>List Price Range</u>
Accurate WeatherSet http://www.weatherset.com	\$370 - \$560
Aqua-Conserve http://www.aquaconserve.com	\$260 - \$580
Hunter ET System This is an add-on device for Hunter controllers only. http://www.hunterindustries.com/Products/Controllers/etintro.html	\$400 - \$800
Weathermatic Smartline http://www.weathermatic.com/images/media/SL_Brochure_Weathermatic.pdf	\$460 - \$640

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Off-Site Sensor Units typically utilize information from government-operated weather stations in and around Santa Monica to adjust the program. This data is gathered, synthesized into a new program and transmitted to your controller each day. A variety of methods are used for this transmission depending on the manufacturer. Regardless of the transmission method, an annual fee (\$50 - \$75) is charged for the daily signal. Off-Site sensor units do not require the installation of multiple devices but may require connection to a telephone line.

<u>Examples of Off-Site sensor Units:</u>	<u>List Price Range</u>
ETWater ** http://www.etwater.com	\$340 - \$700
Hydropoint WeatherTRAK* http://www.hydropoint.com	\$650 - \$700
Irritrol Smart Dial* http://www.irritrolsystems.com/controllers/smartdial.html	\$550 - \$750
Toro Intellisense* http://www.toro.com/irrigation/res/smturfcont/intelli/brochure/intelli.pdf	\$600 - \$750

* These devices all use the same technology and weather data source.

** Must be programmed at an internet-connected computer. Standard model requires connection to a non-dedicated telephone line. Cellular phone alternative available at additional cost.

General information about smart controllers

<http://www.irrigation.org/swat/homeowners/default.asp>

<http://www.usbr.gov/waterconservation/docs/Controller2006.pdf>

http://www.cuwcc.org/Irrigation_Controllers.lasso

Questions? Call the City's Water Efficiency Office at 310/458-8972