

CURRENT STATUS OF IRRIGATION CONTRACTORS

Selecting a qualified irrigation contractor for your home can help ensure that your irrigation system is properly installed and maintained, which in turn can save money and water in the long run. Water used on the urban and suburban landscapes account for a large percentage of total municipal water use. As a result, irrigation system efficiency plays an important role in reducing unnecessary water waste. Currently at the State level, Colorado does not have any certification requirements for irrigation contractors. However, despite the lack of mandatory regulations to enforce contractor certification or licensing, many contractors take the initiative upon themselves so they can better serve consumers like you.

HOW TO FIND CERTIFIED IRRIGATION CONTRACTORS

There are organizations out there such as the Irrigation Association (www.irrigation.org) and the Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado, (www.alcc.com) that have their own certification programs for irrigation contractors. Both of these organizations are helpful places to start your search. On their websites you can find information and a directory to all the Certified Irrigation Contractors in Colorado as well as other information pertaining to your landscape.

WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A CONTRACTOR

When looking for an irrigation contractor, it is important to make sure that the services the contractor provides match the services that you wish to receive. Some contractors may perform design and installation while other contractors may only do one or the other. Remember, you are not just buying an irrigation system, but you are also buying the service of a contractor. Below are a few things to consider before signing a contract.

- What services do you want?
- Is the Contractor professional – *what certifications does the company or employee hold?*
- Who will actually be installing the system? – *make sure that the person that holds the credentials will be involved in the installment*
- Get references – *talk to current and past customers to see if they were (are) satisfied with the contractor.*
- Get estimates in writing – *review contract carefully before signing, or get estimates from multiple contractors. As a general rule of thumb, you get what you pay for.*
- Consider the bid – *make sure the contractor is offering a bid that meets all of your needs.*

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A BID

There are many different types of irrigation systems that can be installed on your property. Efficient systems have a few general characteristics that you should make sure your contractor is already aware of. If the contractor is unaware of these things, then consider going through a different company or contractor. Below are a few things to keep in mind to ensure that an efficient and effective irrigation system will be installed.

- Correct spacing - *Heads that are spaced too far apart cannot get adequate coverage, which will cause brown spots to form. Make sure there is "head to head coverage," a design concept that ensures that the spray from one head reaches the heads on either side of it and visa versa.*
- Proper pressure –*different types of sprinkler heads require different pressure levels. Without proper pressure the sprinkler system will not operate efficiently. |*
- Use low-flow irrigation equipment when possible– *water waste attributed to evaporation can be avoided by drip irrigation.*
- Efficient Control Clock- *all new control clocks should have multiple start times and programs to ensure that each area of the landscape receives the correct amount of water at the correct intervals*
- Quality parts- *make sure that a reputable brand is utilized, such as Rain Bird, Hunter, or Toro.*

QUESTIONS FOR THE CONTRACTOR

- Is the contractor certified and trained? Do they have proof of this?
- Why should I choose you over another contractor
- How will I be inconvenienced?
- How long will the installation take?
- Does the contractor have an insurance policy?
(Professionals will carry it with them)
- Is their work covered under warranty after the job is finished?
- How many systems have they installed in the past month? In the past year?
- What are their payment schedules, terms, conditions?
- Do they guarantee their work will be satisfactory to your needs?

Features of an automatic irrigation system:

Timer – Allows you to schedule your watering times. You can design your timer to water during the early morning to avoid loss to evaporation

Rain shut-off device – Lets your system know not to irrigate when it's raining to prevent unnecessary waste.

Soil moisture sensor – Measures soil moisture and overrides program irrigation when soil levels are adequate.

LEARN MORE

Irrigation Association

Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado

Greener Building

www.irrigation.org

www.alcc.com

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