

## Tips for Homeowners

If you have questions, need to verify a contractor's license, or check on complaints against a contractor, contact the Department of Consumer Protection at 860-713-6110 or visit our website at [www.ct.gov/dcp](http://www.ct.gov/dcp).

**Building Permits:** Contractors must obtain all the required building permits from the local building department before any work can begin. This will ensure that any work performed will be done to code and that any problems found by the building official will be corrected before the work is completed. However, the homeowner is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the necessary building permits are obtained. Always call your local building department for advice and guidance before any work is begun.

**Insurance:** Always check to make sure the contractor has proper insurance. Contractors should have liability insurance for themselves and their employees as well as worker's compensation if they have employees.

**Guarantees and Warranties:** Workmanship warranties are usually good only if they are in writing, and even a written warranty is only as good as the contractor standing behind it. Before making final payment on your project, always make sure that the contractor has provided you with any and all written manufacturer warranties on materials used in your project, and keep these documents in a safe place.

## Important Contact Info for Installers

- Questions: 860-713-6110
- For relevant applications and statutes, visit [www.ct.gov/dcp](http://www.ct.gov/dcp)
- For examination information, visit [www.psiexams.com](http://www.psiexams.com)



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Department of Consumer Protection

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Department of  
CONSUMER PROTECTION

FACT SHEET

# Installing Irrigation Systems



**Lawn irrigation has both residential and commercial applications, to enhance outdoor decorating and watering of lawns and gardens.**

Does lawn or garden irrigation work require a license?

Yes, under Connecticut General Statute Section 20-330.

The Department of Consumer Protection is responsible for the licensing of all occupational trades persons who perform work in Connecticut. Irrigation work falls under the State's legal definition of Plumbing and Piping Work,\* and therefore, irrigation installers need a plumbing and piping work license, such as a J-3 Limited Plumbing Contractor License.



\* **Connecticut General Statute Section 20-330** defines "Plumbing & piping work" as; "the installation, repair, replacement, alteration, or maintenance of gas, water and associated fixtures, laboratory equipment, sanitary equipment, other than subsurface sewage disposal systems, fire prevention apparatus, all water systems for human usage, sewage treatment facilities and all associated fittings within a building and includes lateral storm and sanitary lines from buildings to the mains, process piping, swimming pools and pumping equipment, and includes making connections to back flow prevention devices, and includes low voltage wiring, not exceeding twenty-four volts, used within a lawn sprinkler system.... For the purposes of this subdivision, "process piping" means piping or tubing that conveys liquid or gas that is used directly in the production of a product for human consumption."

## Licensing for Irrigation Systems

The most important component of any sprinkler irrigation system is the source of water. The water source may be a pump and well or a main supply source. *Back-flow preventers* are required for a main water source to allow flow in one direction only. This will prevent water from returning into the drinking water supply with potential contaminants.

However, back-flow preventers can only be installed by a licensed P-1 Unlimited Contractor or P-2 Unlimited Journeyman.

The *timer controller* is the heart of the sprinkler irrigation system because it tells the system when to water -- which day, time, and how much. Valves control the amount and flow of water from the sprinkler system. Low voltage electrical systems power the timer controller which in turn will tell the valves what to do, and must be installed by a licensed contractor. The wiring used within a lawn sprinkler system cannot exceed 24 volts, and local permits must be taken out for installation.

All trade contractors must be licensed with the Department of Consumer Protection and they must display that license number in all advertising and on all vehicles. The license numbers are important in verifying whether or not a contractor is in fact properly licensed.

Why should someone choose only a Licensed Contractor?

**It is against State law** for a person to install or offer to install an irrigation system unless he or she has first obtained the appropriate licensure, as outlined in this brochure.

All licensed trade contractors must undergo rigorous training in both the classroom and during on-the-job training in order to qualify for taking an exam. For example; a plumber would have to complete 8,000 hours of on-the-job training and 576 hours of class room instruction in order to even take the exam to become licensed.

Licensure means the contractor has successfully proven proficiency in his or her particular trade and has passed an exam.

A home improvement registration and an electrical license **do not** qualify anyone to install lawn irrigation systems. A home improvement registration or electrical contractor license merely allows that contractor to subcontract the irrigation system installation to a properly licensed plumbing or irrigation contractor.

What happens when a person or persons perform occupational trades work without a license?

Any person found in violation of Connecticut General Statute Section 20-330 can be fined up to \$200 for each violation, as well as face civil penalties imposed by the licensing board. The civil penalties are \$1,000 per first violation, \$1,500 for a second violation and \$3,000 for the third and each subsequent violation that occurs less than three years after the second or prior violation. Additionally, under Section 20-341a, working without a license, apprenticeship registration or certificate can lead to arrest for a Class B misdemeanor.