2. Locate your irrigation controller.

The irrigation controller is like an alarm clock. It tells the irrigation system when to turn on and off based on your settings. Your controller is usually located on the side of your house, in your garage or near an exterior door.

2. Know how to operate your controller.

Your controller is only as good as the information you enter. Basic irrigation controller features are explained below.

- **Stations/Zones**
  The individual valves in your yard or landscape beds.

- **Start Time**
  The time irrigation starts at the beginning of each cycle.

- **Run Time or Station Duration**
  The length, in minutes, irrigation occurs at each station/zone.

- **Program**
  The settings you choose for a set of stations set to specific start times and run times. Typically, controllers allow you to set three programs (A, B and C).

Refer to your irrigation controller’s manual for specific instructions. If your controller has different features than listed above, then visit the manufacturer’s website or contact their customer service for assistance.
Clay soil in North Texas has difficulty absorbing large amounts of water at one time. The cycle and soak method of irrigation applies water in increments. This allows the soil time to absorb water deep, where plant roots need it. Follow these easy steps to use the cycle and soak method:

> **STEP ONE: System Test**
Run your system in each zone and time how long it operates until water runs off the landscape. Depending on the type of heads (spray or rotor) in your system, the run time will vary between 3 and 20 minutes. The **RUN TIME** for each zone may be different.

> **STEP TWO: Set Controller**
The **RUN TIME** for each **STATION/ZONE** is the time you observed during STEP ONE for each zone. The **START TIME** should begin on your watering day - early enough in the morning to cycle through your system three times before 10 am. Program **START TIMES** to allow approximately one hour between cycles. Here is a sample schedule for a system with six stations/zones - each with a **RUN TIME/STATION DURATION** of six minutes (time determined during the STEP ONE System Test).

> **STEP THREE: Adjust Controller Based on Water Absorption**
Observe how your lawn absorbs water and adjust **RUN TIMES** as needed. Different factors affect how your lawn absorbs water including grass type, slopes, sprinkler head type, system pressure, shade and others.

Visit [plano.gov/water](http://plano.gov/water) for more resources on efficient irrigation.