

Componentry, Selection and Design

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- As effluent quality is not always consistent or compliant, it is important to minimise public health and environmental risks, especially if irrigation is at the surface
- Whilst irrigation area sizing is important, it is equally important to select, match and configure the components of an irrigation system as part of a hydraulic design, to ensure effective even distribution and compliant operation

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graph LR
    TS[Treatment System] --> DS[Dosing System]
    DS --> FF[Filtration / Flushing]
    DS --> DD[Demand Dosing]
    DS --> TD[Timed Dosing]
    FF --> IS[Irrigation System]
    IS --> VS[Vegetation / Soil]
    IS --> SI[Surface Irrigation]
    IS --> SSI[Subsurface Irrigation]
  
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The flowchart illustrates the components and flow of an irrigation system. It begins with the **Treatment System**, which leads to the **Dosing System**. The **Dosing System** branches into **Demand Dosing** and **Timed Dosing**. The **Dosing System** also leads to **Filtration / Flushing**, which then leads to the **Irrigation System**. The **Irrigation System** branches into **Surface Irrigation** and **Subsurface Irrigation**, both of which lead to the final destination, **Vegetation / Soil**.

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- Secondary or better
- Commonly AWTs
- May be sand or media filter, mound or reed bed
- May require non-return valve to prevent backflow
- May require pressure reducing valve



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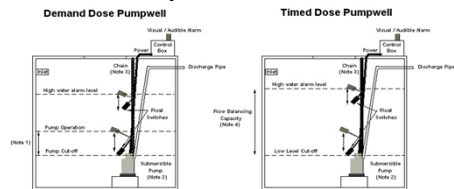
- Commonly pump driven
- May be low pressure dosing device such as a Flout or siphon (for LPED)
- Tipping bucket not appropriate – dose too small and will not pressurize dripper line
- AS/NZS 1547:2012 recommends minimum 200L/dose
- Should be 2-3 x system fill volume
- Larger volumes result in better field distribution

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Demand Dosing vs Timed Dosing

- Demand dosing by float switch most common in domestic systems
- Timed dosing significantly better. More common in non-domestic systems



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Ensuring Even Distribution

- Float switches do not balance shock wastewater loads
- Constrained sites may require a balance tank and timer controlled pump to avoid saturation and ensure even distribution over time
- Large areas may require division into several zones using an indexing / sequencing valve
- A high level alarm should be fitted to the system to warn of system failure

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Pump Selection

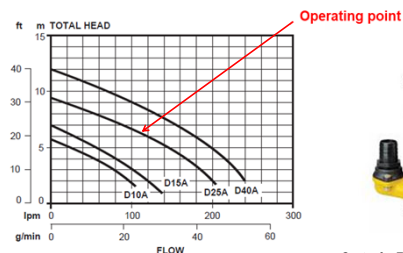
- Needs to be appropriate for wastewater
- Made of non-corrosive materials
- Correct hydraulic duty (Flow (Q) and Head (H)) for actual operating point of the system
- Operating point needs to be as close to optimum efficiency point (mid-point on pump curve) as possible
- Need to determine appropriate operating point
- Affordability – beware cheap pumps

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Pump Selection

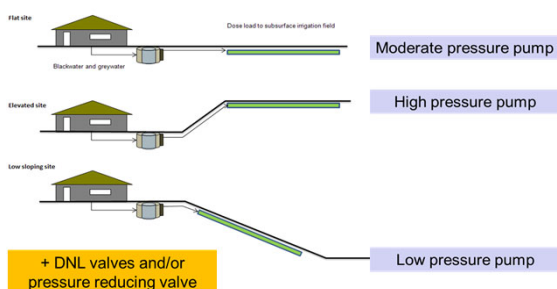
- Pump performance is described by a pump curve
- In terms of Flow (Q) and Head (H)



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Pump Selection



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Pump Selection

- Surface irrigation systems with rotary sprinklers and spray heads require ~4-10m head at the top of system with flow rates of 2-6L/min per sprinkler
- Subsurface irrigation systems typically require a 10-30m head operating pressure
- Pumps in many accredited AWTs/STS have:
 - 6-12m maximum head capacity
 - 33-130L/min maximum flow rate

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Pump Selection

- Sprinkler operating head + friction loss in the pipe commonly requires most if not all of the available head capacity (leaving limited capacity for static lift)
- Pumps supplied are often of insufficient capacity to uniformly irrigate correctly sized irrigation areas (based on appropriate DIR for soil type and/or water and nutrient balances), even when divided into a number of smaller sections or zones

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Pump Selection

- Uneven effluent distribution is a significant contributor to poor AWTs performance, or failure
- Irrigation area sizing requirements may create need for a bigger pump than typically supplied
- A one size fits all approach to pumps is not practical
- Pump should be selected to meet the specific requirements of each site

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Filtration

- Critically important
- Protects irrigation system from blockages
- Mesh filters low cost
- Disk filters higher performance



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Filtration

- Filtration of effluent is essential for effective irrigation
- Cylindrical mesh filters are usually sufficient for surface irrigation systems (typically 150 mesh, 100 micron rated filters)
- Disc filters better protect subsurface irrigation systems
- Need regular cleaning as part of each service
- If filter clogs frequently, need to investigate and solve treatment system problem

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Flushing

- Again, critically important
- Scours potential blockages
- Can return flush line to treatment system, or field flush to soak away (gravel pit)
- Flush valves can be automatic or manual
- Automatic flush flushes ~4 litres on start-up

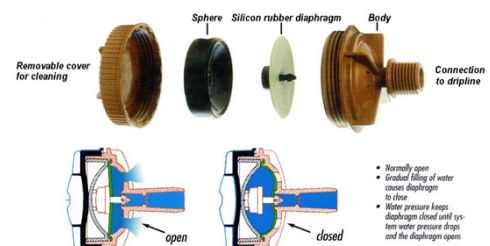


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Automatic Flush Valve

- Netafim Automatic Flushing Valve



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Flushing Velocity

- Flushing velocity can be calculated using the continuity equation (part of hydraulic design)
- Must be sufficient to entrain air and sediment in lines and prevent build-up of slimes
- Dirtier water requires higher velocities
- Typically >0.8m/sec required for effluent
- Some driplines rated >0.3m/sec

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Distribution System

- Mainline to field
- Indexing / sequencing valve
- Manifold
- Laterals
- Drippers or sprinklers
- Air valve / vacuum valve
- Dripper line non-leakage (DNL) valves
- Flush valve / Field flush / Flush return line

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Mainlines, Submains, Manifolds

- Typically 25mm ID or larger diameter LDPE or PVC lilac piping
- Manifold and laterals should be buried
- Older systems may sit on ground surface
- Most Councils now require burial
- Surface exposure increases potential for damage (e.g. mowers, animals) and degradation (e.g. exposure to UV)



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Mainlines, Submains, Manifolds

Pipe selection is part of hydraulic design. Need to consider:

- Energy losses in pipe. Refer to manufacturer's charts or calculate
- Pressure rating - AS/NZS requires pipes to be rated at 150% of the shut off head (of the pump)
- Appropriate wall thickness and depth of burial to protect pipe
- Consider cost, including fittings

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Indexing / Sequencing Valves

- Used to automate and sequentially deliver doses to each zone (zones generally <400m²)
- Improves hydraulic performance of the irrigation field and reduces demand on pump



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Surface Irrigation

- Only suitable for slopes <10%
- Secondary treatment and disinfection required
- Wide variety of spray heads (rotary, impact, spray nozzles, drippers) and risers (fixed, spike, pop-up)
- There are only a limited range of spray heads specifically designed for domestic effluent irrigation (larger orifices), but many for clean water (smaller orifices, which readily block)
- Sprays must not generate runoff or aerosols and should have a throw and plume height suited to the site

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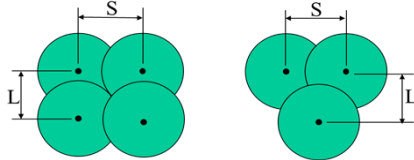
Sprinkler Layout and Recommended Overlap

Average conditions:

$S = L = 60\%$ of the wetted diameter of sprinkler

Windy or exposed conditions:

$S = L = 50\%$ of the wetted diameter of sprinkler



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Surface Irrigation

- Inappropriate where rainfall > evaporation and soils are saturated for extensive periods of time
- May result in uneven distribution



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Subsurface Irrigation

- Subsurface drip irrigation is the industry standard
- Significant public health and environmental advantages over surface spray irrigation
- Involves pressure dosing of 13mm ID pipe fitted with turbulent flow or pressure compensating emitters, laid along the contour
- Built-in or dosed protection against root intrusion and biofilm development (copper oxide/Trifluralin)
- Typically lilac (purple) pipe

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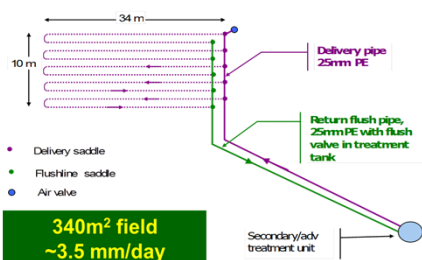
Subsurface Irrigation

- Places effluent directly in the root zone and prevents surface runoff during rainfall
- Allows more use of and ease of maintenance of an irrigation area
- Careful hydraulic design, layout and installation is essential (effluent filtration, line flushing, vacuum release valves, correct spacing of laterals / emitters etc.) is required; though this is often not undertaken

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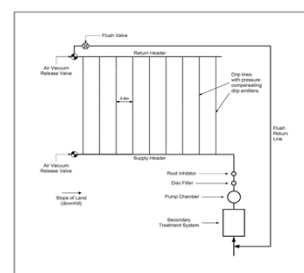
SSI Setup for 1,200L/day System on Category 4 Soil



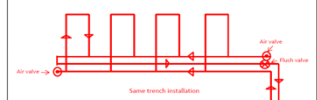
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Subsurface Irrigation System Layout



Revised Figure M1
Page 167
AS/NZS1547:2012 to ensure even pressure in lines for effective distribution and flushing



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Pressure Compensating Drinker Line



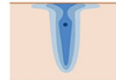
Source: CIVICON

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Dripper Line Selection

Conventional dripper line



KISSS dripper line



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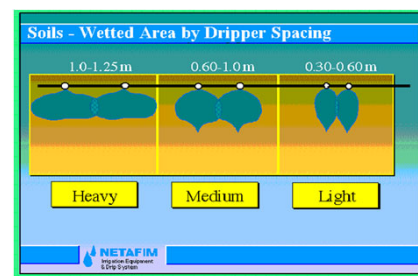
Dripper Laterals

- Typically buried at 100-150mm depth
- May be placed on surface beneath mulch
- Commonly pressure compensating (PC) and anti-siphon (AS) for sloping sites, or may be
- Non-pressure compensating for flat sites
- Laterals commonly spaced 0.6-1.0m apart depending on soil texture
- Space laterals more widely at bottom of slope
- Maximum 100m dripper line run length

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Dripper Spacing



Source: Netafim

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Pressure Compensation

- Flowrate from the drippers remains constant for varying in-line pressures. Why is this important?

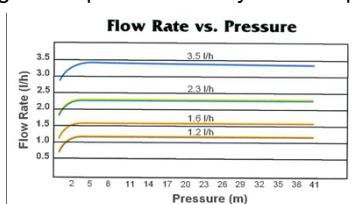


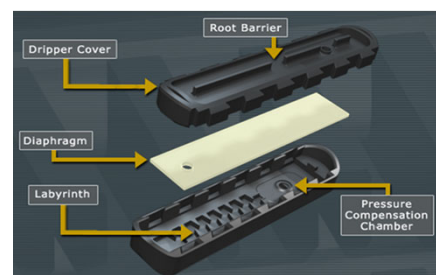
Figure B1.4 Graph of pressure compensation of Netafim Ram dripline emitters.

Source: Netafim

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Pressure Compensating Emitters (PCDE)



Source: Netafim

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Operating Pressure and Flowrate

- Typical operating pressures - 5 to 40m.head
- Typical flowrate - 1.5 to 4.0L/hr per dripper (some brands specify flowrate per m)
- What factors should be considered when selecting emitter pressure and flowrate?

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Dripper Line (Tube) Non-leakage Valve (DNL/TNL)

- Shuts off flow through the valve when line pressure drops below 2, 4 or 6m.head
- Opens and allows flow when the line pressure exceeds 8, 12 or 16m.head

Model	Shut-off pressure (m) **	Minimum Operating Pressure (m) **	Max. working Pressure (m)	Recommended Flow rate range (l/hr)
RED	2.0m (2.0m)	8.0m (4.0m)	40m	0-1,000
BLACK	4.0m (4.0m)	12.0m (7.0m)	40m	0-1,000
BROWN	6.0m (8.0m)	16.0m (11.0m)	40m	0-1,000



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DNL/TNL Valve

- Holds pressure in the irrigation lines and keeps them filled
- Irrigation system full at the beginning of each irrigation cycle
- Ensures the system reaches operating pressure in the minimum time
- Prevents draining of the system to the lowest point
- Results in more uniform distribution of effluent

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Airlocks / Air (Release) Valve

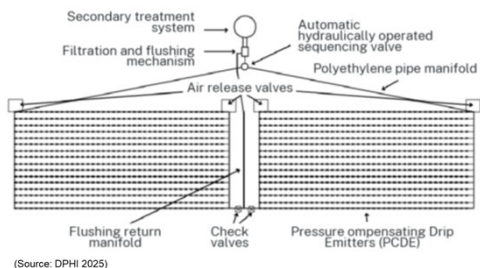
- Air release valves installed at high points to evacuate air from the laterals during system start-up
- Prevents a vacuum from occurring after pump turns off, avoiding debris intrusion into the drippers



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Subsurface Irrigation System Schematic



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Installation – Critical Phase

- Clear and detailed specifications
- Competent and experienced installers
- Follow manufacturers instructions / manuals
- Pipe installation to AS/NZS standards
- May need to rotary hoe or improve ground
- Protect against future damage
- Divert run-on stormwater
- Erect warning signs (min. 2)
- Fence off
- Observe OH&S requirements
- Make good



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Commissioning

- Check pumps and aerators
- Fill pump well with clean water
- Pressure test all pipelines
- Check for leaks
- Check flush lines
- Check alarm system
- System should be inspected by regulator at this stage, not before or after

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Management of Irrigation Systems

- No household fittings or end of pipe discharge
- Do not irrigate low growing crops which are not cooked before eating
- Avoid compaction by vehicular and animal traffic
- Keep clear of sensitive receptors such as;
 - Clotheslines
 - Swimming pools
 - Barbeques
 - Children's play equipment
 - Open windows etc.

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Operation, Maintenance and Servicing Manuals

1. For home owner
2. For servicing agent:
 - Flushing – automated/manual
 - Regular monitoring and cleaning of filter(s)
 - Check for blockages, leaks and surface ponding
 - Monitor desludging requirements
 - Power outage procedures
 - Record keeping:
 - File as-built plans
 - Record location of pipelines
 - Record failures and problems
 - Service report to Council and copy to owner

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Summary

Design requires understanding of:

- Site specific details (soils, slope, flood and / or frost risk, landscape requirements, local regulations etc.)
- Nature of effluent being handled
- Equipment performance and interaction of components
- Clear understanding of required outcomes
- Careful hydraulic design required to match components and ensure even distribution

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