

# Technical Bulletin

**Bulletin No.** 025 Rev B  
**Subject:** Transient Protection  
**Page 1 of 6**  
**Product Applicability:** All Rain Master Controllers  
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## 1.0 Lightning Protection for Rain Master Controllers

The Rain Master RME-T and Evolution-T series controllers incorporate additional components to provide increased protection for lightning induced transients. This Technical Bulletin provides a summary of these capabilities as well as a procedure for the proper installation of the controller.

Fifty percent of all lightning strikes will have a first strike level of 18kA (18,000 Amps). Subsequent strikes will be less, about half. Three strikes is the average per lightning strike. Although theoretically possible, it is economically unfeasible to protect a controller against a direct strike. The cost of the protection would be prohibitive. Lightning induced transients, on the other hand, are electrical impulses induced in a conductor by being in the vicinity of a lightning strike. It is these potentially harmful voltages and currents that Rain Master has attempted to suppress. The closer the strike to the equipment, and the longer the attached conductors (AC line and field wiring), the larger the induced transient will be.

The voltage from a lightning strike rises very fast, typically to its peak in a few millionths of a second. This energy must be returned to earth as quickly as possible, through a low impedance path. At this speed, the inductance of the ground system is much more important than its DC resistance. Inductance in the ground system is reduced by increasing the surface area of the conductors and decreasing their length. The buildup of electrons on the ground system also must be dissipated to prevent dangerous voltages in the equipment. The ground system must therefore be of sufficient size to absorb the energy.

In order to be rendered harmless, an induced transient must be returned to earth ground before harmful energy can enter the equipment. The protection components incorporated in the controllers rely completely on the external ground path provided during the installation of the controller. Therefore, it is **ABSOLUTELY IMPERATIVE THAT A GOOD GROUNDING SYSTEM BE INSTALLED!** The ground system will consist of one or more properly installed ground rods connected through appropriate means to the controller. This is described in each Controller's User Manual.

The safety (green wire) ground from the electrical service is NOT suitable for a lightning ground. The small wire size, long length, and questionable connections make it unsuitable for protection against transients. The only acceptable grounding for lightning protection is a properly installed and connected ground rod system.

A single 8 foot copper clad ground rod, properly installed, is usually sufficient. The rod must extend beyond the frost line if possible. The rod should be driven in, not installed in an augured hole. You may core through a concrete pad or foundation. It should be located as close as possible to the controller, so that the #8 ground wire is as short and direct as possible, free of nicks and bends. The ground clamp inside the controller should be used as the ground point. Be sure to remove any oxide from the copper clad rod before attaching the ground clamp to the rod. Be sure all connections are solid and secure.

Should the 8 foot grounding rod not penetrate completely into the soil it is acceptable to put it into the ground on a slight angle. It is important that the rod be a full 8 feet into the ground, with only enough of the rod showing to clamp the wire on.

**NOTE: Proper installation will show a ground resistance of less than 10 Ohms.**

The conductivity of the soil varies greatly with soil type and moisture content. Sand may have 100 times the resistance of clay. In low conductivity soil, such as sand, two or three interconnected ground rods should be used. Spacing should be greater than the sum of their lengths apart. Connection between the rods should be made with strap, with a width of at least one percent of its length, e.g. with two 8 foot rods spaced 20 feet apart, the width of the strap should be about 2-1/2 inches. The straps should be connected to the rods with approved clamps and buried in the soil. Chemical salts can be used to improve the soil conductivity, but must be renewed every year to maintain their effectiveness. The ground system should be inspected every year for corrosion and loose connections, preferably before the beginning of the storm season.

Where extremely rocky soil prevents the proper installation of driven rods, horizontal radials make an excellent lightning ground. Using #10 gauge wire just buried, install four or more in different directions for at least 50 feet each.

The Rain Master controllers have three stage protection. Observed from the field wiring side, where transients may enter the equipment, there is a gas discharge tube suppressor with a breakdown voltage of 90 volts DC, and a surge current rating of 20kA. Next, a series of inductors of 100 micro-henries provides high impedance to the fast rise time pulses. Finally, a high speed solid state transient suppressor with a breakdown rating of 73 volts at 1.5 kilowatts absorbs the remaining transients. Both of the suppressors are returned to earth ground through the circuit board mounting hardware. The output triacs are rated at 400 volts and are protected against transient turn-on with a Resistor-Capacitor network.

For added protection in the off season, disconnect the interconnecting cables between the controller and the lightning protection boards. Disconnecting the AC power will also help protect the transformer. If the controller has a battery, disconnect it to prevent damage, due to complete discharge. Record your watering programs for easy startup in

the spring.

- 2.0 All Evolution and RME controllers are available with a heavy duty lightning and surge option. This can be specified by appending a "T" (transient) to the controller part number.

Example:

A standard wall mount 24 station controller without heavy duty lightning and surge:  
DX24-WM

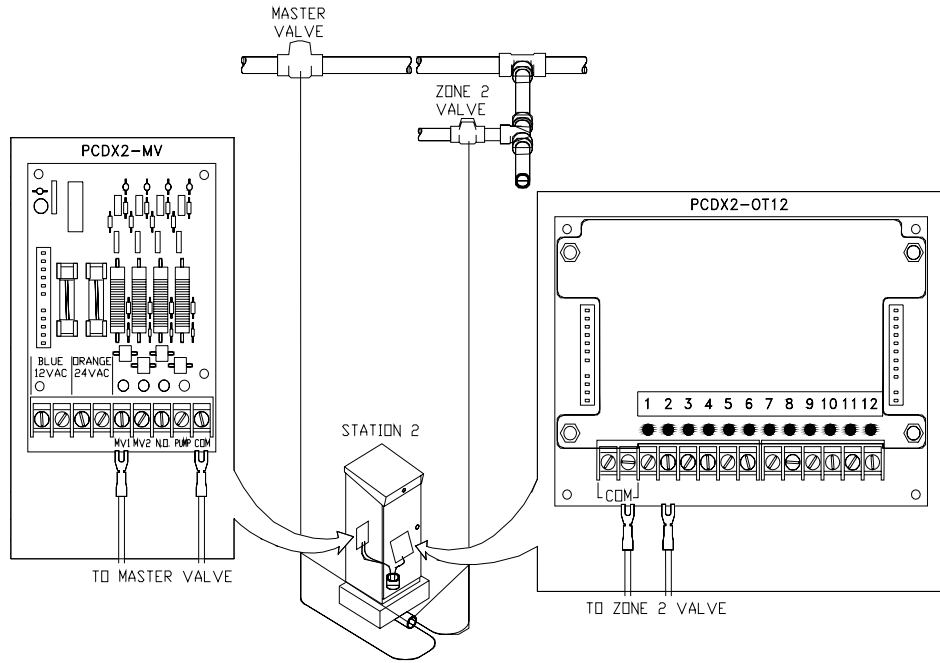
With heavy duty lightning and surge:  
**DX24-WMT** (transient version)

All field wiring connections are made the same way regardless of the option specified. Attachment "A" shows a typical output board, with illustrated connections.

- 3.0 Proper grounding is essential for the surge suppression circuitry to work on any manufacturer's controller. Please ground according to the grounding instructions in Attachment "B". The ground rod and clamp can be ordered from Rain Master.  
Part Number: **EV-GROUND-ROD**
- 4.0 The Evolution system has a number of devices to protect the incoming 120 VAC line. If additional protection is desired, Rain Master can recommend a third party device which mounts inside the Evolution controller. The device and mounting information is found in Attachment "C".

# ATTACHMENT A

EVOLUTION DX2 \* MASTER VALVE AND STATION CONNECTIONS

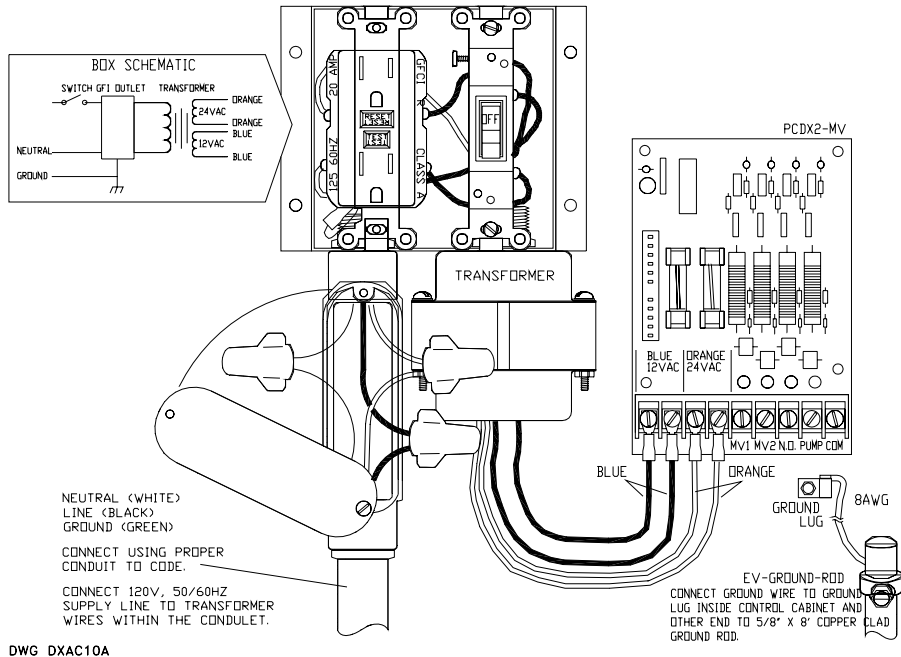


DWG DXMV10A

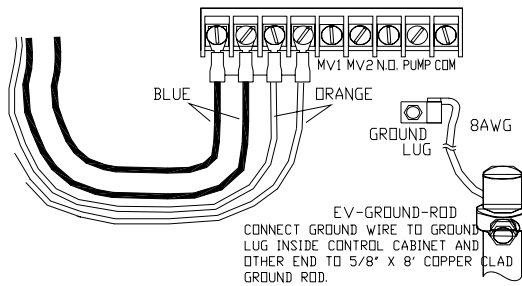
RAIN MASTER IRRIGATION SYSTEMS \* 1825-103 SURVEYOR AVENUE, SIMI VALLEY, CA 93063 \* 805-527-4498

# ATTACHMENT B

EVOLUTION DX2 \* AC WIRING DIAGRAM



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## ATTACHMENT C

**PowerMaster® Whole House Surge Arrester** - Protects household, electrical, and electronic equipment from transient voltage surges which can enter via the main power supply line. Designed to be "hardwired" into house circuitry and mount easily on the circuit breaker panel box. Engineered to absorb a maximum surge current of 32,000A. Clamping response time is typically less than one nsec. UL Listed.



End of Bulletin