



METER.

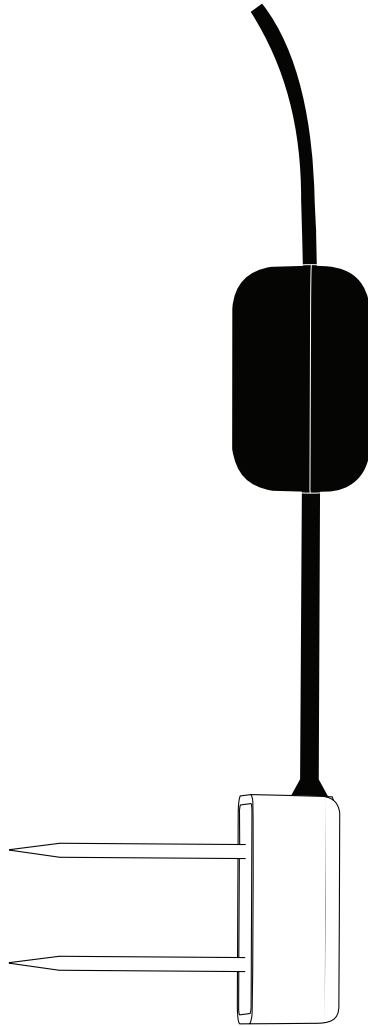
# TEROS 10





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Operation</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1 Installation	2
2.2 Connecting	7
2.2.1 Connect to METER Data Logger	7
2.2.2 Connect to a Non-METER Logger	8
2.3 Interfacing With Data Loggers	9
<b>3. System</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1 Specifications	10
3.2 Components	12
3.3 Theory	13
<b>4. Service</b>	<b>14</b>
4.1 Calibrations	14
4.1.1 Mineral Soils	14
4.1.2 Soilless Media	14
4.1.3 Apparent Dielectric Permittivity	15
4.2 Troubleshooting	15
4.3 Customer Support	16
4.4 Terms and Conditions	16
<b>Reference</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Index</b>	<b>18</b>



# 1. INTRODUCTION

Thank you for choosing the TEROS 10 Rugged Soil Moisture sensor.

The TEROS 10 sensor is designed to be installed in mineral soils, many types of growing media, and other porous materials.

This manual guides the customer through the sensor features and applications and describes how to use the sensor successfully.

- Volumetric water content (VWC) measurement
- Soil/substrate water balance
- Irrigation management

Prior to use, verify the TEROS 10 arrived in good condition. METER recommends testing the sensors with the data logging device and software before going to the field.

## 2. OPERATION

Please read all instructions before operating the TEROS 10 to ensure it performs to its full potential.

### ⚠ PRECAUTIONS

METER sensors are built to the highest standards. Misuse, improper protection, or improper installation may damage the sensor and possibly void the manufacturer's warranty. Before integrating the TEROS 10 into a system, follow the recommended installation instructions and have the proper protections in place to safeguard sensors from damage. If installing sensors in a lightning-prone area with a grounded data logger, see the application note [Lightning surge and grounding practices](#).

## 2.1 INSTALLATION

Follow the steps listed in [Table 1](#) to set up the TEROS 10 and start collecting data. For more detailed installation information consult the [TEROS Sensors Best Practices Installation Guide](#).

**Table 1 Installation**

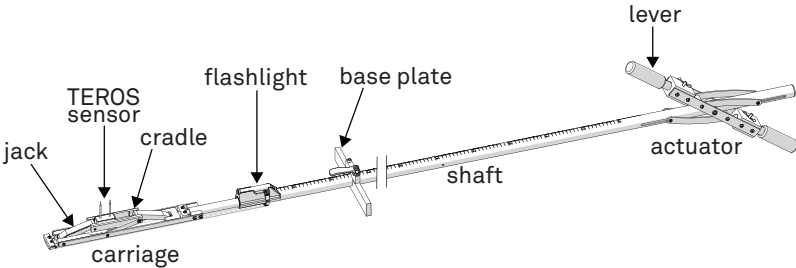
Tools Needed	Auger or Shovel
	Optional Tool Borehole Installation Tool
	

Table 1 Installation (continued)

**Determine Best Installation Method**

There are several methods for installing soil moisture sensors. These methods are described in [Table 2](#).

**Avoid Putting Any Metal in Between the Sensor and the Ferrite Core**

Any metal located between the sensor and the ferrite core can interfere with the TEROS 10 VWC measurement.

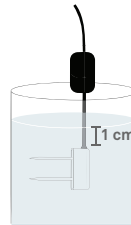
**Check Sensor Functionality**

Plug the sensor into the data logger ([Section 2.2](#)) to make sure the sensor is operating as expected.

**NOTE:** This is an analog sensor. The TEROS 10 will need to be manually selected in ZENTRA Utility.

**Conduct System Check**

Verify all sensors read within expected ranges. To validate both sensor function and logger functionality, take a sensor measurement in air and water. The TEROS 10 will read approximately 0.64 m<sup>3</sup>/m<sup>3</sup> in water (sensor head fully submerged to 1 cm up cable) and a slightly negative value in air.

**Create Hole**

**Avoid interfering objects.** Large metal objects can affect the sensor function and distort readings. Roots or rocks that could potentially bend the needles and should be avoided.

Auger or trench a hole to the desired sensor installation depth and direction according to the installation method desired.

**Insert Sensor**

**ATTENTION:** Minimize air gaps around the sensor. Air gaps around the sensor needles will result in low readings of soil moisture.

1. Load the TEROS 10 using the Borehole Installation Tool (BIT).  
**NOTE:** The BIT provides a significant amount of mechanical advantage. See [Table 2](#) for instruction on installing the TEROS 10 without the BIT.
2. Lower the tool into the hole or trench with the back of the tool supported by the far wall.
3. Pull the tool lever to activate the jack and insert the sensor into the sidewall.

**WARNING:** When installing sensors in rocky soils, use care to avoid bending sensor needles. The soil closest to the sensor has the strongest influence on readings. It is ideal to install the sensor in the native soil to get accurate soil moisture readings.

Preparing

Installing

**Table 1 Installation (continued)**

TEROS 10 may be positioned in any direction (needles aligned horizontally or vertically). However, installing the sensors with the needles in a horizontal position (as shown below) will provide the least restriction to water flow through soil because the water will flow through the soil directly to the needles.

**Sensor body vertical and needles horizontal**

Because of the shape of the sensor electromagnetic field, installing the sensor with the body oriented vertically will integrate more soil depth into the soil moisture measurement. Installing the sensor with the body oriented horizontally (on its side) will provide measurements at a more discreet depth. See [Measurement volume of METER volumetric water content sensors](#) for more information on sensor measurement volume.

**Select Location for Data Logger and Cable****Connect to Data Logger**

Plug the sensor into the data logger.

Use the data logger to make sure the sensor is reading properly.

Verify that these readings are within expected ranges.

**Secure and Protect Cables**

**NOTE:** Improperly protected cables can lead to severed cables or disconnected sensors. Cabling issues can be caused by many factors such as rodent damage, driving over sensor cables, tripping over cables, not leaving enough cable slack during installation, or poor sensor wiring connections.

Installing  
(continued)

Connecting

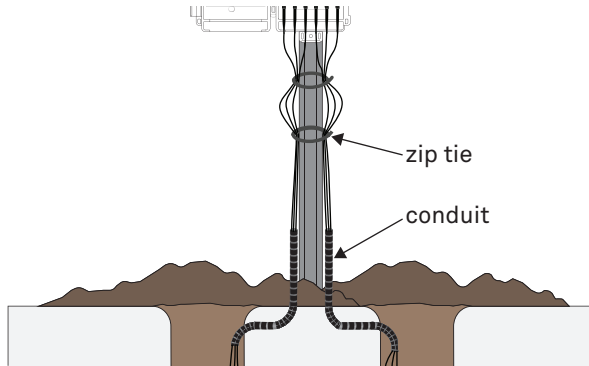


**Table 1 Installation (continued)**

Install cables in conduit or plastic cladding when near the ground to avoid rodent damage.

Relieve strain on the connections and prevent loose cabling from being inadvertently snagged by gathering and securing the cables between the TEROS 10 and the data acquisition device to the mounting mast in one or more places.

Tie excess vertical cable to the data logger mast to ensure cable weight does not cause sensor to unplug.

**Securing excess cable****Backfill the Hole**

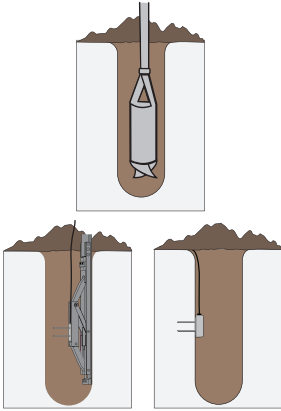
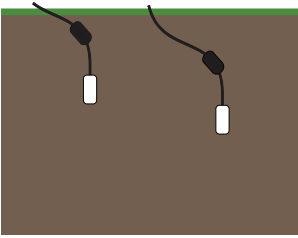
Return soil to the hole, packing the soil back to its native bulk density.

**WARNING:** Do not hit the ferrite core as this could potentially pull the sensor out of the soil.

Connecting  
(continued)

Table 2 contains brief descriptions for typical installation methods. Each has its own advantages and disadvantages. For more information about which installation method is best for specific applications, please see the [TEROS Sensors Best Practices Installation Guide](#) or contact [Customer Support](#).

Table 2 Installation methods

Borehole			
<p>This method uses the TEROS Borehole Installation Tool (Table 1) that allows a profile of soil moisture sensors to be installed at different depths within a single augered borehole. A 10-cm (4-in) borehole is augered vertically at the measurement location. The Borehole Installation Tool is then used to install the sensors in the sidewall of the borehole.</p> <p><b>NOTE: The borehole method requires specialized installation tool available from METER if installing at depths greater than 50 cm.</b></p>		<p><b>Advantage</b></p> <p>Minimizes soil disturbance at measurement site.</p>	<p><b>Disadvantage</b></p> <p>Requires a specialized installation tool that can be rented from METER.</p>
Trench			
<p>This method is best for shallow installations (less than 40 cm). This requires digging a trench with a shovel, excavator, etc. The trench needs to be dug to the depth of the deepest installed sensor. For deep installations, this may require a large trench.</p> <p>The sensor is installed carefully by hand into the undisturbed soil of the trench sidewall. The trench is then carefully backfilled to preserve the bulk density of the soil and to avoid dislodging the installed sensor by accidentally snagging the ferrite core.</p>		<p><b>Advantage</b></p> <p>Does not require specialized equipment.</p>	<p><b>Disadvantage</b></p> <p>Large soil disturbance at measurement site.</p> <p>Potentially large excavation effort.</p>

## 2.2 CONNECTING

The TEROS 10 works most efficiently with METER ZENTRA, EM60, or Em50 data loggers. The TEROS 10 can also be used with other data loggers, such as those from Campbell Scientific, Inc. ([Section 2.3](#)).

TEROS 10 sensors require an excitation voltage in the range of 3.0 to 15.0 VDC.

TEROS 10 sensors come with a 3.5-mm stereo plug connector ([Figure 1](#)) to facilitate easy connection with METER loggers. TEROS 10 sensors may be ordered with stripped and tinned wires to facilitate connecting to some third-party loggers ([Section 2.2.2](#)).



Figure 1 Stereo plug connector

The TEROS 10 sensor comes standard with a 5-m cable. It may be purchased with custom cable lengths for an additional fee (on a per-meter basis). This option eliminates the need for splicing the cable (a possible failure point). However, the maximum recommended length is 40 m.

### 2.2.1 CONNECT TO METER DATA LOGGER

The TEROS 10 sensor works seamlessly with METER ZENTRA, EM60, or Em50 data loggers. Check the METER [Download](#) web page for the most recent data logger firmware. Logger configuration may be done using either ZENTRA Utility or ZENTRA Cloud ([Section 2.2.2](#)).

1. Plug the 3.5-mm stereo plug connector into one of the sensor ports on the data logger.
2. Once the TEROS 10 has been connected to the data logger, use the appropriate software application, configure the chosen logger port for TEROS 10.

**NOTE:** The TEROS 10 is an analog sensor. The METER logger will not automatically identify the TEROS 10. Please use ZENTRA Utility or ZENTRA Cloud to apply the correct configuration.

3. Set the measurement interval.

ZENTRA, EM60, or Em50 data loggers measure the TEROS 10 every minute and return the minute-average data across the chosen measurement interval. TEROS 10 data can be downloaded from these loggers using either ZENTRA Utility (desktop and mobile application) or ZENTRA Cloud (web-based application for cell-enabled data loggers).

## 2.2.2 CONNECT TO A NON-METER LOGGER

The TEROS 10 can be purchased for use with non-METER (third-party) data loggers. Refer to the third-party logger manual for details on logger communications, power, and ground ports. METER has some sample programs for third-party logger setup (see the [METER Download](#) website).

TEROS 10 sensors typically come configured with stripped and tinned (pigtail) lead wires for use with screw terminals. Refer to the third-party logger manual for details on wiring.

Connect the TEROS 10 wires to the data logger as illustrated in [Figure 2](#), with the supply wire (brown) connected to the excitation, the analog out wire (orange) to an analog input, and the bare ground wire to ground.

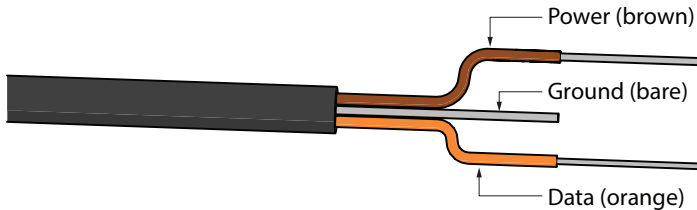


Figure 2 Pigtail wiring

NOTE: Some older adapter cables have the older Decagon wiring scheme where the power supply is white, the digital out is red, and the bare wire is ground.

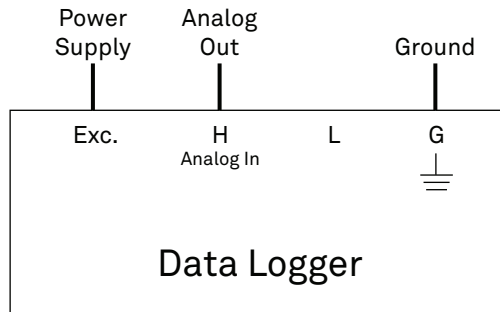


Figure 3 Wiring diagram

NOTE: The acceptable range of excitation voltages is from 3.0 to 15.0 VDC. To read TEROS 10 sensors with Campbell Scientific, Inc. data loggers, power the sensors from a switched 12 V port.

If the TEROS 10 cable has a standard 3.5-mm stereo plug connector and will be connected to a non-METER data logger, please use one of the following two options.

### Option 1

1. Clip off the 3.5-mm stereo plug connector on the sensor cable.
2. Strip and tin the wires.
3. Wire it directly into the data logger.

This option has the advantage of creating a direct connection and minimizes the chance of the sensor becoming unplugged. However, it then cannot be easily used in the future with a METER readout unit or data logger.

### Option 2

Obtain an adapter cable from METER.

The adapter cable has a connector for the stereo plug connector sensor jack on one end and three wires (or pigtail adapter) on the other end for connection to a data logger. The stripped and tinned adapter cable wires have the same termination as seen in [Figure 3](#); the brown wire is excitation, the orange is output, and the bare wire is ground.

**NOTE:** Secure the 3.5-mm stereo plug connector to the pigtail adapter connections to ensure the sensor does not become disconnected during use.

## 2.3 INTERFACING WITH DATA LOGGERS

The TEROS 10 sensor is designed to work most efficiently with METER data loggers. All METER readout devices use a 3.0-VDC excitation.

The sensors, however, may be adapted for use with other data loggers, such as those from Campbell Scientific, Inc. The TEROS 10 requires an excitation voltage in the range of 3.0 to 15.0 VDC. The sensors produce an output voltage that depends on the dielectric constant of the medium surrounding the sensor, and ranges between 1,000—2,500 mV. Any data logger that can produce a 3.0- to 15.0-VDC excitation with approximately 10-ms duration and read a volt level signal with 12-bit or better resolution should be compatible with the TEROS 10 sensor. The current requirement for the TEROS 10 is 12 mA at 3 VDC.

METER designed the TEROS 10 sensor for use with data loggers and readout devices that provide short excitation pulses, leaving the sensors turned OFF most of the time. Continuous excitation not only wastes battery power, but may, under certain circumstances, cause the sensor to exceed government specified limits on electromagnetic emissions. Do not continuously power the TEROS 10 sensor.

## 3. SYSTEM

This section reviews the components and functionality of the TEROS 10 sensor.

### 3.1 SPECIFICATIONS

#### MEASUREMENT SPECIFICATIONS

##### Volumetric Water Content (VWC)

###### Range

Mineral soil calibration	0.00–0.64 m <sup>3</sup> /m <sup>3</sup>
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Soilless media calibration	0.0–0.7 m <sup>3</sup> /m <sup>3</sup>
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Apparent dielectric permittivity ( $\epsilon_a$ )	1 (air) to 80 (water)
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**NOTE:** The VWC range is dependent on the media the sensor is calibrated to. A custom calibration will accommodate the necessary ranges for most substrates.

Resolution	0.001 m <sup>3</sup> /m <sup>3</sup>
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###### Accuracy

Mineral soil calibration	$\pm 0.03$ m <sup>3</sup> /m <sup>3</sup> typical in mineral soils that have solution EC <8 dS/m
--------------------------	--

Soilless media calibration	$\pm 0.05$ m <sup>3</sup> /m <sup>3</sup> typical in media that has a solution EC <8 dS/m
----------------------------	---

Medium specific calibration	$\pm 0.01$ – $0.02$ m <sup>3</sup> /m <sup>3</sup> in any porous medium
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Apparent dielectric permittivity ( $\epsilon_a$ )	1–40 (soil range) , $\pm 1 \epsilon_a$ (unitless) 40–80, 15% of measurement
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##### Dielectric Measurement Frequency

70 MHz

#### COMMUNICATION SPECIFICATIONS

##### Output

1,000–2,500 mV

##### Data Logger Compatibility

Data acquisition systems capable of switched 3.0–15 VDC excitation and single-ended voltage measurement at greater than or equal to 12-bit resolution.

## PHYSICAL SPECIFICATIONS

### Dimensions

Length	5.1 cm (2.02 in)
Width	2.4 cm (0.95 in)
Height	7.5 cm (2.95 in)

### Needle Length

5.4 cm (2.11 in)

### Cable Length

5 m (standard)  
40 m (maximum custom cable length)

**NOTE:** Contact [Customer Support](#) if a nonstandard cable length is needed.

### Connector Types

3.5-mm stereo plug connector or stripped and tinned wires

## ELECTRICAL AND TIMING CHARACTERISTICS

### Supply Voltage (VIN to GND)

Minimum	3.0 VDC
Typical	NA
Maximum	15.0 VDC

### Operating Temperature Range

Minimum	-40 °C
Typical	NA
Maximum	60 °C

**NOTE:** Sensors may be used at higher temperatures under certain conditions; contact [Customer Support](#) for assistance.

### Measurement Duration

Minimum	25 ms
Typical	NA
Maximum	50 ms

## COMPLIANCE

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Manufactured under ISO 9001:2015

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EM ISO/IEC 17050:2010 (CE Mark)

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2014/30/EU and 2011/65/EU

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EN61326-1:2013 and EN55022/CISPR 22

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## 3.2 COMPONENTS

The TEROS 10 sensors use an electromagnetic field to measure the apparent dielectric permittivity ( $\epsilon_a$ ) of the surrounding medium. The sensor supplies a 70-MHz oscillating wave to the sensor needles, which charge according to the dielectric of the material. The charge time is proportional to substrate dielectric and substrate VWC. The TEROS 10 microprocessor measures the charge time and outputs a raw value based on the substrate dielectric permittivity. The raw value is then converted to VWC by a calibration equation specific to the substrate ([Section 4.1](#)).

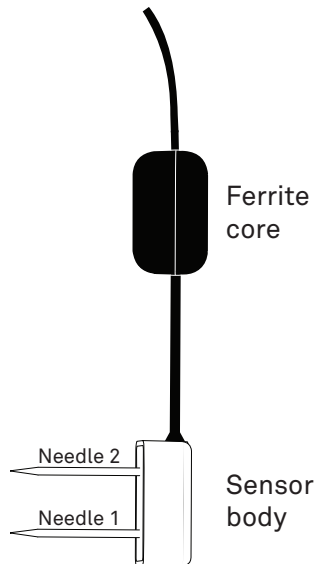
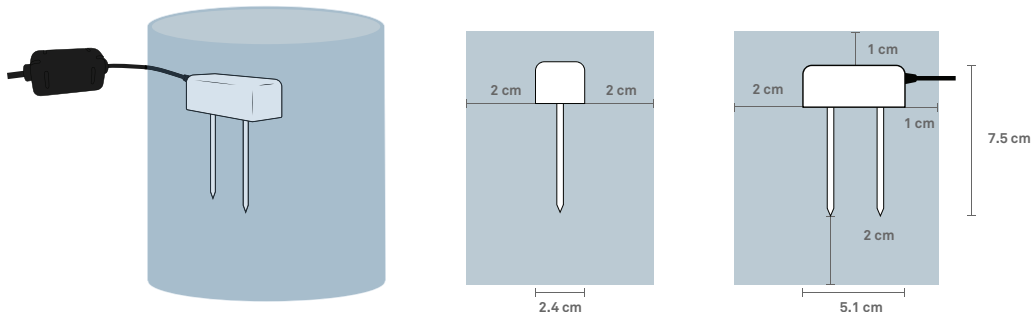


Figure 4 TEROS 10 sensor

A ferrite core positioned on the TEROS 10 sensor cable 7.6 cm (3 in) away from the sensor head is utilized to isolate the sensor from any interferences in the system. This mitigates any potential noise from the system on the measured sensor data. It is important to not attach anything to the section of cable between the sensor head and the ferrite core as this may influence the measurements.



The TEROS 10 VWC measurement sensitivity is contained within a 430-mL volume roughly depicted in [Figure 5](#). Please see the application note [Measurement volume of METER volumetric water content sensors](#) for testing protocol and more thorough analysis.



**Figure 5 VWC volume of influence**

**NOTE:** The TEROS 10 provides instantaneous or near-instantaneous measurements; however, because of the sensitivity of the measurement of the sensor head, the TEROS 10 is not well suited for spot measurements of VWC.

### 3.3 THEORY

TEROS 10 sensors use an electromagnetic field to measure the  $\epsilon_a$  of the surrounding medium. The sensor supplies a 70-MHz oscillating wave to the sensor needles, which charge according to the dielectric of the material. The charge time is proportional to substrate dielectric and substrate VWC. The TEROS 10 microprocessor measures the charge time and outputs a raw value based on the substrate  $\epsilon_a$ . The raw value is then converted to VWC by a calibration equation specific to the substrate ([Section 4.1](#)).

## 4. SERVICE

This section contains information about calibration frequencies, cleaning guidelines, troubleshooting guidelines, customer support contact information, and terms and conditions.

### 4.1 CALIBRATIONS

Following are the explanations of the mineral soil, soilless media, and dielectric calibrations for TEROS 10, where  $\Theta$  is the VWC (in  $\text{m}^3/\text{m}^3$ ),  $\varepsilon$  is dielectric, and  $RAW$  is the raw sensor output, when read with a METER or third-party data logger.

The TEROS 10 is not sensitive to variation in soil texture and (electromagnetic conductivity) EC because it runs at a high measurement frequency. Therefore, its generic calibration equation should result in reasonable absolute accuracy:  $0.03 \text{ m}^3/\text{m}^3$  for most mineral soils up to 8 dS/m saturation extract. However, for added accuracy, customers are encouraged to perform [soil-specific calibrations](http://metergroup.com/soil-sensor-calibration) (metergroup.com/soil-sensor-calibration).

#### 4.1.1 MINERAL SOILS

According to METER tests, a single calibration equation will generally suffice for most mineral soil types with ECs from 0 dS/m to 8 dS/m saturation extract. VWC ( $\Theta$ ) is given by [Equation 1](#):

$$\Theta(\text{m}^3/\text{m}^3) = 1.895 \times 10^{-10} \times RAW^3 - 1.222 \times 10^{-6} \times RAW^2 + 2.855 \times 10^{-3} \times RAW - 2.154 \quad \text{Equation 1}$$

where  $RAW$  is the output from the METER data logger.

If using a non-METER data logger, VWC is given by [Equation 2](#):

$$\Theta(\text{m}^3/\text{m}^3) = 4.824 \times 10^{-10} \times mV^3 - 2.278 \times 10^{-6} \times mV^2 + 3.898 \times 10^{-3} \times mV - 2.154 \quad \text{Equation 2}$$

A third-order equation is used for the mineral soil calibration because it provides the best predictions of VWC in the range of VWC found in mineral soils, but this equation reaches a maximum at approximately  $0.64 \text{ m}^3/\text{m}^3$  in pure water. To display data on a scale from 0 to  $1.0 \text{ m}^3/\text{m}^3$ , VWC should be modeled with a quadratic equation (which would result in a  $1.0 \text{ m}^3/\text{m}^3$  in water). However, METER does not recommend this for mineral soils because it often makes the calibration in the range of VWC found in mineral soil less accurate.

#### 4.1.2 SOILLESS MEDIA

TEROS 10 sensors are calibrated in potting soil, perlite, and coir. The goal is to create a generic calibration equation that will work in many nonsoil substrates with an accuracy of  $0.05 \text{ m}^3/\text{m}^3$ . For higher accuracy, performing a media-specific calibration should improve the accuracy to 0.01 to  $0.02 \text{ m}^3/\text{m}^3$ . The differences between mineral soil and soilless media calibrations are caused by high air volume in the organic soils that lowers the starting (dry media) dielectric of the sensor. For more information on how to calibrate sensors or to

learn about METER calibration service (calibrations performed for a standard fee), review the article on [soil sensor calibration](http://metergroup.com/soil-sensor-calibration) (metergroup.com/soil-sensor-calibration) or contact [Customer Support](#).

The calibration for several potting soils, perlite, and peat moss is shown in [Equation 3](#):

$$\theta(\text{m}^3 / \text{m}^3) = 2.137 \times 10^{-10} \times RAW^3 - 1.465 \times 10^{-6} \times RAW^2 + 3.566 \times 10^{-3} \times RAW - 2.683 \quad \text{Equation 3}$$

where RAW is the output from the METER data logger.

If using a non-METER data logger, VWC is given by [Equation 4](#):

$$\theta(\text{m}^3 / \text{m}^3) = 5.439 \times 10^{-10} \times mV^3 - 2.731 \times 10^{-6} \times mV^2 + 4.868 \times 10^{-3} \times mV - 2.683 \quad \text{Equation 4}$$

### 4.1.3 APPARENT DIELECTRIC PERMITTIVITY

Apparent dielectric permittivity ( $\epsilon_a$ ) can be used to determine VWC using external published equations such as the Topp equation (Topp et al. 1980). Dielectric permittivity is given by [Equation 5](#):

$$\epsilon = 1.054 \times 10^{-4} \times e^{2.071 \times 10^{-3} \times RAW} \quad \text{Equation 5}$$

where RAW is the output from the METER data logger.

If using a non-METER data logger, VWC is given by [Equation 6](#):

$$\epsilon = 1.054 \times 10^{-1} \times e^{2.827 \times 10^{-3} \times mV} \quad \text{Equation 6}$$

## 4.2 TROUBLESHOOTING

**Table 3 Troubleshooting the TEROS 10**

Problem	Possible Solution
Sensor not responding	Check power to the sensor.
	Check sensor cable and 3.5-mm stereo plug connector integrity.
	Check data logger wiring to ensure brown is power supply, orange is analog out, and bare is ground. Try plugging into a different logger port.
Sensor reading too low (or slightly negative)	Check for air gaps around sensor needles. These could be produced below the surface of the substrate when the needle contacts a large piece of material and pushes it out of the way, or if the sensor is not inserted perfectly linearly.
	Ensure the calibration equation being used is appropriate for the media type. There are significant differences between substrate calibrations, so be sure to use the one specific to the substrate. <b>NOTE: Sensor will read slightly negative in air when functioning properly.</b>

**Table 3 Troubleshooting the TEROS 10 (continued)**

Problem	Possible Solution
Sensor reading too high	Check to make sure that the media was not packed excessively or insufficiently during sensor installation. Higher density can cause sensor reading to be elevated.  Ensure the calibration equation being used is appropriate for the media type. There are significant differences between calibrations, so be sure to use the one most suitable to the substrate, or consider developing a substrate-specific calibration for the particular medium.  Some substrates have an inherently high dielectric permittivity (soils of volcanic origin or high titanium, for instance). If the substrate has a dry dielectric permittivity above 6, a custom calibration may need to be performed.
Cable or stereo plug connector failure	If a stereo plug connector is damaged or needs to be replaced contact <a href="#">Customer Support</a> for a replacement connector and splice kit.  If a cable is damaged follow these <a href="#">guidelines for wire splicing and sealing techniques</a> .

### 4.3 CUSTOMER SUPPORT

Customer service representatives are available for questions, problems, or feedback Monday through Friday, 7 am–5 pm Pacific time.

**Email:** [support.environment@metergroup.com](mailto:support.environment@metergroup.com)  
[sales.environment@metergroup.com](mailto:sales.environment@metergroup.com)

**Phone:** +1.509.332.5600

**Fax:** +1.509.332.5158

**Website:** [metergroup.com](http://metergroup.com)

If contacting METER by email, please include the following information:

Name	Email address
Address	Instrument serial number
Phone	Description of the problem

**NOTE:** For TEROS 10 sensors purchased through a distributor, please contact the distributor directly for assistance.

### 4.4 TERMS AND CONDITIONS

By using METER instruments and documentation, you agree to abide by the METER Group, Inc. USA Terms and Conditions. Please refer to [metergroup.com/terms-conditions](http://metergroup.com/terms-conditions) for details.

## REFERENCE

Topp GC, David JL, and Annan AP. 1980. Electromagnetic determination of soil water content: Measurement in coaxial transmission lines. *Water Resources Research* 16(3): 574–582.

# INDEX

## A

applications 1

## C

calibration

  custom soils calibration 14

  dielectric permittivity 15

  mineral soils 14

  soilless media 14

compliance 12

  CE mark 12

  declaration of conformity 12

components 12–13

  cable 11

  connector types 11

  ferrite core 12

  needles 11

configuration

  See data logger

customer support 16

## D

data loggers 7–8, 10

  connect to METER logger 7

  connect to non-METER logger 8–9

## F

ferrite core

  about 12

  installation 3

## I

installation

  ferrite core 3

  installation tool 2

  methods 6–7

    borehole 6

    trench 6

  preparation 3

  tools needed 2

## S

safety 2

specifications 10–13

  data logger compatibility 10

  dielectric measurement frequency 10

  electrical and timing characteristics 11–13

  physical specifications 11

  volume of influence 13

  volumetric water content 10

## T

terms and conditions 16–17

theory 13

troubleshooting 15–16

## V

volumetric water content

  specifications 10

  theory 13

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