

Backflow Prevention



What You Need to Know About Backflow Prevention and Cross Connection

Are You Required To Have A Backflow Preventer?

Customers who have potential cross connections are responsible for preventing contaminants from entering the public water system through their individual plumbing system by installing and maintaining approved backflow prevention assemblies. The following is a list of most frequently asked questions:

What is Cross Connection?

A cross connection is any connection between piping that carries drinking water (also known as potable water) and the piping or fixtures that carry other types of water or substances that are not safe to drink (also known as non-potable). Substances include gases, liquids, or solids such as chemicals, water products, steam, water from other sources and any matter that may change the color, taste, quality, or odor to water.

What Are Some Examples of Residential Cross Connection?

Examples include residential fire systems, wells or auxiliary water systems, lawn irrigation systems, boilers, and swimming pools and hot tubs that are hard piped for filling purposes.

What is Backflow and Why is Backflow Prevention Necessary?

Drinking water normally flows in one direction (from the meter to the house), although under certain circumstances it can flow in the opposite direction or “backflow”.

A backflow incident can happen at any time. All that is needed is a water pressure drop in the public water system main line, most commonly caused by fire fighting, hydrant flushing, flow testing, a water main break, or an extreme high usage of the water system.

Any connection to a non-potable water source not protected could be siphoned back into the public water system, which can pollute or contaminate the water system.

Backflow prevention is important because we assume that when we turn on the water tap, we have safe drinking water. This is a luxury we enjoy, but not without very strong regulations and considerable expenses. Our drinking water is among the safest in the world. Water protection and conservation requires the effort and cooperation of everyone.

What is a Backflow Assembly?

Backflow assemblies are devices placed on service lines to prevent water from back flowing into public water systems. The most common type of backflow assembly is a double check valve assembly, which consists of two independent check valves, two resilient seated shut off valves and test cocks. To ensure they work correctly, all backflow assemblies must be tested annually with the exception of atmospheric vacuum breakers.

How Often Do Backflow Assemblies Need to Be Tested?

Backflow assemblies must be tested at the time of installation, annually (once a year) after installation, after repairs, and after relocating.

Who Can Test the Backflow Assemblies?

Certified technicians must check your backflow assemblies and will put a tag on to show completion and satisfaction of your system.

The Public Works Department tracks all known backflow assemblies in the City to make sure they are all tested annually. If we don't receive a test report for your backflow assembly by September of each year, your assembly will be included in our annual list of assemblies for testing by our contracted certified technician. The cost of this annual test will be included in your water bill and generally runs around \$35.00.