

DO YOUR PART

KEEP OUR DRINKING WATER SAFE

A GUIDE TO BACKFLOW & CROSS CONNECTION

What is the Concern?

- Your home or business is connected to the public water supply.
- The potential exists for you to contaminate the District's drinking water.
- Improper management of your backflow prevention device is a potential health risk for your family and community.

Backflow

Backflow happens when the normal flow of water is reversed from its intended direction in any pipeline or water system. The danger of backflow comes with the potential for **cross connection**.

Cross Connection

A Cross Connection is when water that has contacted chemicals or hazardous compounds flows back into the water system.

When can Backflow Occur?

Backflow occurs when the water pressure in the system is too high compared to the water supply.

Examples; a water main break, pump failure, water draw-down from firefighting, hydrant flushing, etc. These incidents are more common than you may think, and are usually unexpected.

Examples of how a Cross Connection can occur:

- A hose in a bucket
- A hose with a sprayer containing fertilizer or pesticide.
- A sprinkler or irrigation outlet
- A fire protection system
- Radiant flooring
- Swimming pools
- Water softeners
- Hose connections to a laundry tub, etc.

If a backflow occurred, any of the above examples would cause a contamination to our water supply.

POSSIBLE CONTAMINANTS

Contaminants that could possibly be introduced to your water via backflow incidents include; metals, pesticides, E. coli, Salmonella, Giardia, other bacteria and pathogens, nitrates, nitrites, antifreeze, propane, Freon, and more!

HEALTH HAZARDS

From 1981 to 1998, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) documented 57 waterborne disease outbreaks related to cross connections. These outbreaks caused 9,734 cases of illness.

The CDC states that only a small percentage of backflow events that occur actually get reported.

What To Do

Research

Do your research! Find out what device works best for you. Also, knowing the dangers and potential hazards of a cross connection is very important!

Annual Testing

Have your backflow prevention device tested annually by a certified backflow tester.

Maintenance

Immediately replace or repair any backflow prevention device that fails inspection.

Spread the Word

Many people are unaware of the law requiring you to install a backflow device when needed, or that they must be inspected and tested annually.

For More Info on Backflow & Cross Connection

- <https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=51-56-0600>
- <https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=246-290-490>
- <https://my.spokanecity.org/publicworks/water/cross-connections/>
- <https://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/DrinkingWater/WaterSystemDesignandPlanning/CrossConnectionControlBackflowPrevention>

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