



Office of Environmental Health Services
West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources
Bureau for Public Health

Drinking Water Fact Sheet Cross-Connection & Backflow Prevention

- All West Virginia public water systems must, according to **West Virginia Legislative Rule 64CSR15**, establish and maintain an approved cross-connection and backflow prevention program. The West Virginia Bureau for Public Health (WVBPH) enforces these rules.
- A cross-connection is any physical connection or other arrangement through which unauthorized and potentially harmful liquids, gases or other substances may be introduced into the drinking water.
- Backflow is a reversal of the normal direction of flow within a piping system.
- The cross-connection and backflow prevention program must be designed to protect the water system's distribution lines from contamination or pollution from foreign substances which may compromise human health.
- 64CSR15 stipulates that distribution and service lines must operate in their original intent to deliver only properly treated drinking water. In addition, this treated water must meet or exceed both United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) and WVBPH water quality standards.
- A public water system may require commercial, business, or residential customers, to eliminate (at their own expense) actual or potential health hazards, or other degradation to the public water system that may be caused by unprotected cross-connections and backflow prevention problems as part of their program.
- Water system customers may be required to install (also at their own expense) a backflow preventer assembly or device.
- Approved backflow preventer assemblies must be tested at the time of installation and on an annual basis by a state certified tester. Approved backflow preventer devices may be required to be replaced or reconditioned on a pre-determined schedule.
- It is not the intent of the WVBPH that every non-commercial customer (residential homeowner) be required to install backflow prevention devices or assemblies.
- For information on cross-connection and backflow prevention visit the WVBPH website : <http://www.wvdhhr.org/oehs/eed/swap/training&certification/cross-connection&backflow/default.asp>