



PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS'S DRINKING WATER

From the Hazards of Backflow

Your water utility operates a program to enhance the safety and quality of your drinking water through monitoring and correcting hazardous cross-connections.



WHAT IS A CROSS-CONNECTION?

A cross-connection is an actual or potential connection between the safe drinking water supply and a source of contamination or pollution. State plumbing codes require approved methods, called backflow prevention, be in place to prevent contaminated water from mixing with drinking (AKA potable) water at every point of potable water connection and use.



HOW DOES CONTAMINATION OCCUR?

Water normally flows in one direction. However, when water flows backward, backflow or contamination can occur. There are two causes of backflow: backsiphonage and backpressure.

Backsiphonage may occur due to a loss of pressure in the water system. This creates a siphon which can draw contaminants back into your water or the system.

Backpressure may be created when a source pressure is greater than the supply pressure. This can cause contaminated water to be pushed into your plumbing system through an unprotected cross-connection.

WHAT IS A CROSS-CONNECTION CONTROL PROGRAM?

Cross-connection control programs serve as a proactive, preventive approach to securing water systems. It is the method through which your utility ensures safe, potable water throughout your business and community. Cross-connection control is a comprehensive process that involves identifying cross-connections and preventing the backflow of pollutants and contaminants into the water supply.



ON-SITE SURVEYS

Visual on-site surveys of piping systems throughout your facility ensure there are no unprotected cross-connections that could lead to water contamination. Your local cross-connection control program may require external and/or internal surveys of your business.



CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

Cross-connection control programs include enforcement for non-compliant cross-connections. If a survey identifies problems in your system, correct them in a timely manner to avoid penalties or the temporary loss of water service.

HOW DOES THIS PROGRAM AFFECT MY BUSINESS?

As a business owner or manager, your participation is essential to making this program effective. By providing easy and courteous access to your facility, your water utility or an authorized agent can evaluate and protect your drinking water supply. They will identify unprotected cross-connections and verify that the correct backflow prevention measure is installed at each service connection. Inspections can take as little as 20-30 minutes.



UNDERSTANDING DEGREE OF HAZARD

The hazard level associated with each connection determines the type of backflow prevention method. A business' degree of hazard identifies whether and to what extent substances used in operation are toxic contaminants (high or health hazard) or non-toxic pollutants that generally present an aesthetic disruption (low or non-health hazard). Both types of substances can make drinking water non-potable. Evaluating the degree of hazard helps determine the most appropriate type of backflow prevention.

BACKFLOW PREVENTION METHODS

Your degree of hazard influences the type of backflow prevention your business requires. Plumbing specialists working with local municipal officials determine which measure is best suited for each point of use. Five basic methods are used:

- Air Gap
- Atmospheric vacuum breakers, including hose connection vacuum breakers
- Pressure-type vacuum breaker assembly (PVB)
- Double check-valve assembly (DCVA)
- Reduced-pressure principle backflow preventer assembly (RPZ)

Many cross connections can be corrected with a simple hose bibb vacuum breaker. Equipping each hose connection, outside and inside, with a simple, inexpensive vacuum breaker can bring your business into compliance.

COMMON CROSS-CONNECTIONS

- Hose bibbs
- Boilers
- Cleaning/Mop Stations
- Lawn Irrigation Systems
- Fire Protection Systems
- Lab & Medical Equipment
- Restaurant Equipment
- Power Washers/Sprayers
- Water Softener Drains

SUPPORT PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

Remember, we're all in this together – and together we can work to keep your drinking water safe from the hazards of backflow.

Your participation in your water service provider's cross-connection control program is vital! Protect the drinking water in your business to keep your employees, your customers, and your community safe.



For more information, additional resources, and any questions, contact your water utility or visit watercustomer.com

