

BACKFLOW PREVENTION WORKING TO PROTECT SAFE DRINKING WATER



Frequently Asked Questions:

What is a backflow?

Backflow is the undesirable reversal of flow in a potable water distribution system through a cross-connection. A cross-connection is an actual or potential link connecting a source of pollution or contamination with a potable water supply. Backflow may allow liquids, gases, non-potable water and other substances, from any source, to enter a public water system.

How does a backflow occur?

Backflow takes place when water in a distribution system flows in the opposite direction from what is normal. Cross-connections occur in locations where the water supply is connected to some appliance, equipment, or apparatus, including lawn sprinkler heads, which acts as a source for pollution or contamination.

What is a backflow device?

A backflow prevention device protects public water systems from contamination or damage through cross-connections. Backflow preventers are mechanical, containing springs, moving parts, and rubber seating surfaces, which wear over time. Preventers must be properly tested and maintained in order to keep the water supply safe. The three testable preventers are the double check valve assembly, the reduced pressure zone assembly, and the vacuum breaker.

Do you need to have your device tested?

Yes. To ensure the device is functioning properly City ordinances require a certified tester must test it annually. For new facilities, the assembly must be tested when it is installed. If the tester finds the assembly is not working properly, you must arrange to have it repaired and tested again. The tester is required to provide a copy of the test report to you and the water supplier.

Who do you call to for a certified tester appointment?

The City of Gardner does not maintain lists of certifiers, but there are a number of them in the area. Check with your local landscapers and plumbers, or you may try to search for backflow testers in the phonebook.

Do you have more questions?

Please feel free to contact the Utilities Department at 913-856-0980.



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Are all residential homes required to have backflow devices?

Only those residences that have lawn irrigation systems or water softeners that add chemicals are required to have backflow devices.

How much will the inspections/maintenance cost?

A survey of prospective certified testers was done and the cost was between \$50 and \$100 for the test. Maintenance costs depend on what is wrong with the device.

Who mandated the backflow program? If the state requires this, why don't we follow their program?

The State of Kansas and the International Building Code mandates that water suppliers develop and maintain a backflow prevention program. Neither entity has developed a specific program. The International Building Code does give some guidance on the types of devices needed for specific applications. The American Backflow Prevention Association provides more specific suggestions for the type device needed for each application.

How will the City track the inspections?

Currently the City uses a spreadsheet to track the test results for each device and location. Test results are entered into the spreadsheet. Backflow Device Test Report Forms are due to the Utilities Department by July 01, annually.

How do I know if I have a backflow device and where it is located?

Please call the Utilities Department at 913-856-0980 and a water representative will help you.