

# BACKFLOW PREVENTION DEVICES PROTECT YOUR HEALTH

One of our primary and most important roles as a public water agency is to ensure that we deliver safe, potable water to your home or business. We are required by state and federal law to sample and test our water supply frequently, to ensure it meets current water quality standards, and provide the results to the California Department of Public Health.

Part of providing a safe supply of water is preventing potential cross connections between our distribution system and other water sources. The DWP's distribution system is designed to keep water moving in one direction, from our wells to our customers. However, sometimes hydraulic conditions change, and the water flow can be reversed. This creates a backflow condition, which causes the potential for contaminants to enter the DWP's distribution system. Federal and state laws mandate that potential cross connections must have a backflow prevention device installed to safeguard public health.

## WHAT CAUSES BACKFLOW?

Changes in pressure gradients can occur when there is a sudden reduction in pressure in the DWP's water system (e.g., due to firefighting or water main breaks). This can cause the water flow to be reversed potentially drawing contaminants into the DWP's water system. Backpressure can occur when pressure from an auxiliary system (e.g., private well or irrigation system) exceeds the pressure in the DWP's system. This can cause non-potable water to enter the DWP's water system potentially contaminating the potable water supply.

## WHAT PREVENTS BACKFLOW?

A backflow prevention device uses check valves to prevent potential contaminants from flowing into the DWP's water system. There are three types of devices that are designed for differing levels of protection.

1. Reduced Pressure Backflow Prevention Device
2. Double Check Valve Assembly
3. Air-Gap Separation

The DWP will determine the level of protection required based on the degree of hazard the auxiliary system represents to the potable water supply. The device is required to be tested annually to ensure that it is functioning properly.

## DO I NEED TO HAVE A BACKFLOW PREVENTION DEVICE INSTALLED?

ALL new water services require a backflow device. Also, you must install a device if you have:

1. A well plus a DWP water service
2. A residential water service with fire sprinklers
3. An irrigation system
4. A commercial water service
5. A fire service
6. Any other auxiliary water source that may cause a cross connection

The DWP will review all requests for new water service to determine where a backflow prevention device is to be located.

## WHO INSTALLS THE BACKFLOW PREVENTION DEVICE, AND WHERE SHOULD IT BE LOCATED?

Installation may be done by a licensed plumber or contractor. The device must be located as close as possible to the DWP's water service connection but must remain on private property.

## DO I NEED TO GET MY BACKFLOW PREVENTION DEVICE TESTED?

Yes, it must be tested annually by a certified and licensed backflow tester (approved by the County of San Bernardino). The inspection report must be filed with the DWP:

1. Immediately after installation
2. Annually
3. Immediately after the device has been relocated, repaired, or replaced
4. Under other situations the DWP deems necessary

The DWP will send reminder notices to customers when the annual test is due.



Service, Quality, Community

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