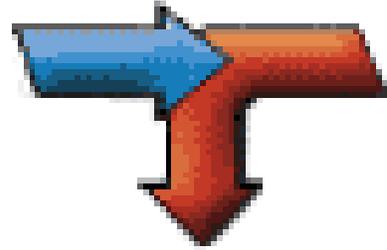




Frequently Asked Questions About Backflow

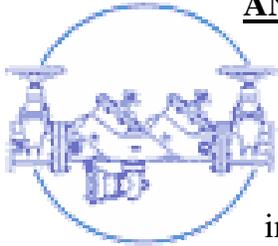
Water suppliers, such as the City of Galveston, are required by the Federal and State law to implement a cross connection control program to protect the water supply from materials backing up into our drinking water. Galveston Codes require that potential backflow connections be fitted with backflow preventers. Cross connection control ensures safe water for all consumers of water in our system. Please call (409) 797-3630 if you have questions about cross connections or backflow prevention issues in our water system.



QUESTION: *What is backflow?*

ANSWER: Backflow is the undesirable reversal of flow of nonpotable water or other substances through a cross-connection and into the piping of a public drinking water system. This “backflow” can pose significant danger to the health of those who drink City water.

QUESTION: *What is a cross-connection?*



ANSWER: A cross-connection is any connection between the City’s water system and any source or system containing nonpotable water or other substances. An example is the connection between our water system and a fire line or a commercial or residential irrigation (sprinkler) system.

QUESTION: *Why do water suppliers need to control cross-connections and protect their public water systems against backflow?*

ANSWER: Backflow into a public water system can pollute or contaminate the water in that system (i.e., backflow into a public water system can make the water in that system unusable or unsafe to drink).

QUESTION: *What must the City do to control cross-connections and protect our public water systems against backflow?*

ANSWER: The City must ensure that a proper backflow preventer is installed and maintained at the water service connection to each system or premises that poses a possible hazard to our public water system. Generally, this would include the water service connection to dedicated fire protection systems or lawn sprinkler systems, as well



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as water service connections to the following types of water customers: (1) premises (e.g. subdivisions, golf courses) using reclaimed or untreated irrigation water from a pond or reservoir; (2) industrial, medical, laboratory, marine or other facilities where objectionable substances are handled in a way that could back up and cause contamination of our public water system; (3) premises exempt from the State Plumbing

Code; (4) classified or restricted facilities; and (5) tall buildings (over 75 feet).



QUESTION: *What is a backflow preventer?*

ANSWER: A backflow preventer is a means or mechanism to prevent backflow. One way of preventing backflow is to leave an air gap, which either eliminates a cross-connection or provides a barrier to backflow. In most cases, however, backflow is stopped by installing mechanical backflow preventers (see examples on left), which provide a physical barrier to water backing up into the public system.

QUESTION: *Why do backflow preventers have to be tested periodically?*

ANSWER: City Code requires that all backflow preventers must be tested annually to ensure that they are functioning properly. Mechanical backflow preventers have internal seals, springs, and moving parts that are subject to fouling, wear, or fatigue. Also, mechanical backflow preventers and air gaps can be bypassed. A visual check of air gaps is sufficient, but mechanical backflow preventers must be tested with properly calibrated gauge equipment used by State-certified backflow technicians.

