Frequently Asked Questions

About Backflow

What is a cross-connection?

Any physical connection created between a possible source of contamination and any drinking water system piping.

What is backflow?

The flow of water or other liquids or substances through a cross connection from a possible source of contamination back into the drinking water system. There are two types of backflows:

- **Backpressure** – This occurs when an opposing pressure is applied against the City's water system supply pressure. Causes for increased pressures from a private system may include a pump, elevated tank, boiler, or other condition.
- **Back siphonage** – This occurs when backflow is caused by negative or reduced pressure in the water supply piping. Cross-connections are the links between the public drinking water supply and auxiliary water such as a pond, holding tank or well. Backflows into the public water supply can be prevented with the installation and maintenance of Backflow Prevention devices.

What is a backflow prevention device?

Any device intended to prevent the backflow of water from a customer water system to the public water system. These devices are typically installed close to the water meter.

Who can install/test a backflow prevention device?

A licensed backflow prevention contractor is required to install and test backflow prevention assemblies. Plumbing permits are required for performing this work.

What are some common potential backflow hazards?

- Water operated sump pumps.
- Hose connections to chemical distributors such as lawn fertilizer or herbicides.
- Hose connections to a water outlet or laundry tub.
- Lawn irrigation systems.
- Swimming pools or hot tubs.
- Boiler heating systems that are connected to the potable water supply.
- Private or non-potable water supplies located on the property.
- Industrial or Commercial processes.

- Feed lots or livestock holding areas or barnyards fed through pipes or hoses from your water supply.
- Chemically treated heating systems.
- Hose connections to chemical solution aspirators to feed lawn and shrub herbicides, pesticides, or fertilizers.

What are some examples of cross-connection and backflow scenarios?

- Soapy water or other cleaning compounds back siphoned into your water supply system through a faucet or hose submerged in a bucket or laundry basin.
- A hose submerged in a swimming pool or lake that creates a pathway for pool/lake water to enter the water supply plumbing.
- Fertilizers or pesticides back siphoned into the water supply plumbing through a garden hose attached to a fertilizer or pesticide sprayer.
- Chemicals or pesticides and animal feces drawn into the water supply plumbing from a lawn irrigation system.
- Bacteria, chemicals, or additives in a boiler system that back siphon into the water supply plumbing.
- A connection made between a private well supply and the watering supplied by a public water system through the water supply plumbing.

How can I reduce the potential for cross-connections and backflow hazards?

- Eliminate any known cross-connections if possible.
- Do not submerge hoses in tubs, pools, buckets.
- Use hose bib vacuum breakers.
- Use a backflow prevention device on a water operated sump pump.

Use a backflow prevention device on an irrigation system.