

Q WHAT IS A BACKFLOW PREVENTION PROGRAM?

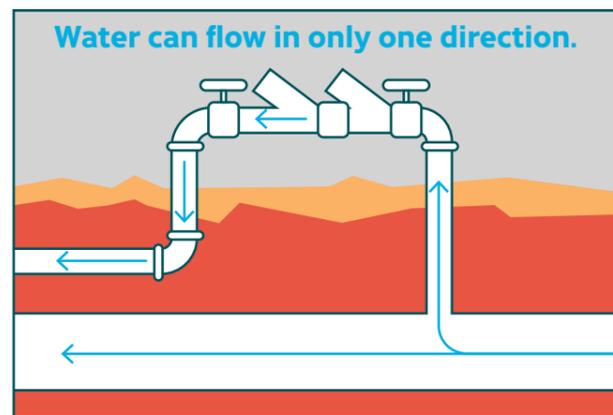
ANSWER

A mutual effort between water companies, property owners and certified testers to educate the public about backflow prevention requirements. These requirements ensure that established guidelines are followed to protect the public drinking water supply.

Q WHAT ARE WE PROTECTING THE PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY FROM? HOW?

ANSWER

Our goal is to protect the drinking water supply from polluting or contamination. We do this by keeping water that has already entered a facility from flowing back into the public water system. Backflow prevention assemblies are the devices used for this purpose.



Q WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN POLLUTION AND CONTAMINATION?

ANSWER

Pollution of the water supply does not constitute an actual health hazard, but the water may taste, smell, or look objectionable. Contamination of the water supply constitutes an actual health hazard, with the consumer being subjected to potentially harmful water borne disease or chemicals.

Q WHAT CAUSES WATER TO FLOW BACKWARD?

ANSWER

Two things: backsiphonage and backpressure.

Q WHAT IS BACKSIPHONAGE?

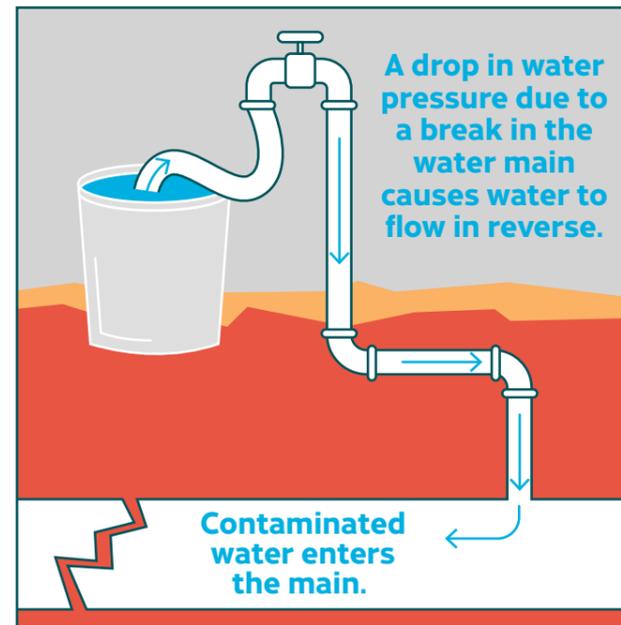
ANSWER

The reverse flow of water due to negative pressure.

Q WHAT CAUSES BACKSIPHONAGE?

ANSWER

Backsiphonage is created when there is a sudden drop in water pressure in water mains due to breaks or nearby firefighting efforts.



Q WHAT IS BACKPRESSURE?

ANSWER

The reversal of normal flow due to downstream pressure being greater than supply pressure.



CONTACT INFO

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phoenix.gov/pdd/development/inspections/inspecttypes/backflow-prevention-program



For more information or for a copy of this publication in an alternate format, contact Planning & Development at 602-262-7811 voice or TTY use 7-1-1.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT BACKFLOW PREVENTERS

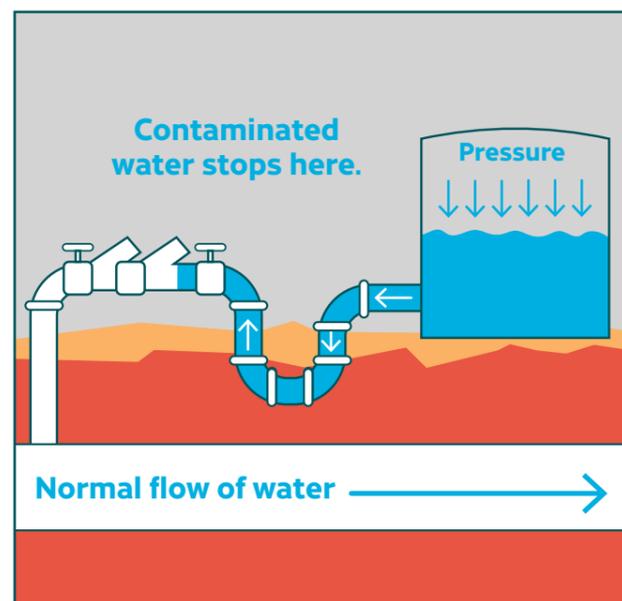
CITY OF PHOENIX PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



Q WHAT CAUSES BACKPRESSURE?

ANSWER

Heating systems, elevated tanks, and pressure producing systems can create pressures in the customer's plumbing which exceeds the supply pressure. An example would be a boiler operating at 100-150 lbs. pressure (as in a commercial system). Since the city's water pressure is usually about 60 lbs. and water flows in the direction of least resistance, a back pressure would be created. The contaminated boiler water could flow into the drinking water supply.



Q WHAT IS A BACKFLOW PREVENTION ASSEMBLY? WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE? WHERE SHOULD IT BE INSTALLED?

ANSWER

A backflow prevention assembly is a testable device which uses spring loaded check valves to prevent polluted or contaminated water from flowing backwards. Some assemblies eliminate backflow by discharging used water to the ground. Assemblies installed as secondary protection shall be located as close as possible to the water meter or property line.

Q WHY CAN'T I JUST USE CHECK VALVES AS A BACKFLOW PREVENTION ASSEMBLY?

ANSWER

A check valve is not equipped with test connections to assure that the valve is preventing backflow. That's why only approved assemblies are allowed.

Q WHAT IS AN APPROVED ASSEMBLY?

ANSWER

Any type of backflow prevention assembly or method approved by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ).

Q CAN ANYBODY TEST BACKFLOW PREVENTION ASSEMBLIES IN PHOENIX?

ANSWER

No, only people certified through an agency approved by ADEQ can test backflow devices. A copy of their certification must be on file with the City of Phoenix's Backflow Prevention Unit.

Q WHO IS A CERTIFIED TESTER?

ANSWER

Any person trained to test a backflow prevention assembly. This person must pass a written and practical examination and have the certificate described above.

Q IS IT NECESSARY FOR EVERY WATER CUSTOMER TO INSTALL AN ASSEMBLY?

ANSWER

No. State regulation exempt single family homes used solely for residential purposes from assembly requirements. All other service connections need to be inspected to determine the type of water use and whether an assembly is required.

Q IF MY BUILDING WAS RECENTLY MODIFIED TO MEET CITY CODE REQUIREMENTS BY INSTALLING BACKFLOW PREVENTERS INTERNALLY, DO I STILL NEED THEM AT THE SERVICE CONNECTION?

ANSWER

Even though plumbing code provisions may be rigidly enforced on new installations, experience has shown that "on-site" modifications and alterations of private plumbing are common. Possible hazards to the public water supply can be created due to backflow from private plumbing. These hazards may be caused by a submerged hose or a complex mechanical failure. In some cases, the only practical way to assure protection is to install a backflow preventer at the point of service delivery. That way, regardless of what happens inside the customer's property or what changes were made to private plumbing, the public water supply is protected.

Q WHERE DO I GET A PERMIT TO INSTALL A BACKFLOW PREVENTION ASSEMBLY?

ANSWER

Permits are issued by the city's Planning & Development Department, 602-262-7811. Note that a separate permit is required for Fire Sprinkler Systems.

Q WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I INSTALL THE ASSEMBLY?

ANSWER

It is your responsibility to have the assembly tested when it is installed and each year thereafter. A copy of the test report showing that the assembly passed is to be forwarded to the Backflow Prevention Unit (address on back). The city code requires that test records be kept for three years.

Q WHAT IS AN ASSEMBLY TEST REPORT AND WHERE CAN I GET ONE?

ANSWER

A special report form approved by the city of Phoenix used by certified testers to log test results. The tester you hire will supply the report form.

