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CROSS CONNECTIONS

What are cross connections?

Cross connections are any potential for the contamination of the City water supply due to the backflow of contaminated water into the pipes which feed into the house or come from the City's water mains.

A common type of backflow that can occur is from an irrigation system.

In accordance with State law, backflow prevention assemblies are required to be installed on any irrigation systems that are connected to City water. The type of device required depends on the hazard potential which exists. Hazard potential is classified as either high or low. The State of Washington Department of Health, WAC 246.290.490 defines high and low health hazards.

A high health hazard potential typically exists when the irrigation system is connected to an unapproved water source, such as an irrigation district (CID or KID), and to City water. A low health hazard potential typically exists when the irrigation system is connected to City water.

A high health hazard potential requires the installation of a Reduced Pressure Backflow Assembly (RPBA). A low health hazard potential requires the installation of a Double Check Valve Assembly (DCVA) or Pressure Vacuum Breaker Assembly (PVBA). PVBAs do not provide adequate protection if they are subjected to flooding, backpressure, elevated piping or if compressed air is used to winterize the irrigation system. In these situations, an approved DCVA is required. Drawings of each of these types of assemblies are provided.

All backflow prevention assembly devices are required to be tested annually in accordance with State law.

Why is an irrigation system that is connected to City water a potential hazard?

Lawn's can be/are typically maintained with fertilizers, weed control chemicals, etc. Because there are various points in a sprinkler system where the sprinkler head is not leak tight, there is potential for chemicals and other types of contaminants to get into the irrigation pipes. Those contaminants could then backflow into the water pipes that are feeding the house or coming from the City's water mains.

How can I tell if my irrigation system has a backflow assembly device installed?

RPBA's are installed above ground, so you should be able to visibly see them on your irrigation valve assembly. DCVA's are installed underground in an irrigation box. The age of your home should be an indicator of which assembly is installed. All newer construction is required to have an approved and tested backflow prevention assembly device installed prior to completion of construction.

If you are unsure if a device is installed, contact the City's Public Works Department at (509) 967-5434 for assistance.

My irrigation system is only connected to the irrigation district. Do I still need a backflow prevention assembly?

No, but keep in mind that if you ever would like to or do connect your irrigation system to City water to supplement your irrigation water, you will be required to install an approved RPBA. The City's Cross Connection Specialist is required to inspect the installation and test the RPBA once installation is completed.

When do I need to have my backflow prevention assembly tested?

Testing is required annually. The results of the test are due to the City by the 15th of the month in which your property's annual test is required. The City's Cross Connection Specialist sends out courtesy reminders a month in advance to all properties which have a test due in a given month. Please look for a postcard and/or letter which serves as your reminder to have your test done.

What do I need to do to have my backflow prevention assembly tested?

The City maintains an up-to-date list of those who are certified to test an assembly. Please see www.westrichland.org/Departments/Public Works or contact the City at (509) 967-5434. The results of the test are to be provided to the City's Cross Connection Specialist by the 15th of the month.

Verify with the company you use if they will be providing the test results directly to the City or if you will need to provide the test results.

Testers typically charge a fee to complete the test.

What happens if my test results show a failure of the backflow prevention assembly?

The City's Cross Connection Specialist will work with you and/or the tester you hire to remedy any failures or problems that result from the test.

I have a pressure pump connected to City water for my house. Does the backflow prevention assembly on the pump need to be tested?

Yes, all backflow prevention assemblies are required by State law to be tested annually.

What happens if I forget to get the test done?

Test results not provided to the City's Cross Connection Specialist by the required due date result in the water service to the property being disconnected until the test results are provided and approved. Disconnection and reconnection fees as well as late penalties (\$35 for low hazards and \$75 for high hazards) apply, all of which must be paid prior to the restoration of the water service as well as the scheduling of the test by a Certified Backflow Tester. *You will receive notice prior to the disconnection of your water service.*

I am renting this property, am I responsible for the annual testing of the backflow prevention assembly?

Any responsibility for maintenance of the property you are renting should be spelled out in your lease agreement. If you are unsure, contact your landlord, owner or property manager. Reminders of the approaching testing due date will be sent to the owner, landlord or property manager **and** the tenant. If you are concerned about whether the test has been or will be completed, please contact the owner, landlord or property manager.

Where can I get more information about this?

Any questions about backflow assemblies or testing dates for your property can be directed to Jim Beeman, Cross Connection Specialist at (509) 967-5434 or by email at jbeeman@westrichland.org. The City's website also contains information about cross connections at www.westrichland.org/Departments/Public Works.

**THANK YOU FOR HELPING TO KEEP OUR
DRINKING WATER SAFE AND CLEAN!!!**