

The City of Rock Hill protects the water entering your system. However, it is your responsibility to protect the water on your property or in your home. If you need information on what you can do to protect it or have any questions, please contact:

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An Introduction to Backflow and Cross Connection Control



What is a cross connection?
What is a backflow
prevention assembly/device?

Backflow and Cross Connection Control

Everyday, the City of Rock Hill proudly supplies an average of 14 million gallons of water to its citizens, water that exceeds the requirements of the EPA. Before the water is pumped to your home or business, it has gone through careful treatment and numerous tests to ensure its quality.

Did you know that your tap water (drinking water) has to meet standards that exceed those for bottled water? Unlike tap water, the quality of finished bottled water is not government monitored.



Congress established the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) in 1974 to protect human health from contaminants in drinking water and to prevent contamination of existing groundwater supplies. This act and its amendments (1986 and 1996) require many actions to protect drinking water and its sources. One of these actions is the installation and maintenance of an approved backflow prevention assembly at the water service connection. Without proper protection devices, cross connections can occur.

What is a cross connection?

Cross connections occur when a foreign substance is introduced into the potable (drinkable) water supply by an illegal or incorrect connection. When water flows in the wrong direction this is referred to as “backflow”.

How could I contaminate my drinking water?

Some very common Cross Connections are:

Sprayed Chemicals - Garden hose applied lawn and garden chemicals, pesticides, fertilizers, etc. Always use a vacuum breaker connected to your hose bibb when using chemicals in conjunction with a hose.

Hoses Left Submerged - Any foreign substance left in a container with a submerged hose has the potential for becoming back-siphoned into your home’s water system. Never leave the end of a hose submerged in a container that contains anything you would not want to drink.



Lawn Irrigation Systems - It is possible for anything laying around the head of your underground irrigation system to become introduced into your water system including chemicals, fertilizer, animal excrements, and microbiological contaminants.

What is a backflow prevention assembly/device?

This device is designed to keep your water flowing in one direction. The required device is determined by the hazard level it is protecting. A much higher form of protection is required for a funeral home or industrial facility than for your home. All devices are required to be tested on an annual basis. Test reports are required to be provided to the City.

How do I know what my hazard level is?

If you have something on your property under pressure such as a lawn irrigation system, or if you produce or manufacture something that, if entered into the water system would be considered harmful, chances are you are classified as a “high hazard”.

Could I be required to have more than one backflow prevention assembly/device?

Yes, in a typical commercial property you could be required to install a backflow assembly on your domestic drinking water line, on your fireflow protection, and also on your irrigation system.

Do I need a permit to have a backflow prevention assembly/device installed and tested?

Yes, you need a “backflow” permit for installation, but not for the annual testing.

How will I know when I am due to have my backflow prevention assembly/device tested?

When your certified plumber installs a backflow device, he/she will conduct a test to verify that the device is in good working order. Within 15 days of that test, the original test report should be forwarded to the City by the tester. The City will then enter the information into a database and you will receive a reminder notice 1 month prior to the annual anniversary date. The letter will include a list of approved testers. You will have 30 days after receipt of the letter to have the device tested.

What if I don’t want to install and maintain backflow prevention assemblies/devices?

If you have anything connected to your water service that is considered a hazard, by State law you are required to have backflow prevention.

I have a backflow device installed, but it is not considered “up to code” under State law. Am I ok?

If you currently have a backflow device installed, depending upon the hazard level the City may let you keep the device until it fails. The City does require proof that the current device has been adequately tested, maintained and is functioning.

