Backflow Preventers and Cross Connection Control Keep Water Safe for Drinking

Keeping Drinking Water Safe is the Responsibility of Both the City and of Private Property Owners

Every day, the City of Rock Hill proudly supplies an average of 27 million gallons of water to its citizens, water that exceeds the requirements of the Environmental Protection Act. Before the water is pumped to your home or business, it has gone through careful treatment and numerous tests to ensure its quality.

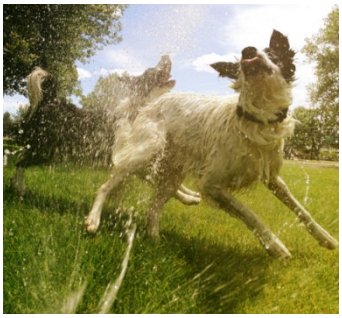
The City of Rock Hill protects the water entering your system. However, it is your responsibility to protect the water on your property or in your home from contaminants so that the water is safe to drink and use for everyday needs.

Common Contaminants

Sprayed Chemicals: Chemicals applied through a garden hose (pesticides, fertilizers, etc.). Always use a vacuum breaker connected to your hose bibb when using chemicals in conjunction with a garden hose.

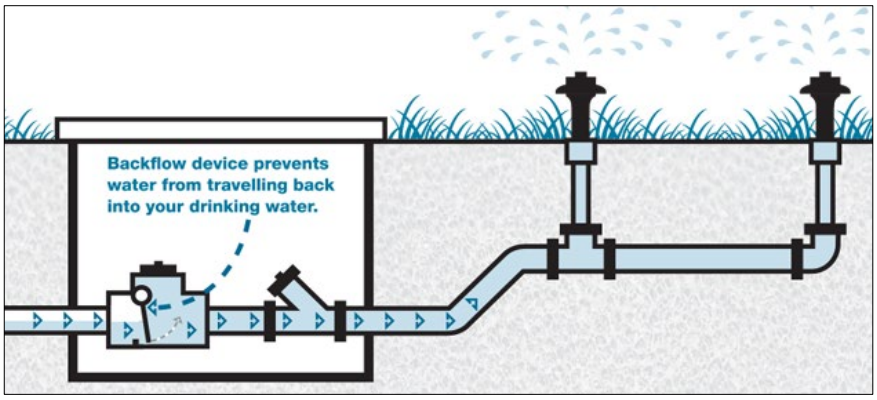
Submerged Hoses: Any foreign substance left in a container with a submerged hose has the potential for becoming siphoned back into your home's water system. Never leave the end of a hose submerged in a container that contains anything you would not want to drink.

Lawn Irrigation Systems: It is possible for anything sitting around the head of the underground irrigation system to become introduced into the water system, including lawn chemicals, animal excrement, and microbiological contaminants.



Preventing Contaminants from Entering Drinking Water

The Safe Drinking Water Act requires the installation and maintenance of approved backflow prevention devices at the water service connection in order to prevent contamination from occurring. Without proper protection devices, cross connections can occur.



Example of a Backflow Preventer for a Water Sprinkler System

Cross connections are when a foreign substance is introduced into the potable (drinking) water supply by an illegal or incorrect connection. When water flows in the wrong direction, that is referred to as "backflow." Backflow prevention devices are designed to keep your water flowing in one direction.

Requirements for Property Owners

Land use activities are required to have a backflow preventer if they are considered to have a high risk of causing contamination. These are called "high hazard" activities.

Common examples include:

- Irrigation systems
- Manufacturing processes that involve chemicals that would cause harm if they were to enter the water system
- Fire sprinkler systems

In many cases, a property may be required to have more than one backflow preventer. On a typical commercial property, one will be required on the domestic drinking water line, the fire flow protection line, and also on the irrigation system.

When a backflow preventer is required, it must be tested annually, with the test results provided to the City. The City requires backflow permits for new installations, but not for the annual testing.

Certified plumbers must install the backflow devices and sent the results to the City within 15 days.

The City will send a reminder notice about a month prior to the annual anniversary date that includes a list of certified testers. You will have 30 days after receipt of the letter to have the device tested.

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

Utilities Department

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