



## **Backflow Prevention / Cross Connection**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q. What is a Cross-Connection?**

**A.** A cross-connection is defined as "any actual or potential connection between a potable water system and any source of pollution or contamination."

**Q. What is Backflow?**

**A.** Water normally flows in one direction - from the public water system through a building's plumbing to any point of egress. Backflow, which can happen from back pressure or back siphonage, is the condition of the water flowing in the opposite direction.

Back siphonage is when water flows in the opposite direction caused by negative pressure in the water line. This can happen in any building when there is a reduction or stoppage of the main water supply pressure because of nearby fire fighting, repairs or breaks in watermains.

Back pressure can be created when a source of pressure, such as a pump, creates a pressure greater than the one supplied from the water distribution system.

Backflow can result in the transfer of any contaminants picked up at the point of a cross-connection to the public water supply, and can occur in any residential, commercial or industrial property.

**Q. Is a permit required to install a backflow preventer?**

**A.** Yes. A plumbing permit is required for the installation of any backflow prevention device. Residents are advised to contact the Building Department (256-2064 Ext. 260) for additional information.

Residents are recommended to plan ahead for the installation of a backflow prevention device if they do not have one in place. If a device is not in place you may receive an order to install at a future date when inspection programs are in your area.

**Q. What can be done to protect our drinking water?**

**A.**

DO keep the ends of hoses clear of all possible contaminants

DON'T submerge hoses in buckets, sinks, tubs, pools, ponds etc.

DON'T use spray attachments without a backflow prevention device

DO install an approved backflow prevention device on all lawn irrigation systems, swimming pools, water softeners (and many others).

DON'T connect waste pipes from water softeners or other treatment systems to the sewer, submerged drain pipes, etc.

DO install hose connection vacuum breakers on all unprotected threaded faucets around your home - these devices are inexpensive and are available at hardware stores and home improvement centers

DON'T use a hose to unplug blocked toilets, sewers, etc

DO ensure, when having a backflow prevention device installed that your contractor is qualified under and familiar with the Town's cross connection control bylaw.