

What You Can Do



Cross-connections can occur every day but often go unreported. They can cause health problems ranging from gastrointestinal illnesses (often attributed to food poisoning) to much more serious health issues. Cross-connections can also negatively affect the overall quality of your water. As the water customer, you are the best resource in preventing backflow and cross-connections.

Here are some helpful tips:

- Recognize potential cross-connections in your home, i.e. garden hoses and under-ground irrigation systems
- Protect all potential cross-connections with the appropriate backflow preventer
- Report to your water provider if water is discolored or has an unusual odor or taste



Keeping Your Water Safe

For more information about cross-connections, backflow, and for what you can do to protect your family's drinking water please contact:

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Providing Safe Water

Your local water provider works hard to deliver safe & clean drinking water to you and your family. One way your water provider maintains their high quality water standard is through a comprehensive Cross-Connection Control Program. You, the water customer, play a vital role in making sure this program is a success. The first step is recognizing and understanding cross-connections.

What Is A Cross-Connection?

A Cross-Connection is defined as any real or potential connection between the public water system or your drinking water and a source that could contaminate or pollute that water. Cross-connections are caused by . . .

. . . Backflow

Backflow occurs when a loss in water pressure (often due to the opening of a fire hydrant nearby, abnormally heavy water use or a water main break) causes the water in your pipes to flow in the opposite direction. This could allow contaminated or polluted water to flow back into your drinking water. This is referred to as backsiphonage. Backflow can also be caused by what is called backpressure. This is less common for residential properties, but can occur if using a booster/auxiliary pump for an irrigation or fire protection system.

Recognizing Cross-Connections

All homes have potential cross-connections. It is important for you to be able to recognize those that exist in your home. Common household cross-connections include:

Garden Hose

Garden hoses represent a typical household cross-connection. When submerged, for instance in a bucket of soapy water or cleaning solvent, a loss in water pressure would cause the contaminated liquid to be sucked through the hose and into your drinking water. Hoses also act as a cross-connection when attached to things such as weed sprayers.



Imagine all the chemicals in your weed sprayer flowing back through your hose and into your water. It is important to know that anything attached to the end of the hose has the potential to backflow. Hose bibbs can be protected by built in or easily installed vacuum breakers, (which are available at your local hardware store). A frost proof hose bibb vacuum breaker is recommended for colder climates.



In-ground Lawn Irrigation Systems

A recent survey conducted by the American Backflow Prevention Assoc. found the most common cross-connections to come from irrigation systems. With a lawn irrigation system, water can accumulate by the sprinkler heads. A loss in water pressure would cause that water to be sucked back through the pipes and into your plumbing system, carrying with it any fertilizer chemicals, pesticides, animal waste or other



bacteria and parasites on the ground. All lawn irrigation systems should be protected by a reduced pressure (RP) back-

flow assembly, which must be tested annually. Please consult your sprinkler contractor or plumber to make sure your system is protected and up to code.

Other

Additional cross-connections that can be found in the home include:

- **Residential Fire Protection Systems**
- **Swimming Pools/Hot Tubs**
- **Private Wells**
- **In-home Businesses** - such as photographers, hair dressers, taxidermists or any in-home business using chemicals or medical supplies/equipment