

BACKFLOW PREVENTION

A testable check valve is required on your water service. This requirement is in accordance with the Belfast Water District's Cross-Connection Control Program approved by the Maine Department of Human Services. The program derives its enforceability from Title 22, MRSA, C601, sub-chapter 2, Sec. 2612 (5) Maine Department of Human Services, Cross-Connection Rules 10-144ACMR226, Maine State Plumbing Code, Occupational Safety and Health Act and the Maine Public Utilities Commission.

This is a customer owned device that prevents the backflow of contaminants into the public water supply. The backflow device needs to be located directly downstream of the meter as shown on the diagram on the reverse side.

When the installation of the testable check valve is complete, the owner is responsible for having the test done within seven (7) days by a certified tester as approved by the Belfast Water District and submitting a copy of the passed tests results to the District. Subsequently, these check valves must be tested on an annual basis between January – June.

Backflow means the reversal of water flow from its normal or intended direction of flow. It is possible for the flow to be reversed, known as *backsiphonage* and flow from the customer's plumbing system back into the public water distribution system. If *cross-connections* exist within the user's plumbing system when backflow occurs then it is possible to contaminate the public water system.

A *cross-connection* occurs when a drinking water supply pipe connects to a non-drinking water supply source or pipe.

Backsiphonage may occur when the water pressure within the distribution system falls below that of the plumbing system it is supplying. The loss of pressure can be caused by a broken water main, or a fire nearby where the fire department is using large quantities of water. Any building near the break or the fire hydrant being used will experience a lowering of the water pressure.

Where backflow occurs and cross-connections are present you have all the necessary elements for contamination of the plumbing system and subsequently contamination of the public water system.

For example, suppose an automatic lawn sprinkler system is spraying a lawn when all of a sudden a backsiphonage occurs due to a fire truck pumping water or water rushing from a broken main. The resulting backflow from the lawn sprinkler system will flow into the plumbing system and then into the water distribution system. As the water backflows it can suck contamination into the lines through the sprinkler heads, such as insects, pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, fertilizers, worms, and other contaminants. Once in the distribution lines the contamination could go anywhere in the public water system.

To prevent backflow from non-potable sources into our public water system check valves or backflow prevention devices installed at the site of the cross-connection can protect the plumbing system from contamination. Placed just downstream of a water meter to an establishment, they can protect the public water system from any contamination that may occur within the entire establishment's plumbing system.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact our office or access our website.

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