

Changes to Minnesota's Plumbing Code

All commercial and industrial RPU water customers are required to have a backflow prevention device located where the water service enters the building, typically near the RPU water meter. RPU water personnel will inventory backflow and cross connection systems throughout the year to ensure compliance. RPU residential water customers with irrigation systems or boiler hot water heat are also required to install backflow prevention devices and test them annually.



Minnesota Plumbing Code requires that all backflow preventer assemblies, at the meter and elsewhere within your business or home, must be tested annually by a certified tester!

How Do I Get My Backflow Assembly Tested or Installed?

Contact a plumber of your choice who is an American Society of Sanitary Engineers (ASSE) certified backflow preventer tester or licensed plumber to perform an installation. The annual test reports must be submitted, no more than 30 days after the test date, to:

Rochester Public Utilities
Attn: Backflow Testing
4000 East River Rd NE
Rochester, MN 55906

To learn more about
RPU's Public Water System
Cross Connection &
Backflow Prevention Program
please visit:

[www.rpu.org/environment/
water-quality/backflow](http://www.rpu.org/environment/water-quality/backflow)



Rochester Public Utilities
4000 East River Road NE
Rochester, MN 55906-2813
800.778.3421 | 507.280.1500

www.rpu.org

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Public Water System Cross Connection & Backflow Prevention Program



Why is Backflow Protection Important?

Providing safe drinking water is the highest priority for Rochester Public Utilities (RPU). Regulated by the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act, the Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Plumbing Code, and RPU's Water Service Rules & Regulations, RPU follows strict standards to ensure that the public drinking water supply remains safe. As a customer, you also have a responsibility to help keep the public water supply safe. Proper backflow prevention on cross connections can eliminate contaminants from entering our public water supply. Remember you are drinking the same water as your neighbor – we are all connected! Help keep your family and our community safe.

What is Backflow?

Backflow is the flow of water or other liquids, mixtures or substances, under positive or reduced pressure, into the distribution pipes of a potable water supply from any source other than its intended source.

Backflow is caused by either backsiphonage or backpressure.

Backsiphonage occurs when a flow of used, contaminated, or polluted water from a plumbing fixture or vessel enters into the public water system, often due to negative pressure in a pipe.

Backpressure occurs due to a drop in pressure from the water system, as illustrated below. It is important to note that a drop in pressure is out of your control and can occur at any time.

What is Cross Connection?

Cross connection is any connection between the public water supply and a source of contamination or pollution.

EXAMPLES OF CROSS CONNECTION:

Residential

- Hose bibs/garden hose
- Lawn irrigation system
- Water softeners

Commercial

- Water service connection
- Boilers
- Irrigation
- Fire systems



How Do You Prevent Contamination?

- DO:**
- Ensure your business has a backflow prevention assembly at the meter.
 - Have your backflow prevention assemblies tested annually by a certified tester.
 - Eliminate cross connections where possible.
 - Buy and install hose bib type vacuum breakers (available at hardware or plumbing stores) on all threaded faucets in and around your business.
- DON'T:**
- Don't use spray attachments such as lawn fertilizers, herbicides, or pesticides without a backflow protection assembly.
 - Don't connect waste pipes from water softeners or other treatment systems to the sewer, submerged drain pipe, etc.
 - Don't leave a hose submerged in buckets, pools, tubs, sinks, ponds, etc. as seen to the right.



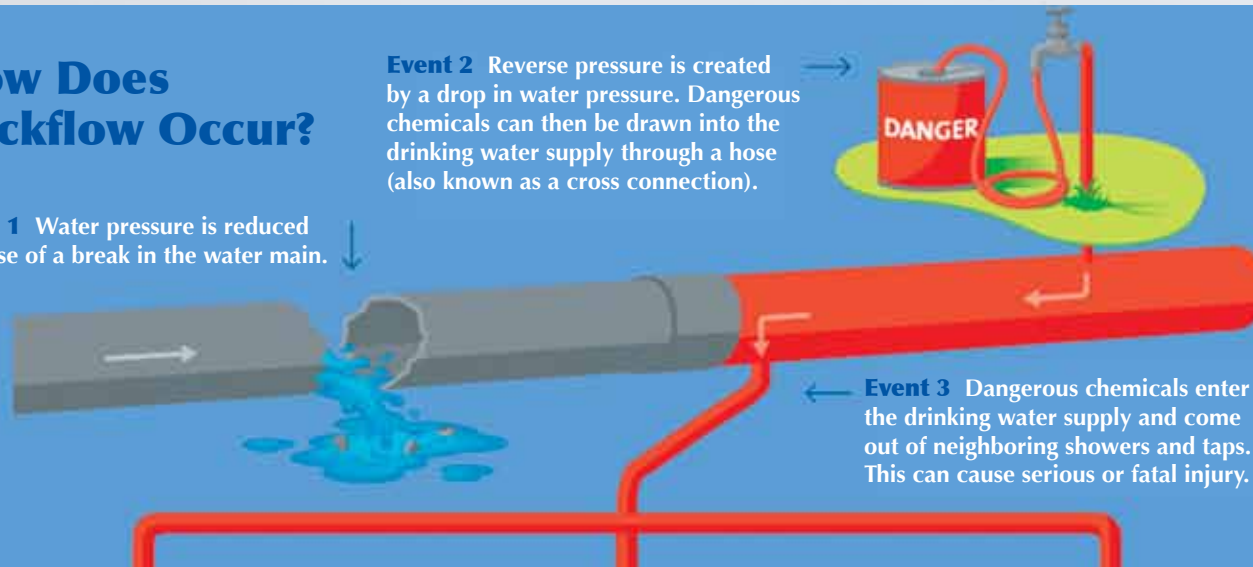
Photo courtesy of www.dep.state.fl.us

How Does Backflow Occur?

Event 1 Water pressure is reduced because of a break in the water main.

Event 2 Reverse pressure is created by a drop in water pressure. Dangerous chemicals can then be drawn into the drinking water supply through a hose (also known as a cross connection).

Event 3 Dangerous chemicals enter the drinking water supply and come out of neighboring showers and taps. This can cause serious or fatal injury.



Does My Backflow Assembly Need to be Tested?

YES! The MN Plumbing Code requires all backflow assemblies to be tested **annually**. All commercial and industrial customers must have backflow protection at the water service entrance to the premise, near the RPU water meter. See the inside flap of this brochure for details.

Backflow Event Diagram courtesy of: www.dutchmanbackflow.com