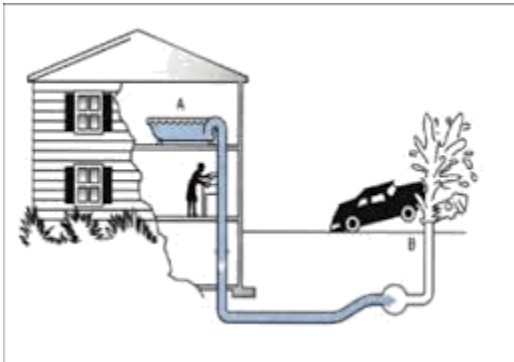




## **Backflow Prevention Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. What is a 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. It is important to note that drop in pressure is out of your control and can occur at any time.



### **2. What is Cross Connection?**

Cross Connection is any connection between the public water supply and a source of contamination or pollution. Examples of cross connections include a hose connection to a chemical solution, lawn irrigation systems, water softeners, hose connections, and swimming pools.

### **3. What is the most common form of cross connection?**

The ordinary garden hose is used to create the most common form of cross connection. A hose can be easily connected to the drinking water supply and used for a variety of potentially dangerous applications.



### **4. What is a backflow preventer and why are they needed?**

A backflow prevention assembly is an approved, testable assembly, which uses valves to prevent potential contaminants from flowing into the drinking water system. Two commonly required devices are the Double Check Valve Assembly (DCV) and the Reduced Pressure Zone Assembly (RPZ). Both of these devices protect drinking water systems from backflow.

### **5. Who needs a backflow preventer?**

All commercial and industrial RPU water customers are required to have backflow protection at the water service entrance.

### **6. How often does my backflow preventer need to be tested?**

Reduced Pressure Zone (RPZ) assembly needs to be tested annually and rebuilt every 5 years. Double Check Valve (DCV) assembly needs to be tested every 3 years.

### **7. Who is responsible for the testing and maintenance of the backflow preventers?**

It is the responsibility of the customer to ensure that the backflow prevention assembly is in proper operating condition at all times.

### **8. Who can test backflow preventers?**

Minnesota licensed plumber who is certified in backflow preventer testing.

**9. Where can I find a list of certified testers?**

RPU will have on file, a list of Minnesota licensed plumbers who are certified backflow preventer testers/rebuilders and a list of certified backflow preventer testers. You can also refer to RPU's Backflow webpage with a list of certified testers.

**10. How much will a backflow test cost?**

The cost of having a device tested varies among testers. The cost is also dependent on several factors, including the size of the device, where the device is located, the type of device, etc. You may want to call several Certified Testers to obtain quotes for your test.

**11. What happens if my backflow test fails?**

Any backflow preventer which fails during a periodic test shall be immediately repaired or replaced. When repairs are necessary, upon completion of the repair the backflow preventer will be re-tested at the owner's expense to insure correct operation. Parallel installation of two (2) backflow preventers is an effective means for the Owner to insure uninterrupted water service during testing or repair of the assembly and is strongly recommended when the owner desires such continuity.

**12. What happens if I don't have my assembly tested?**

RPU shall inform the Owner by letter thirty (30) days prior to the due date of the backflow preventer test. RPU will send a notice of violation when the test is thirty (30) days past due. RPU will send a final notice of violation when the test is sixty (60) days past due. After the final notice, the Owner will have thirty (30) days to become compliant, or face possible termination of water service to their premise and may be subject to a reconnection charge. In the event the Owner informs RPU of extenuating circumstances as to why the test has not been made, a time extension may be granted by RPU, but in no case will exceed an additional thirty (30) days.

**13. Who can I contact for additional information on RPU's Cross-Connection Control and Backflow Prevention Program?**

Contact RPU's Business Services Dept. at 507-280-1544 or email: [backflowtesting@rpu.org](mailto:backflowtesting@rpu.org)