

BACKFLOW TESTING FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS BACKFLOW? Backflow happens when the normal flow of water is reversed from its intended direction in any pipeline or plumbing system. The danger of backflow comes with the potential for cross-contamination: when water that has contacted chemicals or hazardous compounds flows back into the drinking water system.

WHEN IS A BACKFLOW PREVENTION DEVICE REQUIRED? State law requires that a backflow prevention device be installed on any water system that is connected to the drinking water system and carries the potential for cross-contamination. For homeowners, these commonly include irrigation systems, private fire sprinkler systems, boiler systems, and pool or pond equipment. Medical and restaurant facilities must protect against additional hazards. Sallal Water Association is responsible for providing safe drinking water to all of our customers. To ensure you receive clean, safe water to drink, the District monitors backflow protection on known health hazards to meet the requirements of WA State Administrative Code (WAC) 246.290.490.

BACKSIPHONAGE is caused by negative pressure in the drinking water supply system.

Common causes include: ► High velocities in a pipeline ► A line repair or break that is lower than a service point ► Lower main pressure due to high withdrawal rate such as firefighting or water main flushing **BACKPRESSURE** happens when the drinking water supply system is connected to a system with higher pressure levels. Without a proper backflow prevention device, potable and non-potable water or liquids can be forced into the drinking water system.

Common causes include: ► Booster pumps ► Connections to boilers and other systems where thermal expansion is possible ► Interconnections with another system operated at a higher pressure ► Elevated piping (e.g.- 30' above finished grade) The backflow device prevents water from travelling back into your drinking water. The most common residential backflow device is a DCVA, or double check valve assembly. Backflow regulations help keep your water clean and safe to drink—our #1 priority.

HOW DOES BACKFLOW HAPPEN? Backflow occurs when different levels of pressure exist between two different points within a plumbing system—water of high pressure flowing to water of lower pressure. A backpressure or backsiphonage situation may cause this reversal of normal flow direction. Is the backflow requirement a new law? No, the WA State Administrative Code 246-290-490 requiring protection of public drinking water has been in effect for many years. If you are just learning of the requirement, it means a recent district audit or other circumstance added your previously unknown irrigation system to our records. Why is the backflow test required annually? Like any other mechanical device, over time a backflow unit may fail. To ensure it is working properly to protect home and public drinking water systems, the law mandates an annual test. Where is my irrigation backflow device located? Typically, irrigation backflow units are located outside near your home or business water meter in a plastic box, usually green or black in color. What if I don't use my irrigation system anymore, or it is broken? As long as an irrigation system is connected to the drinking water system— the potential for cross-contamination exists—the device must be installed and tested annually. As part of our responsibility to ensure public drinking water safety, we are obligated to follow the state law and require the test for any existing irrigation system. Is there any way to avoid the test? You may be exempt from an irrigation system backflow requirement if you physically disconnect (cap off) your irrigation system from the drinking water system. If you plan to do this, contact us at info@sall.com so we may inspect the disconnection or provide a photograph showing the disconnection. If you performed the "cut and cap" previously, send us an email or letter indicating your service address and the approximate date the system was physically disconnected. How much does a backflow test cost? Costs vary between vendors. The average

range is between \$50 and \$80. Your irrigation professional may offer you a discount along with your regular service. Or you may be able to arrange a group of tests in your neighborhood at a discounted rate. Does Sallal Water Association perform the test? At this time, Sallal does not offer a backflow testing service. Each property owner is responsible for contracting a certified backflow tester to perform the test and submit the satisfactory report to the Association. As a courtesy and for your convenience, a list of certified testers authorized to do work in the area can be found at www.sallal.com. We advise consulting reviews and getting more than one bid for service. What do I do when the test is complete? Your tester should submit the satisfactory test report to us on your behalf. You should keep a copy for your records in case the test report does not reach us.