

Cross Connections & Backflow Prevention

WHAT IS A CROSS CONNECTION?

Any piping arrangement which allows a potable (drinking) water system to be connected to a non-potable system.

WHAT DOES BACKFLOW MEAN?

The undesirable reversal of the flow of water or other substances into the potable water distribution supply. It can be caused by backpressure, back siphonage or combination of both. The most common source of residential cross connection is a garden hose. For example, the end of the hose might be submerged in a non-potable (undrinkable) source or it might be connected to a fertilizer sprayer. If the water pressure drops, contaminated water could get sucked back into your water pipes, which could pose a health risk to you and your family.

PREVENT WATER BACKFLOW FOR RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

How do you protect yourself from backflow situations?

1. Keep all hoses and faucets away from direct contact with possible contaminants.
2. Never submerge hoses in buckets, pools, tubs, or sinks.
3. In the event of loss of water pressure, you need an air gap. Otherwise, the hose will act like a straw and suck the liquid backwards.
4. Protect yourself by installing inexpensive backflow protection devices on all hoses and threaded faucets in your home. These devices are available at hardware and home improvement stores for about \$4-10 each. Backflow vacuum breakers provide safety valves that prevent liquids from flowing backwards into a hose or faucet.

Specialized backflow prevention devices are available for more elaborate installations, such as:

1. Built-in lawn irrigation sprinklers
2. Hot water boilers
3. In-ground swimming pools
4. Heat exchangers
5. Active solar heating systems
6. Private wells

Backflow devices ensure that potentially contaminated water cannot be drawn back into the public water supply in the event of a negative water main pressure situation. If you receive a letter from the Water Utility informing you that a device is due for certification and inspection, please respond as quickly as possible to protect water quality and safety.

Proper maintenance of backflow prevention devices requires a periodic certification, followed by a Charter Township of Filer inspection, and the subsequent annual reporting of those results to the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE).

For more information on specialized backflow requirements, contact a plumber certified by EGLE on backflow prevention devices.

