

# **BexarMet Cross Connection Control and Backflow Program**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the purpose of a Service Agreement?**

The purpose is for BexarMet to notify each customer of regulations in place to protect the drinking water supply from contamination or pollution which can result from improper private water distribution system construction or configuration.

### **What is a Customer Service Inspection (CSI)?**

A customer service inspection certificate shall be completed prior to providing continuous water service to new construction, on any existing service either when the purveyor has reason to believe that cross-connections or other potential contaminant hazards exist, or after any material improvement, correction, or addition to the private water distribution facilities.

### **Who can perform a customer service inspection?**

Individuals with the following credentials are authorized by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and recognized by BexarMet: CSI personnel who have completed a "CSI" course, made application and passed the examination, and who have received a license from TCEQ, Licensed Plumbing Inspectors and endorsed Water Supply Protection Specialist who are approved by the Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners. BexarMet has compiled a list of such individuals and can be obtained online or by contacting the CCC/Backflow Department.

### **What is a Cross-Connection?**

A physical connection between a public water system and either another supply of unknown or questionable quality, any source which may contain contaminating or polluting substances, or any source of water treated to a lesser degree in the treatment process.

### **Why is Backflow prevention so important?**

Backflow is a situation that can occur when hydraulic conditions in the water system deviate from normal conditions potentially allowing contaminated water from a customer's plumbing system to enter the public water distribution system (cross connections). This contaminated water can impair the aesthetic quality of the water or possibly be a health risk.

### **What Causes Backflow?**

There are two types of pressure conditions which cause backflow: back pressure or backsiphonage.

**What is Backpressure?**

Back pressure occurs when the pressure in the downstream piping system is higher than the supply piping system pressure and can be caused by a pump, elevation, boiler unit, or any other means which may cause backflow.

**What is Backsiphonage?**

When there is a sudden reduction in water pressure in the public drinking water distribution system, such as during fire fighting, hydraulic flushing, pump failure, high demand condition or when a water main breaks, water flow can potentially be reversed. This could create a suction effect, possibly drawing contaminated water into the drinking water system.

**How can Backflow be prevented?**

To protect the public water system, BexarMet requires backflow prevention to be installed in certain water use applications. The type of protection which must be installed is dependent on the type of hazard the backflow preventer is protecting the system against.

**What type of Backflow Prevention Assemblies must be installed?**

The Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ) requires different types of Backflow Prevention Assemblies to be installed based on whether the assembly is protecting against a non-health or health hazard. A health hazard is one which could cause illness or death and must always be protected by an Air Gap or a Reduced Pressure Principle Backflow Prevention Assembly (RP). Non-health hazards may be protected by other less protective assemblies (e.g. double check valves, atmospheric vacuum breakers, etc.). A list of common hazards and the assemblies required by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality 30 TAC §290.47 (i) can be found at [www.tceq.state.tx.us](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us).

**How do I know if I need a backflow prevention assembly?**

Contact the Cross Connection Control and Backflow Department at (210) 354-6555 or (210) 354-6586 or email the CCC/Backflow Manager at [mmdigges@bexarmet.org](mailto:mmdigges@bexarmet.org) to schedule a water use survey.

**Where should a backflow prevention assembly be located?**

Unless otherwise authorized by the BexarMet CCC/Backflow Department, the assembly must be located on the customer's property between the water meter and the first connection on the customer's service line. In some cases, a backflow prevention assembly must be installed within the customer's plumbing.

**Who can install a backflow prevention assembly?**

Only a licensed plumber is allowed to install the assembly.

**Does the backflow prevention assembly have to be tested and how often?**

Every backflow prevention assembly must be tested upon installation by a backflow prevention assembly tester who has registered with BexarMet. Assemblies which protect against health hazards must be tested at least annually. The certified tester will test your new backflow prevention assembly to ensure that it works and will then fill out a Backflow Prevention Test and Maintenance form. You must sign the bottom portion of the form, make a copy for your records and mail, fax or email the completed form to:

Cross-Connection Control / Backflow Department  
BexarMet Water District  
2047 W. Malone  
San Antonio, TX 78225  
FAX: (210) 354-6593  
Email: [mmdigges@bexarmet.org](mailto:mmdigges@bexarmet.org)

**How do I know when my annual testing is due?**

BexarMet will send you a letter reminding you to have the backflow prevention assembly tested.

**How much does it cost to have the backflow prevention assembly tested?**

The cost will depend on the type of assembly and other factors taken into consideration by your tester. As long as you use a tester registered with BexarMet, you can shop for the best price. It should be noted that the testers must use the Test and Maintenance Form provided by BexarMet.

**What will happen if I fail to comply with the requirements of the Cross Connection Control Program?**

In emergency situations where failure to have a functioning backflow prevention assembly in place could affect public health and safety, water service can be disconnected until the assembly is properly installed and tested.