



# Backflow Prevention & Cross Connection Control

## Frequently Asks Questions

### **What is Backflow?**

Backflow is the reversal of flow of a liquid, gas or other substance in a piping system.

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

A cross connection is a connection between the public water supply and a water supply of unknown quality (well pump, reclaimed water system...etc.)

### **When Does Backflow Occur?**

Backflow can occur at any time and without warning. If a water main is damaged or a fire truck is hooked to a fire hydrant and normal water pressure is lost in the water main, water could flow from a house/building back into the water main causing a backflow condition. Backflow could also occur in the event of a cross connection where the well pump pressure is higher than the water main pressure causing the water to flow backwards into the water main. Any form of backflow can be dangerous and is a potential health hazard to the community drinking water supply.

### **How Does a Backflow Preventer Work?**

A backflow preventer consists of multiple spring loaded check valves located within the backflow device. The check valves allow the water to flow from the water main located at the street through the backflow preventer and into the house/building. When a backflow condition occurs, the check valves shut and prevent the water from flowing back into the water main therefore protecting the community drinking water supply from potential contamination. The State of Florida requires backflow preventers to be tested periodically to ensure they are functioning properly.

### **How Often Should a Backflow Preventer Be Tested?**

Backflow preventers at non-residential properties are required to be tested once a year.

Backflow preventers at residential properties are required to be tested once every 2 years.

### **How can I get my Backflow Preventer Tested?**

Backflow preventers can only be tested by a certified backflow tester. Most plumbers are familiar with backflow and have the proper certifications to test the backflow preventer.

As soon as the backflow preventer is tested, the certified backflow tester should submit the test report to Englewood Water District so the test records can be kept up to date.

### **Where is a Backflow Preventer Typically Located?**

Backflow preventers are typically located directly after the water meter and are approximately 12"-18" above finished grade level. They consist of two pipes coming out of the ground with some valves and shutoff handles between the pipes.

### **Who is Required to have a Backflow Preventer?**

A reduced pressure (RP) backflow preventer is required at all non-residential properties.

An RP backflow preventer is also required at any residential property with:

- An irrigation system
- A well pump
- A building with 3 floors or more (unless no pressure booster pump exists)
- A water meter 1-1/2" or greater in diameter
- Reclaimed water available
- Four or more residential units
- A fire sprinkler system