

Cross-Connection Control

If you are a residential customer and have an underground sprinkler system, private well, solar heating system, photo lab (“dark room”) or an in-ground swimming pool or you are a commercial establishment, it is important that you read this article as you are most likely affected by this New York State Department of Health requirement.

The passage of the Safe Drinking Water Act in 1974 made water utilities responsible for monitoring the quality of water at the consumer’s tap. It is the responsibility of the water utility to oversee a Cross-Connection Control Program in order to insure their consumers a safe potable water supply. This program includes notifying consumers of the need for a backflow device (reduced pressure zone device (RPZ), double-check valve, etc.), notification of annual testing due dates, tracking paperwork, and inspections of all new and periodic meter changes for potential cross-connections. The New York State Sanitary Code, Part 5, and the Nassau County Public Health Ordinance, Article VI requires that the Massapequa Water District perform these functions and prepare semi-annual reports that outline the number of required devices and the percentage of devices that have been tested.

A quick and easy way to explain what exactly a cross-connection and backflow is as follows: When water enters your home or building from a District water main, it goes to a variety of places: boilers, sinks, bathtubs, toilets, outdoor faucets, in-ground sprinkler systems, fire sprinkler systems, etc. Some of these locations can be considered potential cross-connections and require that a backflow prevention device be installed to prevent potentially contaminated water from your residence or building from accidentally flowing back into the public water supply system. Backflow can be the result of a number of circumstances such as a water main break or the sudden opening of fire hydrants for an emergency. In these situations, without proper backflow prevention devices, lawn chemicals, pool water and other liquids could flow back into the water supply and pose a serious health threat to you and your neighbors.

For the past few years, many of you have received letters stating 1) of the need to have an existing device tested; 2) the need to have a device installed and tested; or 3) inquiring as to whether your location has one of the items listed above. The District would like to thank those of you who have cooperated in this mandated and highly beneficial requirement. We have come a long way in just a few short years in improving the protection of our water supply system from the dangers of potential cross connection situations.

It is important that you hire reputable and licensed contractors for the installation of your in-ground sprinkler systems or if you are doing the job yourself, make sure you call the Water District and be aware of and follow all of the requirements. If you are unsure as to whether or not you have or need a backflow device please contact the water district at (516) 798-5266 to speak with a knowledgeable person or to arrange for a convenient inspection.

BACKFLOW ALERT

- State law mandates the installation of backflow devices on all potential cross connections such as in-ground sprinkler systems.
- Backflow devices must be tested annually by a certified tester.
- Test results must be sent to the district each year.