

CROSS-CONNECTION CONTROL AND BACKFLOW PREVENTION

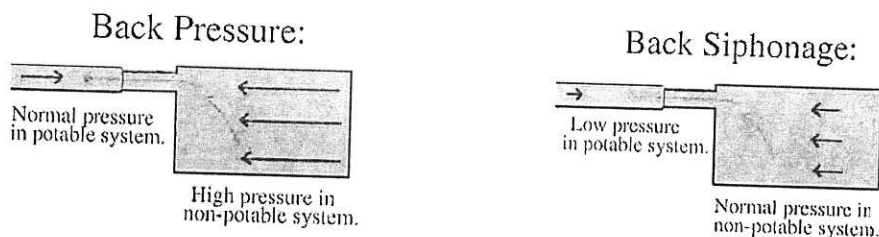
The Chatham Water Department makes every effort to ensure that the water delivered to your home and business is clean, safe and free of contamination. Our staff works very hard to protect the quality of the water delivered to our customers from the time the water is extracted via deep wells from the underground aquifer, throughout the entire treatment and distribution system. But what happens when the water reaches your home or business? Is there still a need to protect the water quality from contamination caused by a cross-connection? If so, how?

What is a cross-connection?

A cross-connection occurs whenever the drinking water supply is or could be in contact with potential sources of pollution or contamination. Cross-connections exist in piping arrangements or equipment that allows the drinking water to come in contact with non-potable liquids, solids or gases (hazardous to humans) in the event of a backflow.

What is a backflow?

Backflow is the undesired reverse of the water flow in the drinking water distribution lines. This backward flow of water can occur when the pressure created by an equipment or system such as a boiler or air-conditioning cooling towers is higher than the water pressure inside the water distribution line (backpressure), or when the pressure in the distribution line drops due to routine occurrences such as water main breaks or heavy water demand causing the water to flow backward inside the water distribution system (backsiphonage). Backflow is a problem that many water consumers are unaware of, a problem that each and every water customer has a responsibility to help prevent.



What can I do to help prevent a cross-connection?

Without the proper protection something as simple as a garden hose has the potential to contaminate or pollute the drinking water lines in your house. In fact over half of the country's cross-connection incidents involve unprotected garden hoses. There are very simple steps that you as a drinking water user can take to prevent such hazards, they are:

- NEVER submerge a hose in soapy water buckets, pet watering containers, pools, tubs, sinks, drains or chemicals.
- NEVER attach hose to a garden sprayer without the proper backflow preventer.
- Buy and install a hose bibb vacuum breaker on any threaded water fixture. The installation can be as easy as attaching a garden hose to a spigot. This inexpensive device is available at most hardware stores and home-improvement centers.
- Identify and be aware of potential cross-connections to your water line.
- Buy appliances and equipment with a backflow preventer.
- Buy and install backflow prevention devices or assemblies for all high and moderate hazard connections.

The Massachusetts Drinking water Regulations, 310 CMR 22.00, requires all public water systems to have an approved and fully implemented Cross-Connection Control Program (CCCP). The Chatham Water Department is working diligently to protect the public health of its drinking water customers from the hazards caused by unprotected cross-connections through the implementation of its cross-connection survey program, eliminating or properly protecting all identified cross-connections with the registration of all cross-connections protected by a reduced pressure backflow preventer (RPBPs) or double check valve assemblies (DCVAs) and the implementation of a testing program for all RPBPs and DCVAs.

If you have any questions, please contact Lynn A Carr at 508-945-5150.