

Your Legal Obligations for Preventing Backflow

New Zealand has strict legislation to prevent backflow and protect the safety of our water.

The Building Act 2004 requires all buildings to have a safe and adequate water supply. If there is any likelihood of contamination from a cross connection, an approved backflow prevention device is required to eliminate it, ensuring that all end users are protected against contaminated water. To maintain a current building warrant of fitness all backflow devices must be inspected and tested annually, by an Independently Qualified Person (IQP).

The Health Act 1956, and the Health (Drinking Water) Amendment Act 2007, section 69ZZZ "Protecting water supplies from risk of backflow", authorises Watercare to enforce backflow prevention, whether the hazard is new or historic, and recover all reasonable costs incurred for testing, survey, and retrofitting devices.

Specific responsibilities for water suppliers and property owners to prevent backflow are listed below:

Developers: All developers must complete a Water Use Survey form to assess the risk of a backflow hazard when applying for a new connection. This form is available on our website at www.watercare.co.nz. Watercare may require this form to be completed when property ownership changes and there is a potential change of use. All new commercial connections must have backflow prevention included in the installation.

Property Owners: It is the property owner's responsibility to ensure that the correct boundary device/s is/are installed and maintained at their water connection/s. Boundary devices must be tested annually and results submitted to Watercare.

Watercare: Watercare reserves the right to rectify or upgrade a faulty device to reduce risks to the water network. Watercare will recover reasonable costs for this work from the property owner.

Watercare's responsibility

We are responsible for enforcing this legislation and managing a Backflow Prevention Policy, which includes a rigorous annual backflow prevention device testing plan.

If you fail to comply with this Backflow Prevention Policy your property will be deemed non-compliant and we may restrict water supply to you. Water supply won't be restored until you comply with the requirements of this policy and pay all applicable fees relating to re-establishing the water service. In emergency situations, where the public water supply is being contaminated or is, in immediate danger of contamination, water service may be disconnected at Watercare's discretion.

Backflow Testing Requirements

All high and medium risk properties must ensure that the boundary backflow devices on their property are tested annually. Properties that are not tested nor comply with the legislation will be automatically classified as high risk.

You can choose to have your boundary device/s (*) tested by an approved backflow technician or alternatively, Watercare can test the devices for you.

(*) A boundary device is the containment device at the point of supply. Please refer to Watercare's Customer Terms for details.

Let Watercare test your device and save you the hassle

We can come to your site and test each device at a time suitable to you. Once our testing is complete we'll keep your test details on a register. We will also put you on an annual device testing recall so that your testing requirements will be scheduled for you.

If your device is working correctly, we will approve your backflow device for use for another year. If our test indicates that your device requires repair, you will be notified in writing outlining what you need to do to fix the problem. You will need to arrange any repairs and then book re-tests. We reserve the right to rectify or upgrade a faulty device, to reduce risks to the drinking water supply. Reasonable costs for this work will be recovered from the property owner.

The cost for an annual test is dependent on the number of devices at your property, and can be found on our website at www.watercare.co.nz.

If you would like more information on how you can protect our water by installing the correct boundary backflow prevention device visit our website at www.watercare.co.nz, or call us on (09) 442 2222.

Backflow Prevention

Protecting the Safety of Our Drinking Water



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Making Our Drinking Water Safe

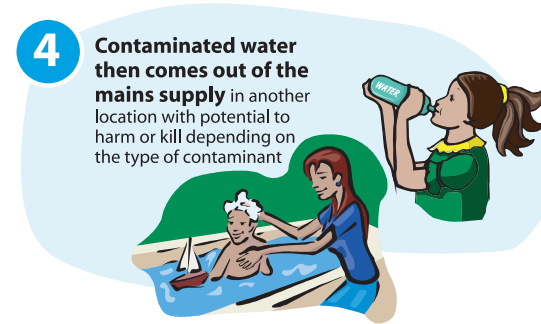
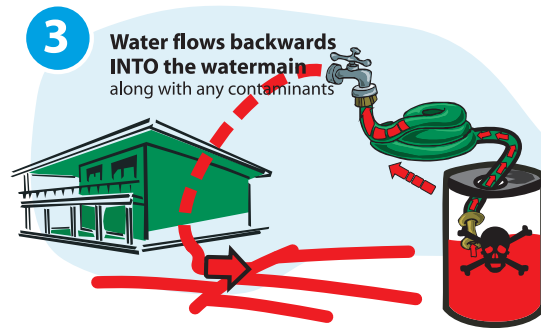
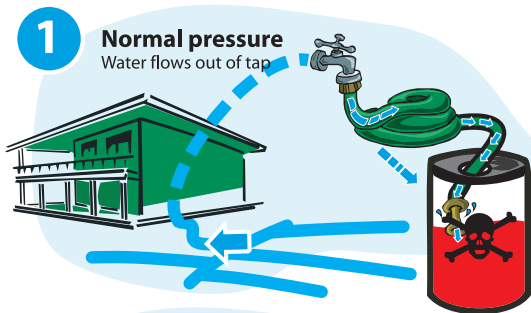
Watercare is committed to delivering safe, high quality drinking water to everyone in the Auckland region. To ensure that we continue to provide you with this, we need you to help play your part and take care not to contaminate the water supply – it's easy to do.

What is Backflow?

Backflow is one of the biggest risks to the water supply. It is a potential source of contamination that can seriously affect the quality and safety of our drinking water, which could cause illness or death.

Backflow is when water flows backward into the public water supply network. This is caused when water pressure drops in the water distribution system causing water to flow in the opposite direction, from residential or commercial premises, back into the public water supply network. Contaminants could be back-siphoned or injected by back-pressure into the public water supply; or a combination of both, where cross connections exist.

What Causes Backflow?



Preventing Backflow

Preventing water contamination from backflow is easy. All you need to do is install a boundary backflow prevention device at the service connection/s and have the device tested annually. This device, when maintained and working properly, will trap water that begins to flow the wrong way and prevent contamination of the public water supply.

Your responsibility

If you carry out activities on your property, which use substances that could enter the public water supply and then be consumed causing death or injury, it is your legal obligation to install a boundary backflow prevention device. Refer below to see what device is the right one for your property.

All costs associated with the installation, operation, maintenance, and/or repair of this device is your responsibility. It is also your duty to ensure you get your backflow device tested each year. If your device fails the annual test, you will need to make the necessary repairs and submit the certified documentation.

You are legally responsible for protecting the water on your property and ensuring that you don't contaminate the public water supply. This starts at the water meter and includes your entire property's water system.

What is the correct boundary backflow prevention device to install?

It is important that the correct boundary backflow prevention device is in place to contain the degree of risk of backflow on your property. Three degrees of risk are used to classify properties in order to determine the type of backflow device required.

1. **High Risk** sites are properties that use or produce products of a toxic or bacterial nature that may cause death or serious illness if leaked into the main water supply.

Examples of high risk sites are hospitals, mortuaries, chemical plants, laboratories, cooling towers, hairdressing salons, food processing and other manufacturing plants. Residential homes with irrigation systems (pop-up sprinklers), swimming pools and spa baths are also considered high risk.

Backflow prevention device: Reduced pressure zone device (must be tested annually).

2. **Medium Risk** sites can endanger health if backflow occurs.

Examples of medium risk sites are public swimming pools, garden irrigation systems, drink dispensers with carbonators, commercial laundries and rainwater tanks connected to household plumbing.

Backflow prevention device: Double check valve (must be tested annually).

3. **Low Risk** sites are properties that could cause a nuisance by colour, odour, or taste but do not endanger health.

An example of a low risk site is a residential home with only domestic water use.

Backflow prevention device: Air gap separation or hose vacuum break dual check valve (these devices do not require testing; they only require certification that have been installed correctly).