



Customer Service 1.800.286.5700

www.ctwater.com

## Protecting Your Home's Drinking Water Supply



A cross connection exists if there is a physical connection between two separate water systems that have the potential to cause a substance of unknown quality to enter your drinking water supply. A

potential cross connection (a connection between a public water system and a contaminant source) can occur when you use your garden hose to fill a swimming pool, apply pesticides, or operate your irrigation system at the same time as the system experiences a significant pressure drop, such as a water main break, major fire fighting demands or particularly heavy water usage in the system.

This can pose a significant health threat to you and your family. That is why Connecticut Water has a program in our service areas to identify potential cross connections, including those from residential irrigation systems, to make sure customers are taking steps to prevent non-potable water from entering your drinking water supply.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### What can homeowners do to protect from potential cross connection contamination?

You can follow these steps to help keep your home's water supply safe:

- Don't submerge hoses in sinks, tubs, buckets or pools.
- Keep contaminants away from the end of a hose.
- Use a backflow prevention device when using a hose-end sprayer.
- Install and maintain a hose bibb vacuum breaker at any outdoor spigot to protect your drinking water.
- Protect your irrigation system from contaminating your drinking water with a proper backflow prevention device.

#### Safeguard Your Water

- Keep the end of the hose clear of possible contaminants.
- Buy and install inexpensive backflow prevention devices for all threaded faucets around your home. They are available at hardware stores and home-improvement centers.
- Don't submerge hoses in buckets, pools or sinks.
- Don't use spray attachments without a backflow prevention device. The chemicals used may be toxic and could be fatal if ingested.



#### What type of backflow preventer do I need for my situation?

Our team of inspectors can answer your questions and help you to choose the right backflow preventer for your particular needs and safety.



Hose Bibb



Reduced Pressure Device



Pressure Vacuum Breaker

### Why do I need to have my irrigation system checked?

The State Department of Public Health (DPH) requires water companies to inspect their customers' irrigation systems every five years, to make sure they are using the appropriate backflow devices to prevent substances that could degrade the water quality from getting into the water system.

To stop water from traveling from your irrigation system back into your water supply, you are required to install a backflow prevention device. Connecticut Water is required by the DPH to perform tests on backflow prevention devices in our service area on an annual basis to ensure they are working properly.



### What would cause the water from my irrigation system to flow back into the water supply or my home's plumbing?

Any significant increase/decrease in water pressure can cause water to flow in the opposite direction and bring along with it fertilizers, lawn chemicals or animal waste. This is called backflow and can occur due to a water main break, major fire fighting demands or particularly heavy water usage in the system.

### If it's your water that's going into my irrigation system, what's wrong with it?

The water that is flowing in our mains meets state and federal water quality standards. Contamination can occur, however, when an irrigation system's sprinkler heads become submerged in puddles or standing water in your yard. A significant change in pressure can cause animal waste and lawn chemicals to enter the water system if a backflow prevention device is missing or not working properly.

### Why am I being charged a fee for the test?

The \$60 fee for the first device and \$40 for each additional device at the same property covers the annual test if performed by one of our certified testers. There is no charge for the inspection, which occurs every five years for typical residential accounts and annually for other facilities.

### Can I hire my own tester?

Public water systems are required by law to check that their customers' backflow prevention devices meet certain regulations. Each public water system is responsible for using the required devices and using trained technicians to be sure the devices are working properly.

You can use another tester, but they must be certified by the DPH. A copy of the testing report for the device(s) along with the tester's certification number must be provided to Connecticut Water once the test is completed as we are required to submit your test results and tester's certification to the DPH annually.

It is the customer's responsibility to have the tests performed and the results submitted to us. The customer would be subject to a special charge of \$43, applied to their water bill, if the results are not submitted to the water company for inclusion in the annual report to the DPH as required.



If you have any questions, please feel free to call Customer Service at 1-800-286-5700 or send an e-mail to [CustomerService@ctwater.com](mailto:CustomerService@ctwater.com).