

## **Q: Why do I have to have my backflow tested & inspected?**

**A: Basically, it's the law.**

*The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Division of Codes & Standards enforces the standards IBC (International Bldg Code) and IFC (International Fire Code) and have adapted the NFPA 25 standard as the maintenance rules for fire suppression systems.*

*Backflow preventers are designed to isolate cross connections between the water supply and contaminants. They are designed to be field-tested and must be tested prior to the final inspection following installation. Backflows must also be **re-tested annually** to ensure their working order.*

**Per NFPA 25, 13.7, the code for Backflow Prevention Assemblies is as follows:**

*13.7.2 Testing: The testing of backflow prevention assemblies must be performed by a qualified tester possessing a valid Backflow Testers Certificate of Compliance. Their certification must be certified by an agency recognized by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Safe Drinking Water.*

*13.7.2.1- **All backflow preventers installed in fire protection system piping shall be exercised annually by conducting a forward flow test** at a minimum flow rate of the system demand.*

**13.7.1 Inspection: Inspection Responsibilities of Owner or Property Manager for backflow prevention assemblies as described in 13.7.1.**

*13.7.1.1 Reduced-pressure assemblies and reduced-pressure detector assemblies shall be inspected weekly to ensure that the differential-sensing valve relief port is not continuously discharging.*

*13.7.1.2 After any testing or repair, an inspection by the property owner or designated representative shall be made to ensure that the system is in service, and all isolation valves are in the normal open position and properly locked or electrically supervised.*

In 1999, the State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Division of Codes & Standards sent notification to every Department of Public Works and every Code Official in EVERY town, borough, city, etc. in the state that backflow testing is now mandatory, so..

if you have a backflow preventer and you've never had it tested before, you should:

- A. Consider yourself lucky that you or your tenants haven't been poisoned by contaminated drinking water
- B. Be thankful you haven't been previously fined by your local subcode official
- C. Call us today to schedule your backflow testing before either A or B happen to you.



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Date: **June 1999**

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Subject: **Testing of Backflow  
Preventers**

Reference: **N.J.A.C. 5:23-2.23(I)  
N.J.A.C. 5:23-3.15  
**Plumbing Subcode Section  
10.5.6****

In an effort to clarify the Uniform Construction Code requirement for the testing of backflow preventers, the Department of Community Affairs is updating this bulletin to give guidance on what devices need to be tested, when they need to be tested, and who may perform the test.

#### TESTING

The plumbing subcode official should ensure that backflow preventers which are designed to be field tested and which isolate cross connections between the water supply and contaminants are tested prior to final inspection and annually, as required by the regulations. Testable backflow preventers for one- and two-family dwellings are not required to be tested annually. Locations where cross connections between contaminants and the potable water supply are likely to be encountered include, but are not limited to, lawn sprinklers and irrigation systems, fire-protection systems, laboratories, chemical and industrial plants, boilers, hospitals, and waste-water treatment plants. A flat fee may be established by the municipality for the annual reinspection, as per N.J.A.C. 5:23-4.18(g)4. The Department fee is specified at N.J.A.C. 5:23-4.20(c)4.

Inspectors are not permitted to perform the test. The inspector's role is to make sure that the owner of the facility has the backflow preventers tested by a qualified individual. The inspector can ensure this either by witnessing the test, or having the owner submit a certification that the device was tested. This certification should identify the type and location of the device; the date tested; the results of the test; and the name, qualifications, and signature of the tester. A form that can be used to document the testing of backflow preventers follows. A Certificate of Compliance, which is to be valid for only one year, will be issued by the inspector after passing test results have been received.

On dedicated fire water service lines, the fire official will accept a current Certificate of Compliance issued in accordance with this bulletin. This will meet

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the requirement of National Fire Protection Association Standard 25 for the backflow annual test.

As evidenced by the Plumbing Subcode (Section 10.5.6 of the National Standard Plumbing Code), individuals testing these devices need to exhibit their qualifications. The tester must have a certification from an agency recognized by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Safe Drinking Water.

## BACKFLOW PREVENTER REPLACEMENT

Devices that do not pass the test are required to be repaired or replaced. Devices replaced on water supplies serving fire-protection systems must be approved for fire-protection service and cannot reduce the effectiveness of the fire-protection system. A permit will be required for all backflow preventer replacements. Where the backflow preventer is installed on a water service that is a dedicated fire service, the application must be submitted on a Fire Protection Subcode Technical Section. Where the water service is a combination fire and domestic service, the application must be submitted on a Plumbing Subcode Technical Section. Joint plan review by both the plumbing subcode and fire protection subcode officials are required for devices serving combination domestic and fire-protection systems. The fee for the replacement will be as per N.J.A.C. 5:23-4.20(c)ii.2.