SUBJECT: BACKFLOW ASSEMBLY EXPLANATION

Some buildings have backflow prevention devices and some do not. You may find that you need one and must have it installed or that you have a backflow assembly device and you no longer need one. This letter is to clarify these issues and to give you a point of contact about this topic.

WHAT IS BACKFLOW?

Essentially, backflow means the undesirable reversal of flow of a liquid, gas or solid into the potable water supply. A backflow prevention assembly is a device used to protect potable water supplies from contamination or pollution due to backflow from a premise’s into the potable drinking water. – An approved backflow assembly device protects the public water system.

WHO SAYS I HAVE TO HAVE IT?

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State of Oregon (DHS) require cities to have a backflow program to protect the drinking water in your community. The City of Sheridan adopted an ordinance in 1993 that required new construction, homes that performed plumbing upgrades and any home or business that met the EPA and DHS list of standard requirements to install a backflow device. What has changed is the City has adopted the current regulations from the State of Oregon. Under the current regulations the following is a list of some of the most common reasons you may be required by the State to have a backflow prevention assembly: you are a medical facility, own a hot tub, have an in or above ground pool, a pond or water feature, a well, an irrigation system, have a facility that produces pollutants, store chemicals or have a fire sprinkler system. The City will still continue to run the program as mandated by the EPA and DHS; however it will no longer pay for the annual testing.

WHY DO I HAVE TO PAY FOR IT?

Since the implementation of the program the City has paid the State a $200 annual administrative fee and incurred all financial responsibility for the annual testing and record keeping for all assemblies. When restrictive changes took place in chapter 6 of the Oregon Plumbing Specialty Code the City was no longer allowed to perform the annual backflow testing ourselves so the work was contracted out to a backflow specialist. The State regulations for the backflow prevention program mandates that we are required to keep accurate records and insure testing is completed while providing no funding support to run the program. Due to budget restraints, and not wishing to raise water rates, the City has been left with no choice but to phase out the expense of testing the backflow assemblies starting with businesses last year and then as of January 1, 2014 property owners.
I DON’T THINK I AM REQUIRED TO HAVE ONE.

Great! Then give us a call and we will make an appointment to inspect your property and if you are not required by the State to have one then arrangements to have the device removed can be made.

WHAT IF I WANT TO KEEP IT ANYWAYS?

Great! Backflow assemblies can cost anywhere from $400 to $1200 to install depending on application. By keeping yours you can keep your options for getting a hot tub, pool or irrigation system that you have always wanted. Cost for an annual test start at around $25 a year if performed by a backflow specialist and around $60-$100 a year if performed by most plumbers. Enclosed is a list of backflow assembly testers who have performed tests for residents in the City of Sheridan. The tester should forward a copy of the completed test report to the City of Sheridan’s Public Works Department and also provide you with a copy for your records.

Thank you for working with us to protect your drinking water. Please do not hesitate to contact our office with any questions or concerns!

Kie Cottam, Director Public Works
City of Sheridan
Public Works Department
503-843-2660

Laury Hall, Backflow Specialist
City of Sheridan
Public Works Department
503-843-2880