



Backflow Prevention Frequently Asked Questions

What is 'backflow'?

- If the pressure changes in a water distribution system, water can begin to flow in the reverse direction, from a property into a municipal water main. That is called 'backflow' and it can result in the distribution of contaminated water to taps elsewhere in the community.

Why are you requiring backflow devices?

- We are ensuring that backflow valves are installed to better protect our water quality.
- Backflow poses an unacceptable and unnecessary risk to our water distribution system and to the users of the system.
- This requirement is consistent with Ministry of the Environment expectations.
- Backflow prevention measures are being introduced by other municipalities across Ontario.

How much will they cost?

- We estimate that purchasing the valve for a standard service and having it installed and tested will cost approximately \$1,000.
- There may be additional costs to access waterlines and these costs will vary from one property to another.
- If there are logistical challenges, Town staff will work with property owners to help resolve them.

If the Town requires it, why isn't the Town paying for this, particularly when this is designed to serve the public interest?

- Every property owner has a responsibility to ensure that their privately owned property does not pose a risk to the surrounding community.

- These measures are required to ensure that businesses and institutions do not accidentally contaminate our water distribution system.
- It is the responsibility of each private owner to ensure that their property complies with building codes and standards.
- Recently, an Ontario business owner was fined \$75,000 for allowing car wash run-off to backflow into a municipal water system.

Why don't residential properties require this?

- The risk of backflow contamination from a typical family home is low, unless it is unusually tall – more than three stories, etc.

Why hasn't this been required in the past?

- Ontarians recognize that greater emphasis needs to be placed on the protection of water quality and our environment.
- Backflow prevention measures were introduced into the building codes some time ago.
- What has changed is the emphasis on making sure that they are in place and tested annually.

For further information, please contact:

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