

BACKFLOW PREVENTION

Maintaining the integrity of your public drinking water system



Providing safe drinking water to Avondale Residents is our highest priority. Regulated by State and Federal guidelines, we follow strict standards to ensure that the public drinking water supply remains safe.



Our customers also have a responsibility to help keep the public water supply safe by preventing backflow.

WHAT IS BACKFLOW?

Backflow is the backward flow of water through a pipe. The normal direction of water flow is from the utility water main to homes or businesses. The backflow of water from home plumbing systems into community drinking water happens when water is pulled backward due to a pressure loss in the utility main pipe or pushed back by a pressure source like a well pump. If water flowing backwards contains hazardous chemicals or bacteria, it can cause an unhealthy or dangerous situation.

HOW DOES BACKFLOW OCCUR?

Your garden hose is one of the most common offenders as a cause of backflow; for instance, say you are watering your garden with a fertilizer or pesticide applicator attached to your hose. The phone rings and you leave the garden. While you are on the phone, there is a drop in water pressure in the supply system that causes a vacuum. Like sucking on a straw, the vacuum will pull the pesticide-laced water into your home. Then the next time you or your neighbors turn on a faucet, the water could be laced with toxic chemicals.

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(continued)

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HOW TO PREVENT BACKFLOW AT HOME

- ▶ **Never** submerge hoses in buckets, pools, spas, tubs or sinks. They may contain harmful cleansers or dangerous bacteria.
- ▶ **Always** keep the end of the hose away from possible contaminants.
- ▶ **Do not** use any spray or cleaning attachments on your hose without a backflow prevention device* on the hose. This includes pesticide applicators, portable pressure washers, drain openers and radiator flush kits. All of these devices utilize chemicals, detergents and waste water which are toxic and can be fatal if ingested.
- ▶ Install hose connection vacuum breakers **on all** of your outdoor faucets.



**A backflow preventer acts as a physical barrier to water flowing in the wrong direction. Each spigot at your home should have a hose bib vacuum breaker installed. This is a simple, inexpensive device which can be purchased at any plumbing or hardware store. Installation is as easy as attaching your garden hose to a spigot.*



For more information contact the **Public Works Department, Water Quality Division**

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