

Criteria for Selecting a Backflow Tester/ Technician/ Company

Selecting a backflow testing company or tester to certify your backflow prevention device can be a difficult task, especially since it only comes up once a year when your water utility sends you the dreaded “Backflow Testing Due” letter. The purpose of this document is to assist the water consumer in selecting a tester or company, and the questions you should ask before making that selection. Many larger water utilities maintain a listing of testers that can test in their district. Some water districts require testers to attend special training programs or meet special requirements set forth by the water district. Based on the statement above, the first step is to check with your water district. Every water district is different, so this is a critical step.

If your water purveyor does not provide a list of testers, then it is up to you as a water consumer to select one. Listed below are questions that you will want to ask when choosing someone:

- Is the tester’s backflow testing certification current?
- Is the tester allowed to test in the water district where the test is needed?
- If the device is on a fire suppression system, does the water district require special training or licensing by a tester to test this type of device? Does the tester have this training or licensing?
- Is the tester’s kit calibration current? (Annual accuracy certification required)
- Does the tester carry liability and workers compensation insurance?
- Does the tester send a copy of the test results immediately to the water authority according to rules and regulations?
- What is the price to test one device? Is there a discount for multiple devices?
- Are there any extra charges?
- If the backflow assembly needs repairs, what is the cost of labor and parts?
- Does the tester have advanced training in diagnostics and repair?
- Does the tester “tag” the device after testing?
- Is the tester aware of any other special requirements of the water district?
- Is the tester aware of local and national approval agencies regarding backflow assemblies?

As with any business transaction, always ask questions up front and be informed. Get multiple bids. It is the responsibility of the tester to submit the test report(s) to the owner and the water district in a timely manner. This is usually 5 to 7 days after the test(s) is/are performed. Most of the testers do a good job of complying with local codes. You will want to keep a copy of the test report on file, so that if you receive a second notice letter, you can easily send a copy to the water purveyor.

Irrigation Systems

PERMIT & REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

The following information has been compiled to help residents better understand the requirements and the need for safety measures when installing an irrigation system.

**The City of Wentzville
200 E. Fourth St.
Wentzville, MO 63385**

Tel: 636-327-2102

Permit/Registration Required

Any resident wanting to install an irrigation system needs to apply for a permit (miscellaneous application) and register (backflow registration application) the backflow prevention device that will be installed. There is also a fee required at the time of submitting these forms.

These forms can be obtained from the Public Works Office at 200 E. Fourth St. or by accessing the City of Wentzville's web site: http://wentzvillemor.org/public_works.htm

Irrigation Systems and the Need for a Backflow Preven- tion Device

The average yard has many chemicals and pollutants that a Backflow Prevention Device can help you steer clear of. Because of this the water used in an irrigation or sprinkler system is considered a health hazard. Irrigation water can contain toxic chemicals such as fertilizers as well as animal waste. It takes very little for these substances to infiltrate your irrigation pipes and your drinking water. Many people believe that the sprinkler valves which turn the irrigation system on and off are enough to stop backflow but they definitely are not. This is the number one reason you need a backflow prevention device. A backflow prevention device protects the water when the irrigation valve breaks or leaks. A lot of homeowners resist installing a backflow prevention device in order to save money. However, with the amount of chemicals seeping into our ground water these days, it pays to make the right decision. When water pressure drops in the irrigation system, backflow occurs, this allows the contaminated water to cross into clean water.

This situation does not happen on a regular basis but it does take place. Backflow can be caused by construction projects, fire fighting or when the city shuts down water supply lines. Some people believe that manual valves will prevent backflow but sometimes backflow occurs at a time when the valve is open so this is not a safe logic either. You may be able to completely close off a manual valve but automatic valves will not stop backflow even when fully closed due to their design. Any way you look at it, the safest option is to always install a backflow prevention device. In the City of Wentzville, this is a mute point seeing that it is mandated by city ordinance. Any way you look at it, you should always install a reduced pressure principle detector backflow prevention assembly (RPZ). The added expense is well worth saving any headache, literally or figuratively, in the future.