

Fact Sheet
May 2008

Backflow Prevention

Coliban Water is committed to supplying the highest quality potable water to our customers. Through on-going maintenance and water improvement initiatives, we are proud to deliver water of exceptional purity and quality. Backflow prevention is an integral part of our water quality protection program.

Backflow is defined as the reverse flow of a liquid into the potable water supply. The installation of a backflow prevention device protects the water supply from this very serious situation.

The Problem

Backflow from a domestic property is rarely a problem. However, backflow from an industrial and commercial property that uses toxic substances could result in the potentially dangerous pollution of local water mains.

For example: a backflow problem could arise when a hose is left running in a container of harmful chemicals. A sudden drop in supply pressure could cause the liquid to be siphoned back down the hose and into the water mains. The chemical could then spread throughout the water reticulation system and into other properties – creating a major health hazard.

Legal Risks

All property owners or occupiers of a commercial or industrial site identified as the source of a backflow contamination run the risk of substantial financial losses and litigation, such as:

- Workcover claims;
- the serious illness or poisoning death of people on the property or beyond;
- the contamination of products, and subsequent exposure to product liability claims;
- litigation and possible penalties Victoria's Occupational Health & Safety Act;
- liability for damages to neighbouring premises relying on the same water main;
- legal fees;
- increased public liability insurance premiums; and
- loss of trade through a damaged reputation.

AS/NZS 3500 Regulations

'Acceptable Solutions on Cross Connection Control and Backflow Prevention' can be found in Section 4 of AS/NZS 3500 National Plumbing & Drainage Part 1,2: Water Supply Acceptable Solutions. Examples of Potential Cross Connections can be found in Appendix D and types of Backflow Prevention in Appendix E.

Protection

Coliban Water requires containment protection to be provided immediately downstream of the water meter. All water downstream of a containment device is classified as potable unless there are unprotected hazards within the property.

Hazard Rating

Cross Connections are rated into three degrees of hazard; High, Medium and Low. High hazards are associated with connections of a toxic or bacterial nature that have the potential to cause death. Medium hazards have the potential to endanger health, whereas Low hazard would constitute a nuisance but not endanger health.

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Choosing a Backflow Prevention Device

When choosing a suitable containment device consideration should also be given that the device is not over prescribed so as to reduce pressure and water flow loss.

Installation and Commissioning

Plumbers with Water Supply Licences and /or Registration can install the device. Commissioning, annual testing and recommissioning of any backflow device installed in a hazard rating of Medium or High risk, can only be performed by a person who is licensed in the specialised class of 'Plumbing (Backflow Prevention)' work. It is this person's responsibility prior to commissioning to ensure that the backflow device fitted is appropriate to the hazard rating.

Owner's Responsibility

It is the property owner's responsibility to ensure that any testable device is inspected and tested at least annually.

Backflow Prevention Test Reports

Backflow Prevention Test Reports are to be forwarded to Coliban Water's agent:

Casey Services (Aust) Pty Ltd
104 Glen Iris Road
GLEN IRIS VIC 3146

For more information, or to speak to our Trade Waste Officer, call 1300 363 200, or go to our website www.coliban.com.au