

# NEWS SPLASH

SPRING 2009



## YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT BACKFLOW ASSEMBLY TESTING

Have you received a letter from the District indicating that your backflow assembly is once again due for testing? Some of our customers are curious as to why they are receiving a backflow assembly testing reminder letter from the District. Here are some answers to frequently asked questions we hear about backflow assembly testing:

### **I tested my backflow assembly last year and it passed its test! Why do I need to test it again?**

Your backflow assembly needs to be tested each year, as required by Washington State law. Your backflow assembly is your primary defense protecting you from a potential contamination incident that could affect the health of you, your family and your neighborhood. During annual testing, your certified backflow assembly tester will test your assembly to determine if it is functioning properly. A faulty assembly could allow contaminants into the water in your home, and could also potentially contaminate the public water supply.

### **Does everyone who has an automatic irrigation system have to test their backflow assemblies each year?**

Yes. If you have an automatic irrigation system, you must have a backflow assembly installed and tested annually, regardless of whether or not you have received notification from the District. All tests must be conducted by a state certified backflow assembly tester, and test reports must be forwarded to the District for processing. New regulations in recent years have required us to more carefully monitor potential cross connections in single family residences.

### **Has there ever been a report of a backflow incident in the District?**

Many backflow incidents go unreported. The origin of many water quality issues is often difficult to determine, and in some instances a water quality incident may have been caused by a malfunctioning backflow assembly but cannot be tracked to

a specific device. The best way to be proactive is to identify backflow assemblies in our District, put the assembly information into our database, and ensure that our customers are testing their backflow assemblies annually and repairing or replacing any defective devices.

### **Why do I have to hire a certified backflow assembly tester to do the testing? Why doesn't the District just do the testing for us?**

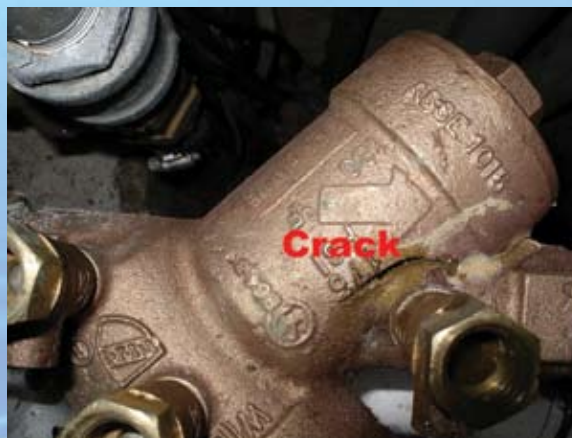
A recent analysis conducted by the District indicated that there were no significant advantages to customers if the District were to undertake the backflow testing. Testing your backflow assembly to protect your water supply is similar to performing any regular home maintenance, such as fixing leaks in your irrigation system or cleaning your furnace or chimney each year for more efficient operation.

### **How much does a backflow assembly test cost?**

At this time, the annual backflow assembly test can cost in the vicinity of \$35 to \$55. The District does not control or dictate how individual testers price their work. Be sure to call several testers, get price estimates, and compare costs. You can also contact your landscape irrigation maintenance company to discuss combining backflow assembly testing with your spring startup or winterization services. The District maintains a "Convenience List" of backflow assembly testers who have expressed an interest to test in our area. You may contact the District to get a copy of this list or visit our website for all testers within our state.

### **How can I get more information about backflow assembly testing?**

Visit the District's website at [www.sammplat.wa.org](http://www.sammplat.wa.org) and go to the Cross Connection link on the menu bar. The web page contains useful information about backflow assemblies and testing. You can contact Chic Nessly, the District's Cross Connection Control Specialist, at (425) 392-4931 x 213 if you have any questions about the District's Cross Connection program.



A crack was discovered in this backflow assembly during the annual testing procedure.

Photo by Loren Hanson

## TOILET REBATES NOW AVAILABLE!

The Sammamish Plateau Water and District has partnered with Cascade Water Alliance to provide rebates to homeowners who install high efficiency toilets in their homes. Cascade's Toilet Replacement Program offers homeowners a \$100 rebate for the replacement of older, water guzzling toilet models with new, high-efficiency toilets purchased after January 1, 2009 bearing the WaterSense label. Toilets purchased before January 1, 2009 are eligible for a

\$50 rebate. All WaterSense toilets use a maximum of 1.28 gallons per flush and were tested by independent laboratories to demonstrate reliable performance and water savings.



In order to qualify for a rebate, the replacement toilets must bear the WaterSense label. No exceptions will be given. Ask for WaterSense toilets when you visit your local retailer. You must be a customer of a Cascade member, which includes the Cities of Bellevue, Issaquah, Kirkland, Redmond and Tukwila, Covington Water District, Sammamish Plateau Water and Sewer District, and Skyway Water and Sewer District. There is a maximum of three toilets per household. The maximum rebate amount is \$100 or the purchase price of the toilet, whichever is lower.

Call (425) 453-1810 or visit [www.cascadewater.org](http://www.cascadewater.org) for more information, including an application and a list of the most current WaterSense models or visit your retailer and ask for WaterSense toilets.



Part of the extreme weather crew, left to right: Dalton Langlois, Matt Ellingson, Mike Green and Russ Zwick.

Photo by Jim Krieg

## EXTREME WEATHER RESPONSE

During last December's snowstorms, our crews participated in the effort to keep the area roads clear of snow for drivers. The District has an agreement with the City of Sammamish to assist with snow plowing efforts, and contributed six staff members and a District vehicle rigged with a plow and a portable sander and de-icer. The staff members worked 12 hour shifts during the snow event. In addition, District staff also assisted the City by clearing storm drains in early January's rain event. Many thanks to Russ Zwick, Jim Moe, Mike Green, Matt Ellingson, Tim Henderson, Dalton Langlois, and crew supervisors James Whitney and John Anderson for their efforts during this winter's extreme weather!



Photo by  
Loren Hanson

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**QUESTIONS? Please call us at  
(425) 392-6256**

**or visit our website at [www.sammplat.wa.org](http://www.sammplat.wa.org)**