

NEWS SPLASH

WINTER 2006 - 2007

BACKFLOW TESTS: YOUR QUESTIONS

Have you recently 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 letter this year from the District. Here are some answers to frequently asked questions we hear about backflow testing:

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

Truth is, 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 and your family. During annual testing, your certified backflow assembly tester will determine if your device is functioning properly. A faulty assembly could be allowing contaminants into the water in your home, as well as tainting 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 need to test your backflow assembly 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. We currently have information for nearly 2,000 backflow assemblies throughout the District. New

regulations in recent years have required us to more carefully monitor potential cross connections in single family residences. Please contact the District if you have any questions about this requirement.

Have we ever had a report of a backflow incident?

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 directly tracked to a specific device. It is the District's intent to be proactive and manage any problems before they arise. The best way to do this is to identify backflow assemblies in our District, get the information about them 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?

Our current level of staffing does not allow us to undertake the testing of all of the backflow assemblies within the District. It is more cost effective in the long run for the customer to hire a certified backflow assembly tester to do the testing. You could consider your annual backflow testing to be a regular home maintenance item, just like getting your furnace or chimney cleaned each year.

Continued on back page

Backflow Questions

Continued from front page

How much does a backflow assembly test cost?

At this time, the annual backflow assembly test can cost somewhere around \$35 to \$50. 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. The District maintains a list of backflow assembly testers who are approved by the District and who test in our area. You can contact the District to get a copy of this list.

How can I get more information about backflow assembly testing?

Visit the District's website at 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 Cross Connection program.



QUICK TIPS FOR WINTER



- * **Disconnect and drain all hoses**
- * **Cover all hose spigots with protective coverings**
- * **Insulate all pipes in unheated crawl spaces**
- * **Turn off and blow out irrigation systems**
- * **Find your master shutoff valve before an emergency arises**

WATER USE EFFICIENCY RULE

Use of water resources is increasing in Washington. Efficient use of water can be one way to extend supplies and ensure that water will be available not only for the people of our state, but also for fish as well. That's why the Washington State Legislature passed the Municipal Water Law in 2003 with a water use efficiency requirement.

The key elements of the water use efficiency rule include:

- * **Mandatory requirements for water use efficiency plans and programs.**
- * **A statewide standard of 10%**

for water distribution system leakage.

- * **Water use efficiency goals established through a public process.**
- * **An annual performance report of total water usage and progress toward meeting water use efficiency goals.**

The District will be informing its customers of upcoming public meetings to set water use efficiency goals. For more information, please call Janet Sailer, Conservation Specialist at (425) 392-4931 x 204, or email her at janet@sammplat.wa.org.

CORRECTION

We have 158 miles of sewer line, not 15, as was incorrectly reported in the Autumn 2006 issue of News Splash. We are also currently maintaining 19 sewer lift stations, not 21. We regret the errors! Many thanks to the sewer team members for their hard work and dedication!



SAMMAMISH PLATEAU

WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT

1510 - 228th Ave. S.E. • Sammamish, Washington 98075
(425) 392-6256 • Fax (425) 391-5389 • www.sammplat.wa.org