

## Who Is Responsible?

### Cleveland Water

Cleveland Water is responsible for protecting the public water supply by reducing the risk of drinking water contamination from backflow prevention. We do this by ensuring compliance with Ohio EPA regulations on backflow. This includes inspecting properties in our service area to determine if a backflow prevention device is required, providing educational resources, and tracking backflow testing data.

### Customers

Customers are responsible for properly maintaining their plumbing. This includes complying with applicable plumbing code, not creating cross connections, installing required backflow prevention devices, and testing them yearly to ensure they are working correctly, and repairing them when necessary.

### Plumbers

Certified plumbers are responsible for testing backflow prevention devices and submitting the results of these tests to Cleveland Water. We contract with Backflow Solutions Inc. (BSI) to track all of the backflow testing data from our customers to ensure that backflow devices are working properly. Plumbers must submit their test results through BSI Online ([bsionline.com](https://bsionline.com)).

## Questions?

Questions about backflow prevention and cross-connection control can be directed to Cleveland Water Permits and Sales at **216.664.2444 ext. 75209** or to the Ohio EPA Northeast District Office at **330.963.1200**. You can also learn more at [clevelandwater.com/backflow](https://clevelandwater.com/backflow)



### Cleveland Water

1201 Lakeside Avenue • Cleveland, Ohio 44114  
[clevelandwater.com](https://clevelandwater.com)



# Cleveland Water

## RESIDENTIAL BACKFLOW PREVENTION



## Preventing Drinking Water Contamination

Cleveland Water works hard to make sure the drinking water delivered to your home or business is safe at all times. One way we do this is by reducing the risk of drinking water contamination from backflow.

### What is Backflow?

Cleveland Water depends on pressure to keep water flowing in the proper direction through our distribution system and into customers' homes. Backflow occurs when the pressure in a customer's pipes is above the pressure in the water main, causing flow to reverse. This creates a safety issue if that flow reversal (backflow) pulls contaminated water from an unprotected cross-connection into the drinking water supply.

### What is a Cross Connection?

A cross connection is a when a drinking water pipe is physically joined to any source of potential contamination such as non-potable water, chemicals, or gas. Cross connections have the potential to allow contaminants into the drinking water system if a backflow situation occurs.

Examples of cross connections include drinking water piping connected to:

- boiler-radiator heating systems
- swimming pools and hot tubs
- fire sprinklers
- lawn irrigation systems
- private water wells or cisterns

### What is a Backflow Prevention Device?

A backflow prevention device keeps potential contaminants out of the drinking water pipes by maintaining one-way water flow. Backflow prevention devices are required on all commercial water service connections and on residential connections that have irrigation systems, fire sprinkler systems, and swimming pools and hot tubs with automatic fill valves. All backflow devices must meet certain requirements and be tested annually. A list of device requirements can be found at [clevelandwater.com/backflow](http://clevelandwater.com/backflow)

## Required Residential Protection

Backflow prevention devices are required on residential connections that have irrigation systems, fire sprinkler systems, and swimming pools and hot tubs with automatic fill valves.

### In-ground Lawn Sprinklers

All lawn irrigation systems, for both commercial and residential properties, must have a backflow prevention device installed on the water service line supplying the system.

### Swimming Pools and Hot Tubs

Swimming pools and hot tubs with automatic fill valves are required to have a backflow protection device installed. Always maintain an air gap between the water surface in the pool or tub and the hose.

### Wells, Cisterns, or other Auxiliary Water Systems

Auxiliary water systems are water sources on your property that are not water supplied by Cleveland Water. Examples include water from a well, cistern, open reservoir, rain barrel or grey water source that has been equipped with pumps or other sources of pressure, including gravity. Auxiliary Water Systems are never allowed to be connected to the drinking water system. Typically, Cleveland Water prohibits auxiliary water systems on properties that receive public water. In rare cases where an auxiliary water system is permitted, there are stringent requirements for maintaining the connection and for the installation of an approved backflow prevention device.

## Additional Protection

There are some additional actions customers can take that, while not required, further protect the drinking water in your home and community.

### Swimming Pools and Hot Tubs

Never fill a pool or hot tub by submerging a hose in the water. Always maintain an air gap between the pool or tub and the hose.

## Home Plumbing Fixtures

While many modern plumbing fixtures are designed to prevent backflow, they only work when installed and used correctly. Faucets should be installed above the rim of the sink. If you attach any tubes or hoses to the faucet, be sure to remove them after use.

### Outdoor Faucets & Hose Bibs

To prevent backflow from occurring via garden hoses attached to outdoor spigots make sure to:

- Disconnect hoses from the spigot after each use
- Never leave a hose submerged in water or other liquid
- Disconnect any bottles of pesticide, herbicide, or fertilizer once you're finished using them
- Install a hose bib vacuum breaker certified by the American Society of Sanitary Engineering (ASSE)

## DO'S AND DON'TS

