

Backflow Information

The City of Elgin is dedicated to protecting and maintaining the high quality of Elgin's public water supply. As part of our protection efforts, we maintain a backflow prevention and cross-connection control program.

Our cross-connection control program includes:

- Site inspections of plumbing systems to identify and prevent cross-connections and potential contamination of the water supply.
- Oversight of the installation and testing of required backflow prevention assemblies.
- Creation and enforcement of rules, through ordinances, regulations, and a plumbing code, to prevent cross-connections and unacceptable plumbing practices.

To prevent cross-connection with the public water supply:

- All industrial, institutional, or commercial establishments shall install a reduced pressure zone device on the domestic line. (City Code 14.04.065 A)
- All lawn irrigation systems require a reduced pressure zone (RPZ) device. (City Code 14.04.065 B)
- Every fire protection and sprinkler service system shall be equipped with a cross-connection control device as noted in City Code 14.04.210 D.

Backflow Prevention Devices are required to be tested annually by a licensed Cross-Connection Control Device Inspector. A copy of the test report must be submitted electronically to the Meter Shop. The report as well as any questions may be sent to martinez_f@cityofelgin.org.

New Service

For information on new services or device requirements, please review the following procedures or contact the Meter Shop by phone 847-931-6146 or email martinez_f@cityofelgin.org.

[New Water Meter Installation Procedure](#)

[Combination Fire Suppression and Domestic Water Service](#)

FAQ

What is Backflow?

Simply put, backflow means an undesirable reversal of flow in the water distribution system. Common causes for backflow are water main breaks and high rates of water withdrawal, such as that which occurs through hydrant flushing. The City of Elgin works hard to prevent backflow through ordinances requiring backflow prevention devices on residential irrigation systems and at commercial businesses. Irrigation systems, for example have a backflow prevention device installed before its connection to the water supply. The backflow prevention assembly ensures that any substance on your lawn such as pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers does not end up in your cup of coffee or glass of tea.

There are two types of backflow:

- Back pressure, the pressure outside the water distribution system exceeds the pressure within the system.
- Back siphonage, potentially contaminated water flows back into the drinking water system, as a result from the pressure in the drinking water system falling below atmospheric pressure of the plumbing fixtures.

What if I don't use my lawn irrigation system? Does the backflow device still need to be tested?

If the device is installed, it must be tested. If you do not use it, do not install it and inform the Meter Shop by phone 847-931-6146 or email martinez_f@cityofelgin.org.

If you plan to permanently disable the lawn irrigation system so it cannot be used in the future, the backflow device must be removed. Also, the plumbing to the device must be cut and capped per Part 890 Illinois Plumbing Code. After the system is disabled, please notify the Meter Shop by phone 847-931-6146 or email martinez_f@cityofelgin.org. An inspection of the plumbing modification is required.

Do I need a permit before installing a backflow device?

Yes. For more information about obtaining a permit and what fees may be required, contact [Community Development](#) at (847) 931-5920.

Why do I need an expansion tank?

Adding a backflow preventer creates a closed system. An expansion tank is required on the cold water supply side of the hot water heater, prior to any control valves. This allows for thermal expansion of the heated water and can prevent leaks or breaks of pipe and fittings.

Sources:

[Part 890 Illinois Plumbing Code](#)

[City of Elgin Municipal Code](#)