



INFRASTRUCTURE & OPERATIONS

## BACKFLOW PREVENTION

Council policy aims to protect the community water supply from potential water backflow events.

Backflow is the unintended reversal of water flow from a property back into Council's water main. This may occur when there is a sudden reduction in pressure in the reticulation network.

This could occur if a pipeline breaks or the fire brigade pumps water from Council's water mains to fight a fire. In industrial and commercial premises, this water may have been contaminated by chemicals used at the property, so backflow can represent a serious health risk to Council's other customers.

Backflow Prevention Devices prevent this happening via the installation of appropriate devices on the water connection to the property. The Backflow Prevention Device to be installed on a property is determined by the activity carried out on site and the risk this activity poses.

A Backflow Prevention Device is normally installed in addition to the water meter assembly.

Council Policy requires the property owner to ensure that a Backflow Prevention Device is installed and is in working order. If required, the test result documentation must be submitted to Council periodically to establish this.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### Why is it a concern for Council?

It is a concern for Council because this water may be contaminated with chemicals or whatever is mixed with the water on the property.

If the contaminated water enters the reticulation it could be used by another customer causing health issues to the customer and liability issues for Council.

#### Why do I need to install a backflow prevention device?

All properties with a water connection must have a Backflow Prevention Device in accordance with Council policy, and the Plumbing Code of Australia, some of which are testable devices. This includes residential and commercial premises.

Council will assign a default level of hazard based on an assessment of the primary activities being undertaken on site.

A licensed plumber with backflow prevention accreditation may assist in determining the type of device required. If your property has more than one water service connected to Council's water supply, you will need to install a Backflow Prevention Device on each of the water or fire services.

#### I understand there are several types of Backflow Prevention Devices. How do I know which is the best one for my property?

The Policy is risk assessment based. The business activity being undertaken at the property determines the hazard rating, which in turn determines the Backflow Prevention Device required.

Council's policy will see a default hazard rating based on the business activity assigned to each premises.

Council will use this default hazard assessment unless the property owner supplies specific information that would lead to assignment of a different hazard.

#### HAZARD RATING

**High hazard** - Any condition, device or practice that, in connection with the drinking water supply system, has the potential to cause death. *Testable Device required.*

**Medium hazard** - Any condition, device or practice that, in connection with the drinking water supply system, has the potential to endanger health. *Testable Device required.*

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**Low hazard** - Any condition, device or practice that, in connection with the drinking water supply system, constitutes a nuisance but does not endanger health or cause injury. *Non-Testable device required.*

You will be required to advise Council of any changes to the business activity undertaken on the property, so that the hazard rating may be reconsidered.

### Testable Devices

Device	Hazard Rating
Reduced Pressure Zone (RPZ)	High
Registered break tank/air gap	High
Testable double check valve	Medium
Testable double check detector assembly	Medium



### Non-Testable Devices

Device	Hazard Rating
Dual check valve	Low

If the site's hazard rating is determined as low, Council's 20 mm and 25 mm water meters already have a non-testable backflow prevention device in them. If the property's water meter is larger than 25 mm, or has a medium or high hazard rating, a separate backflow device will need to be installed.

### I have a testable backflow device, so how does the Policy affect me?

The Plumbing Code of Australia requires property owners to test these devices every 12 months. A licensed plumber, who has completed additional training in backflow prevention, must undertake the test and forward the results to Council.

### Who can I get to undertake the regular 12 monthly test of my Backflow Prevention Device?

You need to engage a licensed plumber who has completed special NSW Government backflow prevention training.

Council maintains a list of these plumbers on its website [www.dubbo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dubbo.nsw.gov.au)

### What if the testing reveals maintenance is required or the device needs replacing?

Minor maintenance such as renewal of seals or springs could normally be carried out by the plumber when undertaking the testing. Under Council's Policy, property owners are responsible for the installation, upgrading, maintenance and replacement of devices.

### What happens if a property owner does not undertake testing of the backflow device when required to do so?

Under Council's Policy, there are a number of enforcement options, from doing the work itself and charging the customer, to disconnecting the property from the water supply.

### Why do I have to tell Council of changes in my business activity?

If the business activity changes within a premises, the hazard rating assigned may be affected. An accredited backflow licensed plumber should be engaged by the property owner to re-assess the hazard rating.

**Disputing a Hazard Rating** - There may be instances where the property owners disagree with the default hazard rating assigned to their premises. In this case, the property owner should engage an accredited backflow licensed plumber to re-assess the hazard rating and submit the proposal in writing to Council for approval.

**Change of Hazard Rating** - All requests to Council to review backflow prevention hazard ratings should be made by an approved plumber on behalf of their customer.

Please submit to Council an Application to Review Backflow Prevention Hazard Rating, along with any supporting information that may assist the claim.



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