

Tips To Protect From Backflow At Home

Standard Irrigation Systems

- ***Always test backflow prevention assemblies on your irrigation system*** - Typically, homeowners who have sprinkler systems have a PVB (pressure vacuum breaker) installed on their irrigation system. Testing your PVB every year should keep bacteria, animal waste, and fertilizers, which leach into your sprinkler pipes, out of your drinking water. If your house has a separate metered irrigation account or fire line, you are required by City and State regulations to install an approved backflow prevention assembly and have it tested annually.
- ***Make sure to properly "winterize" your PVB during winter and have your sprinkler system blown out***- Maintaining PVBs helps protect your drinking water.

Drip Irrigation Systems

- ***Make sure your drip irrigation system has a check valve*** - Check valves or pressure vacuum breakers can prevent bacteria from entering your drinking water.

Garden Hoses

- ***Make sure hose connections have backflow prevention***- Whether using vacuum breakers or frost-free hose bibbs, make sure your system is protected. **Please note:** If needed, remove hoses and vacuum breakers during winter to prevent freezing.
- ***Never leave garden hoses lying out***- When garden hoses are left laying out, they can create puddles where bacteria and chemicals pool. These contaminants can work their way up your garden hose and into your hose bibb because water is left in the hose.
- ***Don't submerge garden hoses***- If you have to fill a bucket or some other container, keep the end of the garden hose out of the bucket. This provides an air gap. If you leave the hose submerged and backflow occurs, anything in the container you are filling can get back into your drinking water. **Please note:** When filling swimming pools, never submerge the garden hose.
- ***Watch what you connect your garden hose to***- If you connect your garden hose to any chemicals like hand-held fertilizers, you risk those substances entering your drinking water. If you have to hook hoses up to these sources, make sure you have proper backflow prevention on the hose bibb.

Hazardous Well Water Connections

- ***Don't connect well water to your internal plumbing*** - If you are connected to the city's water supply, connecting well water into your drinking water can be extremely hazardous. Well water often contains heavy metals, bacteria and/or other contaminants that are not being monitored. Never connect a hose from your well into your plumbing. If your irrigation system is connected to both water supplies, you will want to change it. **Please note:** If you have a well that is not capped, you may be required to install a ***backflow prevention assembly***.

Other Hose Connections

- ***Never connect hoses to indoor faucets***- Your bathtub faucet spout and your kitchen faucet spout are natural air gaps. Air gaps allow the free flow of water through space and do not prevent backflow. Avoid hooking hoses to spouts such as spray extensions used to bathe pets. If you need to bathe your pet, it is best to do so in a container that is filled using your garden hose.

Plumbing Drains

- ***Inspect how appliance's drains are plumbed***- Too often appliances such as water heaters and water softeners are piped directly to sewer pipes. This is a common mistake and is usually done to avoid splashing or flooding, but it can result in backflow. Drains should always have an air gap. Never "hard pipe" appliance drains directly to sewer piping.

Filtration Devices

- ***Change point-of-use and whole house filters*** - A lot of people have point-of-use filters or whole house filters, which rarely get drained. Not only can filters grow bacteria over time, but they can breakdown and release filtered material into your drinking water. **Please note:** Water softeners should also be inspected to make sure filter membranes have not broken down.

Other Water Sources

- ***Protect yourself from auxiliary water sources***- If you have any other water sources, you may want to protect yourself from backflow. Whether by disconnecting the water source, use of an air gap or actual backflow prevention assembly, make sure you are protected.
 - Auxiliary sources:
 - swimming pools/hot tubs/spas
 - ponds/lakes
 - streams/rivers
 - ditch water/wells (specific wells issues are detailed above)