

## Backflow Prevention

### What is backflow?

Backflow occurs when water flows opposite to its normal or intended direction.

Under normal conditions water flows in one direction, from the main water system into the pipes of your property. When the normal flow of water is reversed; that is, from the pipes on the property back into the water system, it is referred to as backflow.

### How can backflow occur?

Backflow can occur when:

- there is a break in the water main which supplies your property
- water is being pumped from the main water supply during a fire
- you are using water at a higher pressure than the pressure supplied by South East Water
- high water demand from the main water system reduces water pressure to your property.

### What does a backflow prevention device do?

Backflow can result in a public health risk if it allows pollutants or contaminants such as chemicals to enter the drinking water supply from your property.

A suitable backflow prevention device will allow water to enter the property through the water meter assembly, but will prevent the water from flowing back into the reticulated water supply network.

### Backflow prevention devices

The type of device required by South East Water will be assessed based on the **risk rating** of your property.

- High risk: Any condition, device or practice within the water supply system and its operation which has the potential to cause death.
- Medium risk: Any condition, device or practice within the water supply system and its operation which could endanger health.
- Low risk: Any condition, device or practice within the water supply system and its operation which would constitute a nuisance but not endanger health. *Note: Most residential properties fall into this category.*

### Testing of devices

Devices installed in high or medium risk properties must be registered with South East Water, and tested at least annually by a suitably qualified backflow tester.

The test results should be forwarded to South East Water within five working days of testing being undertaken.

*Note: Your accredited plumber/tester will advise of any additional backflow devices required to protect the drinking water supply **within** your property.*

For more information on the common types of backflow devices used, refer to *Water metering and servicing drawings* available at [southeastwater.com.au](http://southeastwater.com.au)

If you require further assistance, please contact [backflow@sew.com.au](mailto:backflow@sew.com.au)