



## Backflow Prevention Containment Policy

This policy was established in May 2011 and revised in September 2014 and has been adopted by the following water authorities in Victoria:



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## Operating Statement

For the purpose of ensuring the protection and integrity of the Water Corporation's reticulated water supply system, this document prescribes a set of guidelines that shall be adopted in conjunction with any existing Water Corporation's Backflow Prevention Containment Policy. In the absence of such a Policy the Water Corporation shall adopt this document as the Backflow Prevention Containment Policy.

All property owners when notified by the Water Corporation to install / test a backflow prevention device must comply with the requirements of AS/NZS 3500.1AS/NZS 2845, the Plumbing Code of Australia (also known as the National Construction Code Series – Volume Three) and the Water (Estimation, Supply and Sewerage) Regulations 2014. All property owners / agent must arrange for a suitably qualified person to assess the potential onsite hazards, install and maintain an appropriate backflow prevention device at the boundary/main water meter for containment purposes.

The property owner is also responsible to arrange a suitably qualified person to conduct ongoing annual servicing and testing of testable backflow prevention devices and lodge the test results forms with the relevant Water Corporation.

The installation of an appropriate backflow prevention containment device is necessary to ensure the reticulated water supply is protected from unintended cross connection and backflow of possible contaminants into the reticulated water supply system.

This Policy is effective from September 2014 and supersedes the 2012 version.

## Background

(specific to each water authority)

South East Water's policy was initially produced in 1995 to address property containment for new connections by ensuring the protection of the reticulated drinking water supply system and to safeguard public health.

In 1996, the policy was updated to include information relating to existing properties assessed as having potential medium and high backflow risk.

A further update to the policy was made at the start of 2006 in response to the increasing number of recycled water estates being developed within South East Water's boundaries. This policy has been updated in September 2014 as a result of the enactment of the the Water (Estimation, Supply and Sewerage) Regulations 2014.

The policy encompasses the varying aspects of backflow prevention and South East Water's commitment to maintaining a collaborative approach with property owners resulting from the changing demands of reticulated water supply.

The community water supply is under threat with the risk of water quality being compromised due to the increased use of alternative water supplies.

South East Water reserves the right to specify any additional plumbing requirements to protect the water quality without notice as deemed appropriate to ensure the integrity of the reticulated water supply system.

## Introduction

This Backflow Prevention Containment Policy applies to all property owners connected to a Water Corporation's water supply system located in the jurisdiction of the referenced Water Corporation. It identifies the type of backflow prevention required for property connections with low, medium or high hazards as defined in AS/NZS 3500.1 Plumbing and drainage Part 1 Water Services, the Plumbing Code of Australia and the conditions that property owners must comply with to remain connected to the reticulated water supply system.

## Objectives

1. To ensure the integrity of the Water Corporation's reticulated water supply system by minimising the risk of backflow contamination from connections to the system.

This may include potential threats from residential, commercial, mixed development processes, industrial processes and properties serviced by alternate, grey and black water recycling systems.

2. To specify when testable backflow prevention containment devices shall be installed at properties with a medium or high hazard rating in order to protect the reticulated water supply system from contamination flowing back through the property water service, metered standpipes, separate fire service or hydrants.
3. To outline the Water Corporation's requirements to install and test backflow prevention containment devices on properties rated as medium and high hazards.
4. To outline the Water Corporation's requirements for properties rated as a low hazard to ensure they have appropriate non-testable backflow prevention. .
5. To identify backflow prevention containment requirements for customers with multiple reticulated water supplies.
6. To identify backflow prevention containment requirements on fire services.

## Definition of Terms

Term	Definition
AS/NZS 3500.1	Australian/New Zealand Standard for Plumbing and Drainage Part 1: Water Services
Backflow	The unplanned reverse flow of water or mixtures of water and contaminants into the reticulated water supply system.
Backflow Prevention Containment Device	A device to prevent the reverse flow of water from a potentially contaminated source, into the Water Corporation's reticulated water supply system
Backpressure	The difference between the pressure within any water service and a higher pressure within any vessel or pipework to which it is connected.
Back-siphonage	Backflow that occurs when the water supply pressure falls below atmospheric pressure.
Compliance Program for Existing Properties	A program identifying existing properties having a medium or high hazard rating requiring to be fitted with appropriate containment protection.
Containment protection	The installation of a backflow prevention containment device on the reticulated water supply system at the property boundary, to prevent backflow from within the property entering the system.
Cross connection	Any connection or arrangements between the system, connected to the water main or any fixture that may enable non-drinking water or other contamination to enter the system.
Double check valve AS/NZS 3500.1	A medium hazard testable device in accordance with AS 2845 Part 1.
Drinking water	Water that is suitable for human consumption, food preparation, utensil washing and oral hygiene (see AS/NZS 4020). Compliance with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2004 (and as amended) is required.
Dual check valve	Low hazard non-testable device in accordance with AS 2845 Part 1.
Fire service	Services comprising water pipes, fire hydrants, fire hose reels, fittings and including water storage or pumping facilities, which are installed solely for fire fighting and extinguishing purposes in and around the building or property.
Grey/black water treatment system	A system that provides a localised water treatment system owned and operated by the Water Corporation and/or private operator.
High Hazard Rating AS/NZS 3500.1	Any condition, device, or practice, which in connection with the system, has the potential to cause death.
Individual protection	Installing a backflow prevention device at the point where the water pipes connect to a fixture or appliance.
Low Hazard Rating AS/NZS 3500.1	Any condition, device, or practice, which in connection with the system, is a nuisance but does not endanger health or cause injury.
Medium Hazard Rating AS/NZS 3500.1	Any condition, device, or practice, which in connection with the system, could endanger health.
Mixed development	A property with both commercial and residential classifications on-site
Water Corporation	A Government licensed organisation responsible for the supply and on-going management of a Reticulated Water Supply Systems in a designated area of supply.
New properties	Any new or existing property, undergoing construction or redevelopment that must submit a development application.
Reduced Pressure Zone Device AS/NZS 3500.1	A high hazard testable device in accordance with AS 2845 Part 1.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Registered Air Gap	<p>A device or system installed for backflow prevention registered by, or on behalf of, a Water Corporation</p> <p>Air gap for water supply system is specifically defined as the unobstructed vertical distance through the free atmosphere between the lowest opening of a water service pipe (or fixed outlet) supplying water to a fixture or receptacle and the highest possible water level of that fixture or receptacle.</p> <p>Installation of a Registered Air Gap will be applied to sites rated as a high hazard backflow risk.</p>
Registered break tank	<p>A tank system specifically designed for backflow prevention registered by, or on behalf of a Water Corporation.</p> <p>Installation of a registered break tank will be applied to sites rated as a high hazard backflow risk and be inspected and maintain in accordance with this policy.</p>
Reticulated water supply system	The supply system into which the Water Corporation's delivers drinking and/or non-drinking water.
Single check valve testable	Low hazard testable device in accordance with AS 2845 Part 1. Suitable for Fire Service installations
Single check detector assembly testable	Low hazard testable device fitted with a metered bypass assembly in accordance with AS 2845 Part 1. Suitable for Fire service installations.
Suitably qualified person – backflow testing	A plumber registered and/or licensed in backflow prevention with the Victorian Building Authority (VBA)
Plumbing Code of Australia (PCA)	Means the National Construction Code Series Volume Three
Zone protection	Installing a backflow prevention device at the connection point of specified sections of a plumbing system within a building or facility.

## Legislation and Standards

The following are the principal Acts, Regulations and Standards that are relevant to the area of backflow prevention. Any reference to the specified Acts and Regulations below refer to the latest version as amended. Any reference to the specified Standards below refers to the version as issued, published or remade. Any reference to the Plumbing Code of Australia refers to the version as adopted by Victoria.

### **The Water Act 1989 (as amended)**

It defines water entitlements and establishes the mechanisms for managing Victoria's water resources.

Section 8 provides for an individual's rights and Section 9 sets out the rights of water corporations.

### **Water (Estimation, Supply and Sewerage) Regulations 2014 (as amended)**

The Regulations provide generally for the management, protection and use of lands, waterways and works under the management and control of a water corporation. It allows the Water Corporation to outline conditions with which all property owners must comply with when connecting to the water supply.

### **Safe Drinking Water Act 2003 (as amended)**

The purpose of this Act is to make provision for the supply of safe drinking water. This includes making specific directives to water supply authorities in managing water quality.

### **AS/NZS 2845 Water Supply – Backflow Prevention Devices as issued, published or remade**

This standard specifies requirements for the design, performance and testing of backflow prevention devices used for the protection of the water supply.

### **AS/NZS 3500 Part 1 Water Services and Part 5 Housing Installations as issued, published or remade**

#### **Part 1 (Section 4)**

This section specifies the requirements and methods for the prevention of potential contamination of drinking water within the water service and the water main and provides for the selection and installation of backflow prevention devices.

### **Plumbing Code of Australia (as adopted by Victoria)**

The Plumbing Code of Australia is Volume Three of the National Construction Code Series and is adopted under the Victorian Plumbing Regulations 2008. It empowers the regulation of certain aspects of plumbing and drainage installations, and contains the administrative provisions necessary to give effect to the legislation.

## Operating Principles

1. In accordance with the Water (Estimation, Supply and Sewerage) Regulations 2014, all owners of a serviced property when requested shall arrange for a plumber to install an appropriate high / medium / low rated backflow prevention device appropriate to the hazard rating and type of water service supplying the property.
2. The property owner is responsible for the purchase and installation costs of a backflow prevention containment device appropriate to the hazard rating of the development type as specified in AS/NZS 3500.1 Section 4 and the Plumbing Code of Australia.
3. The property owner is responsible for the maintenance and testing of the device as detailed in AS/NZS 3500.1, the Plumbing Code of Australia , AS/NZS 2845 Part 3 and the Water (Estimation, Supply and Sewerage) Regulations 2014 Section 11 and 12 ( as amended) by a suitably qualified person.
4. The Water Corporation will maintain a register of all installed testable backflow prevention containment devices and annual test reports. They will conduct audits of installations from time-to- time to ensure on-going compliance with AS/NZS 3500.1 and the Plumbing Code of Australia and the Water Corporations Backflow Prevention Containment Policy.
5. If the Water Corporation issues a notice that a backflow prevention containment device does not comply with the requirements of this Policy / Guidelines, the property owner must engage a suitably qualified person to repair, maintain, test, replace or install the backflow prevention containment device as specified in the notice within the timeframe given.
6. If the property owner fails to comply with the notice issued by the Water Corporation to repair, maintain, test, replace or install the backflow prevention containment device, the Water Corporation in accordance with the **Water Act 1989\*** may remove or disconnect the reticulated water supply system to the property or carry out the required maintenance works and recover from the property owner all reasonable costs applicable.
7. If the internal business process/es at the property has changed affecting the hazard rating, the property owner must have a suitably qualified person assess the site and provide a written report of their assessment to the Water Corporation certifying the change in hazard level. The Water Corporation may conduct a site audit to verify the revised hazard rating.

## Operating and Administrative Requirements

1. A testable backflow prevention containment device must be installed on all properties with a medium or high hazard risk in accordance with AS/NZS 3500.1 and the Plumbing Code of Australia at or near the property boundary. No connections are to bypass the backflow prevention containment device.
2. The type of backflow prevention containment device installed is based on the risk assessment of the existing or proposed on-site water processes and or the type of reticulated water supply system present.
3. In the absence of a known hazard or business activity for any new Non-Residential development the Water Corporation will automatically specify a high hazard device be installed.  
*Note:* Consent to connect will only be granted once relevant backflow documentation is completed and received by the Water Corporation.

4. Where multiple processes occur on a site, the hazard rating of the backflow prevention containment device will be equal to or greater than that of the highest hazard required to protect the zone and or individual hazard.
5. The property owner or agent must complete a registration form or acceptance form agreeing to maintain and test the backflow prevention containment device(s) at intervals of no more than 12 months from the date of the initial commissioning or as otherwise determined by the Water Corporations.
6. Class A Recycled Water Supply Properties
  - a) Residential properties provided with reticulated Class A recycled water supply shall require a dual check valve/dual check meter on the Class A recycled water supply and drinking water supply, which provides a minimum low hazard control against cross connection.
  - b) Non-residential properties provided with reticulated Class A recycled water supply shall install an appropriate backflow prevention device in accordance with the hazard rating of the property. Where a testable device is required a Registration form must be completed.
7. The testable backflow prevention containment device(s) manufactured to AS/NZS 2845, shall be installed, commissioned and tested annually by a suitably qualified person.
8. Results of annual testing of the device must be forwarded to the relevant Water Corporation within 20 days of the test for recording. Test reports must clearly show:
  - The property address
  - Location of device
  - Test date
  - Device test results
  - Device type, make, serial number and size
  - Water meter number
  - Tester's name, licence/registration number, contact phone number and address
  - Test kit calibration date and serial number.

Note: The test report must be in accordance with the provisions of AS/NZS 2845 Water Supply – Backflow prevention devices; Part 3 Field testing and maintenance.

9. Owners of properties with high hazard ratings must install a reduced pressure zone device, or where approved by the Water Corporation a registered break tank or registered air gap.
10. Owners of properties with a medium hazard rating must as a minimum install a double check valve.
11. Standpipes (portable and fixed for tankering / water carrying / temporary supply purposes) connected to the Water Corporation reticulated water supply system shall be rated as a high hazard.
12. Fire Service Containment Backflow Prevention
  - a) All Fire services require a low hazard containment device as a minimum. Fire hydrant & sprinkler type systems 80mm + greater size require a single check valve testable as a minimum hazard device.
  - b) If a fire services is designed to use an alternative water source /chemical additive or have a boost connection point within 180m of an open water source (river or dam), a higher hazard level would apply in this instance.
  - c) Where fire appliances are provided in a high hazard area, backflow prevention commensurate with the hazard level shall be provided.

13. Drinking and non-drinking water services must not be cross connected without the installation of an appropriate backflow prevention containment device. The device installed must be the same on both the drinking and non-drinking water services. These properties include mixed developments and areas serviced by grey and black water treatment systems.
14. Retrofitting Backflow Prevention Devices – where an existing water service is being renewed from ‘main to meter’, altered or relocated a backflow prevention containment device shall be installed appropriate to the property’s hazard rating. The existing non- return valve (where installed) is deemed not adequate backflow protection. If the residential property has a domestic 20-25mm water meter incorporating a dual check valve an additional backflow prevention device is not required.

## Compliance

1. The property owner is responsible for arranging the installation, maintenance and annual testing (where applicable) by a suitably qualified person of the backflow prevention containment device(s) within their property in accordance with AS/NZS 3500.1 and the Plumbing Code of Australia .
2. A plumber licensed by the VBA in water supply may install the backflow prevention containment devices. Only a suitably qualified person may commission and test these devices.
3. A plumber licensed by the VBA in water supply may install registered break tanks and registered air gaps. Only a suitably qualified person may commission and test these devices.
4. The property owner is responsible for ensuring that the backflow test report is submitted to the relevant Water Corporation within 20 days of the test being conducted.

NOTE: The property owner has a legal obligation to maintain the reticulated water supply system inside their property and depending upon the plumbing system and hazard ratings of the internal processes, to install additional individual/zone protection backflow prevention devices.

## Non-Compliance

As the aim of this Backflow Prevention Containment Policy / Guidelines is the protection of the system and public health, it is vital that all parties comply with the relevant Acts, Regulations and Standards.

In the event of a property owner refusing to rectify a potential backflow hazard or cross-connection hazard the Water Corporation has the authority to disconnect the reticulated water supply system to the relevant property in order to protect the system and public health as per Section 141 of the Water Act 1989\* .

Examples where the system may be disconnected include:

- Failure to install a backflow prevention containment device following request from the Water Corporation.
- Failure to carry out tests or maintain a backflow prevention containment device in accordance with AS/NZS 3500 and AS/NZS 2845.
- Failure to replace or repair a backflow prevention containment device.

- Removal or bypassing of a backflow prevention containment device without the authority of the Water Corporation.

The Water Corporation reserves the right to install the appropriate containment device at the relevant property and to take necessary action to recover all associated costs.