

## **Q: What is Backflow?**

Backflow is the reverse flow of the normal direction of water flow in a water supply system. This can pose a serious risk for the contamination of our water supply system when not properly managed.

## **Q: Why does Backflow occur?**

Backflow can occur in two ways; backpressure and back-siphonage causing water to flow backwards into our pipes after a property has used it.

## **Q: Why is Backflow bad?**

Backflow can cause a health threat to our community because of potential contaminants (e.g. chemicals, pesticides, bacteria, and industrial waste) that can flow into drinking water as a result.

## **Q: What is a Backflow Prevention Device?**

A Backflow Prevention Device is a vital part of a plumbing system designed to protect potable (drinking) water supplies from contamination. Essentially, it acts as a one-way valve, ensuring that water flows only from the public water supply into a home or business, but not back the other way.

## **Q: Who must have a Backflow Prevention Device?**

All properties connected to our water supply system are required to be risk assessed and have an applicable site containment backflow prevention device installed. The risk assessment should address the requirements to Australian Standard AS/NZS 3500 Plumbing & Drainage to determine if the property is a high, medium or low hazard risk to the drinking water supply.

## **Q: What device is required for each hazard rating?**

The hazard rating of the site's operations and processes determines which type of device you are required to install. If the hazard rating varies due to multiple processes, you must apply the highest hazard rating.

- Low hazard – All 20mm and 25mm Port Macquarie Hastings Council issued water meters incorporate internal low hazard devices therefore no additional device is required in this instance. We manage the replacement of these devices through our meter exchange program. For water meter sizes greater than 25mm, an independent site containment testable device is required to be installed immediately downstream of the property's water meter.
- Medium hazard – An independent testable back flow prevention device is required for all service sizes. We recognise a testable Double Check Valve (DCV) for this category. The device is to be installed immediately downstream of the property's water meter.
- High hazard – An independent testable back flow prevention device is required for all service sizes. We recognise a testable Reduced Pressure Zone Device (RPZD) for this category. The device is to be installed immediately downstream of the property's water meter.

## **Q: Who is responsible for the Backflow Prevention Device?**

All Backflow Prevention Devices are the responsibility of the property owner.

**Q: Where is the Backflow Prevention Device connected to?**

Backflow Prevention Devices shall be installed on the customer's side of the water meter with no connections between the water meter and the device. On a separate hydrant and sprinkler fire service on a non-residential property, the device shall be installed close to where the water service crosses the property boundary, prior to any booster assembly.

**Q: Who can install a Backflow Prevention Device?**

Any installation of a Backflow Prevention Device must only be in accordance with the requirements of the National Plumbing and Drainage Code AS3500.1 by a Licensed Plumber. Alternatively, PMHC Council can arrange the installation of the device/s for a service fee as outlined in Councils Annual Fees and Charges. This application can be made using our new online forms. [Application for Backflow Prevention Device \(BPD\) installation or testing by Council \(openforms.com\)](#)

**Q: Do I have to provide PMHC with the Backflow Prevention Device Details once installed?**

All Backflow Prevention Devices installed for the purpose of site containment must be registered with PMHC, with payment of the applicable fee, as set each year by PMHC through Fees and Charges. This can be submitted by our new online forms. [Application for Registration of Backflow Prevention Device \(BPD\)](#)

**Q: Do I have to have my Backflow Prevention Device Tested?**

If you have a testable Backflow Prevention Device(s) installed at the water meter you must have the device tested every 12 months by a Backflow Accredited plumber. The test results will need to be submitted to PMHC using our new online lodgement system. [Submit Backflow Prevention Device \(BPD\) Testing Results](#) Annual testing ensures that the backflow prevention device continues to operate correctly.

**Q: What happens if my Backflow Prevention Device returns a failed test result?**

If PMHC determines that the Backflow Prevention Device is unsatisfactory, the owner of the Backflow Prevention Device will be required to repair, maintain, test or replace the Backflow Prevention Device, at the owner's expense.

**Q: Will a Backflow Prevention Device affect my water pressure?**

Backflow Prevention Devices may reduce the pressure and flow rate of the water supply to the premises. It is the owner's responsibility to undertake, at their cost, any works on the premises necessary to provide adequate water flow rate and pressure for their needs. A licenced plumber shall carry out any works related to the house water supply system.

**Q: What if I fail to install/maintain a Backflow Prevention Device?**

If you fail to comply with the requirements for Backflow Prevention your access to PMHC water supply system can be disconnected and terminated at no cost to Council.