

Residents, What is Backflow, and Why Should I Care?



Backflow is when contaminated water flows BACKWARDS into the public drinking water system instead of out. This can happen in TWO ways:

1. Back pressure; more pressure pushing the water back through the system than the pressure pushing the water into the system, OR
2. Back siphonage; when a partial vacuum is created, causing water to flow in reverse, bringing contaminated water into the system.

BACK SIPHONAGE

Let's say your neighbor, Matt, decided to fill his pool and add chemicals to get ready for a party this weekend. Great! You are excited to go swimming and have a fun evening.

Matt decided to submerge the hose into the pool, to keep it filling, and then added the chemicals. But Matt didn't know that by putting the hose under the water, his hose was now attached to a partial, undetected vacuum in the public water system, and water from the pool was being sucked back into the hose, and into the water supply system.

Meanwhile, your kids are getting all their supplies ready for a lemonade stand, including filling pitchers with tap water in your kitchen, tap water that is now contaminated with Matt's pool water. YUCK!

On Saturday, the day of the party, half the neighborhood is sick, nobody can go to Matt's party, and everybody is blaming YOU for bad lemonade!

BACK PRESSURE

Anytime there is an increase in water pressure that raises the system pressure above the supply pressure, it can reverse the flow of water BACK to you instead of away. This cause is out of the homeowner's control.

How to Protect Your Drinking Water

- **Do** keep the ends of hoses clear of all possible contaminants
- **Do** make sure dishwashers are installed with a proper "air gap" device
- **Do** verify and install a simple hose bibb vacuum breaker on all threaded faucets
- **Do** provide at least one inch of "air gap" above drains for any water treatment device like a water softener
- **Don't** submerge hoses in buckets, pools, tubs, sinks or ponds
- **Don't** use spray attachments without a backflow prevention device
- **Don't** connect waste pipes from water softeners or other treatment systems directly to the sewer or submerged drain pipe. Always make sure there is a one inch "air gap"

