

Backflow questions:

1. What is backflow?

Backflow is the undesirable reversal of the flow of water or mixtures of water and other undesirable substances from any source (such as used water, industrial fluids, gasses, or any substance other than the intended potable water) into the distribution pipes of the potable water system. Backflow occurs when the pressure on private property is higher than in the city mains. This can occur for several reasons such as firefighting use of city water, or pressurized systems on private property leaking back into the supply. There are two types of backflow conditions: backpressure (higher pressure on the private side) and backsiphonage (lower pressure on the city side).

2. Why is the District of Lillooet concerned about backflow?

The District must meet the requirements of the Drinking Water Act as managed by Interior Health. It is the District's responsibility to provide safe drinking water for all citizens. Backflow can render the potable water system unsafe to drink and thus must be avoided. The installation of back-flow assemblies on properties that are considered higher risk will help safeguard the water system.

3. Do we have to install it within a certain time? If yes, how many days do we have to install it?

No, at this point, we are informing owners what is required, and asking owners to let us know how they plan to deal with the requirements. Owners should provide us with their plan within 30 days, which will identify when backflow protection will be installed. It is the District's intention to meet Interior Health requirements in a timely fashion, so the District will be updating the Water Bylaw in the New Year.

4. Who can write a report that the back-flow assembly is working properly? Can every plumber do that?

No, an inspector or tester certified by BCWWA is required for testing of backflow assemblies. This is required when the backflow assembly is first installed and then on an annual basis after that.

5. Do you know a person or a company who installs it properly? If yes, can you provide the name and phone number please?

Yes, BCWWA maintains a list of certified testers and inspectors. The District will acquire this list from BCWWA and make it available to the public.

6. Will the District of Lillooet provide any reimbursement for the installation?

No, once the District provides water to private property, it is the owner's responsibility to ensure that they do not allow the water to feed back into the city system.

7. My plumber says I don't have any devices which would require backflow protection.

The District brought in an inspector certified by BCWWA to inspect all the industrial, commercial and institutional properties to determine levels of risk. The level of risk determines the type of backflow protection required. A normal plumber is not certified to determine the level of risk.

8. According to the BC Building Code and Plumbing Code, I have no devices requiring backflow protection.

The BC Building Code and Plumbing Code specify minimum requirements. Backflow protection is on top of those minimum requirements. The District brought in an inspector certified by BCWWA to inspect all the industrial, commercial and institutional properties to determine levels of risk. The level of risk determines the type of backflow protection required.

9. My property has no water service.

The District provided the inspector with a list of water accounts to determine those that should be inspected. In some cases, the account may have been tied to the wrong property or the inspector may have been unable to determine the location of a particular account, which may have led to properties with no service being identified. If this situation applies to you, please contact the Director of Public Works at the District so we can determine the correct location of the water account.

10. What happens if I don't install the backflow preventer?

First, you will be putting the public water system at risk. **Second**, once the bylaws are updated in the New Year, you will be in violation of the District bylaws, and subject to fines.

Rod Pleasance, P.Eng.
Director of Public Works
District of Lillooet