George Parks - Notes on Backflow Prevention Mandate

Dick Plastino, Lakewood CO public works director

Their water comes from Denver Water, so Denver Water sets the rules, and is very picky about backflow and they have not required this standard. Denver Water blames the state for its pickiness, but actually the state rules are very lax. Referred me to Steve Lohman at Denver Water, 303-628-5994.

Steve Lohman called and said that Denver Water does not require residential backflow prevention devices for normal service. Sprinkler systems require a backflow prevention device on the sprinkler system only.

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In Idaho there is no State requirement for backflow prevention devices on new residential water connections. There are some municipalities that choose to require this themselves.

There is one city I am familiar with that gives out public education flyers to home owners when they install a check valve or double check valve at the meter, letting the homeowner know that an expansion chamber is needed on the hot water heater. In this city the cost, and the decision to put in the expansion chamber, is left to the home owner.

thank you,

Troy Thrall, Drinking Water Engineer
IDEQ Technical Services
(208)373-0175

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MD regulations (COMAR 26.04.04.32) require that community water systems have a Cross Connection Control Program. The regs do not specify the components of a cross connection control plan, however, MDE has developed guidance on this, which I have attached. The decision to require backflow prevention devices at the house connection is made at a local level.

Feel free to call me at (410) 537-3706 if you have any other questions.

Sincerely,

Barry O'Brien
Maryland Water Supply Program

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Mr. Parks,
Connie passed your email inquiry on to me for a response. The State of North Dakota does not require backflow prevention on residential water service lines, so we have not had to deal with the problem that you describe. I suppose this is one more thing to worry about in the future though.

Keith Demke , P.E.
Director of Utility Operations
City of Bismarck
kdemke@state.nd.us
701-222-6431

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August 4, 2004

John Probasco, Bush & Gudgell Engineers, Salt Lake 801-364-1212, referred by Hyrum City which has just completed a couple of water main projects.

No, state does not require every residential connection to have a backflow device, as part of the approval for a water main project. They do require devices on sprinkler systems.

Ken Ballsfield, Utah Drinking Water Division 801-536-4200

No, state does not require every residential connection to have a backflow device, as part of the approval for a water main project. They do require devices on sprinkler systems.

The state requires every public water system to have a cross-connection program. That program can feature both isolation and/or containment. Containment would be a device on the service line. Isolation is that every outlet has protection. Typical residential outlets (sinks, toilets, tubs, showers, washing machines, etc.) are protected by a satisfactory air gap. Sprinkler systems must have a device, but that is the only typical residential outlet that requires protection.

Approval for water main projects is not specifically tied to the residential backflow program anyway – it is a separate process.

There is federal discussion about requiring cross-connection for bacterial reasons, but that is still in process, and it may not impose any additional requirements on Utah.

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Telephone conversation with Greg Butts, Montana Public Water Systems Program, August 13 406-755-8985 x103 (Kalispell)

Montana does not require backflow devices on residential service lines. A few municipalities do, but he does not have all the details. Some have installed backflow prevention in meter pits in

conjunction with a meter replacement program. One did not provide or give notice about the need for thermal expansion chambers and has consequently had problems. Sprinkler systems, of course, do need backflow devices. Missoula is served by a private water company and has one of the most aggressive backflow programs, and that company takes the position that residential is low risk and they do not put backflow devices on typical residential service lines. Only a few municipalities have filed their cross-connection programs with the state for review. The state offers the review service, but it is not mandatory.

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Kent Lostick, City of Billings, 406-657-8309

Since early 80's they have included a dual check in their residential meter loops, so whenever they replace meters, install a meter in a new house, or whenever work is done on a service line, the new meters are installed. The homeowner bears the cost of the expansion chamber. This is not associated with water main projects, and much of the city is not covered. Sprinkler systems, of course, require protection. In the state of Montana, backflow is kind of voluntary. The dual check in the meter loop probably adds less than $20 to the cost.

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