



Village of Woodridge

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BACKFLOW PREVENTION DEVICES FOR LAWN IRRIGATION SYSTEMS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ's)

What is backflow and why are backflow devices required in certain water applications?

- Backflow is the unwanted flow of a non-potable substance back into the consumer's plumbing system and/or public water system. Cross Connection is a point in a plumbing system where the potable water supply is connected to a non-potable source. Contaminants can enter the drinking water system through uncontrolled cross connections when backflow occurs. There are generally two types of backflow: back-siphonage and backpressure. Back-siphonage may occur during water main breaks, when repairs or maintenance are done on the water mains, when shutting off the water supply, when the fire department is using a fire hydrant, etc. Backpressure can occur when the potable water supply is connected to another system operated at a higher pressure or has the ability to create pressure. Principal causes are booster pumps, pressure vessels, and elevated plumbing. All devices used for backflow prevention in Illinois must meet the standards of the Illinois Plumbing Code and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

The requirement for a backflow preventer, also referred to as an RPZ (Reduced Pressure Zone) device, on all automated irrigation systems and fire suppression systems is intended to mitigate health hazard concerns. More information can be found via the IEPA's website at <https://epa.illinois.gov/>.

What is a RPZ and why is it important to be tested?

- An RPZ device is a type of backflow prevention device designed to prevent the reverse flow of polluted water from entering the "potable" public drinking water supply.

Regarding homes with Irrigation Systems, does the Village of Woodridge create and control backflow requirements or does the State of Illinois?

- In response to the unfunded State mandate established under title 35 of the Illinois Protection Agency's (IEPA) Administrative Code and Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), title 77, part 890, Illinois Plumbing Code, all Public Water Supplies are required to have a Backflow Prevention Program. These codes delineate that there should be no arrangement or connection by which an unsafe substance may enter a water supply (cross connection). The mandate requires that all such connections to a Public Water Supply be the responsibility of the official custodian of the supply (i.e., Village of Woodridge).

Regarding Townhomes or Single-Family Houses that have a Fire Suppression System: Do these backflow prevention systems need to be tested and certified every year?

- Yes.

Is there legislation that says that my backflow device is to be tested every year?

- Both Agency regulations, 35 Ill. Adm. Code 653.802(e)(1), and the Plumbing Code, 77 Ill. Adm. Code 890.1130, require testing of the backflow assembly at the time of installation and at least annually thereafter.
- Also, while any Illinois licensed plumber can inspect plumbing or install a backflow device or assembly, only licensed plumbing contractors certified as Illinois Cross-Connection Control Device Inspectors (CCCDI) can test that device or assembly.

Has the Village seen any backflow issues with Commercial, Multi-Family or Residential?

- There have been no instances of documented backflows since the program was instituted. Typically, any issues would be identified by the licensed plumber and certified cross-connection control device inspector. For example, if the wrong backflow prevention device is in place, the licensed inspector will advise the property owner of what device(s) is required to meet state law. The village's primary concern at this point, regarding residences, is ensuring that we are meeting the mandated requirements of surveying our community for potential cross connections and ensuring those with irrigation systems are provided annual notifications on their responsibilities with respect to operating the system connected to the public water supply.

Where do backflow mandates come from and who is going to enforce these mandates?

- The Cross-Connection Control Program in Illinois is one of several tools intended to protect water consumers in the state. Section 18 of the Illinois Environmental Protection Act (P.A. 89-445, eff. 2-7-96; 90-773, eff. 8-14-98) and 35 Ill. Adm. Code 607.104 provides the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) direction from both the Illinois legislature and Illinois Pollution Control Board. These statutes establish that no person can threaten a water supply and that local water supply officials are responsible for protecting their water mains from connections that have the potential to allow the backflow of contaminants into their respective distribution systems. Further, 35 Ill. Adm. Code 602.115 gives the Illinois EPA authority to develop and modify "Agency" regulations regarding cross-connection control at community water supplies.

Who is BSI, and what is their role as it relates to the Village of Woodridge?

- The Village of Woodridge has contracted with Backflow Solutions Inc. (BSI) to manage our backflow inspection program. BSI has experience managing similar programs for many municipalities in the State of Illinois and across the country. BSI will serve as the primary point of contact for backflow inspections within the Village of Woodridge and can be contacted at (800) 414-4990 or through their website at www.bsiprograms.com.

My irrigation/sprinkler company shared that they would have to charge me an additional cost to "upload" the backflow test results to BSI. Is this true?

- Yes. BSI charges irrigation/sprinkler companies \$15 to upload/transmit the backflow test results to their company.

I will not be using my lawn irrigation system this year? Will I still be mandated to have my RPZ tested? What are my options?

- In the Village of Woodridge, if you are not going to use the irrigation system, the RPZ is still required to be tested.
- If you would like to deactivate your irrigation system permanently, all piping in the house from the supply to the location at the foundation where the system goes outside the needs to be removed, and capped with no pipe section longer than twenty-four inches (24") remaining. Once that is accomplished, contact the Community Development Department (CDD) at (630) 719-4750 and the front desk will schedule an appointment with one of the Building Inspectors to inspect that the system has been fully removed from inside the house. Then, the CDD will notify BSI that the irrigation system and the RPZ was removed.

Who requires testing?

- The Illinois Plumbing Code requires that a backflow prevention device be installed on all (Commercial and Residential) irrigation systems to protect the potable water supply. The law not only requires the use of backflow prevention devices, but also that the devices be tested once per year. State law also requires that the local municipality provide oversight that all requirements are being met.

Who needs to have their backflow prevention device tested?

- Any property owner/agent that has an irrigation system in the State of Illinois.

What credentials must a contractor have to test a backflow prevention device?

- Illinois Plumbing License
- Illinois Plumbing Contractors License
- Backflow Testing License (CCCDI License)

Who can I contact for specific questions about testing in Woodridge?

- Backflow Solutions Inc. (BSI)
 - Telephone: (800) 414-4990
 - Website: www.bsiprograms.com

Which Village Department is providing Municipal Oversight?

- Woodridge Community Development Department (CDD):
 - Telephone: (630) 719-4750
 - Website: <https://www.woodridgeil.gov/index.php>

Other Contacts:

- Illinois Dept. of Public Health:
 - Springfield Office Telephone: (217) 782-4977
 - Chicago, Michigan Ave. Office: (312) 814-2793
 - Chicago, Washington St. Office: (312) 814-5278
 - Website: <https://dph.illinois.gov/>
- Illinois EPA Division of Public Water Supply Field Operations:
 - Telephone: (217) 782-3397
 - Websites:
 - <https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/water-quality.html>
 - <https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/drinking-water.html>