

FACT SHEET

BACKFLOW PREVENTION DEVICES

What is a Backflow Prevention Device, why do we have one and what are our responsibilities? These are questions that are often asked when the annual registration fee is received from council and when we seek approval from our Committee's to engage a plumber to undertake the inspection & testing of the devices. This Fact Sheet has been put together to assist with answering these questions.

What is a Backflow Prevention Device?

Local councils define a backflow prevention device as a valve that prevents potentially harmful polluted water from entering the city's drinking water supply when an incident such as a drop in pressure causes water to be drawn back into the main from private properties.

Under state legislation, all Queensland local governments are required to maintain a program for the registration, maintenance and testing of testable backflow prevention devices installed in their area..

Would our Building have a Backflow Prevention Device?

If your body corporate receives a yearly registration fee notice for your local council and reminders from backflow plumbers you would have a backflow device installed somewhere in the complex. Backflow prevention devices are usually fitted in the following circumstances:

- An irrigation system connected to mains water supply
- Fire hose reels or hydrants
- A commercial or industrial activity or machinery connected to the mains
- Water outlets in proximity to pollutants, grease traps or chemicals
- An underground rainwater tank that has mains water backup.
- An alternate water supply

There are testable and non-testable devices. The type of device installed is determined by the potential contamination hazard level, being low, medium & high.

When the potential for contamination is medium or high, a testable backflow prevention device is required.

Following the initial installation, the endorsed backflow plumber will record the physical location of each device on the Form 9 that is submitted to Council. This description is retained by Council and included in the annual reminder sent to the Body Corporate.

I have a testable backflow prevention device installed, what are my responsibilities?

Section 38 (3) of the *Standard Plumbing and Drainage Regulations 2003* states:

(3) An owner of an installed testable backflow prevention device must –

- (a) Register the device with the local government or entity; and*
- (b) At least once each year, have the device inspected or tested by a person who is licensed to do the work*

Maximum penalty – 20 penalty units

How do I find an plumber qualified to inspect and test backflow devices and what do they need to do?

Plumbers need to hold a backflow endorsement license – which allows plumbers to commission and maintain backflow prevention devices. The QBCC have an additional requirement that plumbers requalify every 5 years and provide evidence of skills and qualifications. Plumbers will also need to pass a test.

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Within 10 business days of testing the backflow prevention device, the backflow plumber must submit a Form 9 – Report on inspection and testing of backflow prevention devices, registers air gaps and registered break tanks. Under section 38 (4) of the *Standard Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2003* council have the power to issue a Penalty Infringement Notice of maximum 10 penalty units for failing to submit the test results within the 10 business days.

Can I remove a testable backflow prevention device?

A device must remain installed if the potential hazard still exists, however an endorsed plumber can provide advice on whether the device can be removed and if the device is removed, or replaced, it is the responsibility of the licensed plumber to submit a Form 4 to the QBCC and submit the completed Form 9 test report and fee for each device to Council. Council may audit device removals performed under a Form 4 to ensure the hazard requiring the device is no longer present.

SOURCES

<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/pdf/inforce/current/sl-2003-0265>

Standard Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2003, Section 38, Effective as at 27 October 2017, Page 47

<http://www.ipiq.org.au/resources/Form9ReportOnInspectionAndTestingOfBackflowPreventionDevicesRegisteredAirGapsAndRegisteredBreakTanks%20PAD.pdf>

Form 9 – Report on inspection and testing of backflow prevention devices, registered air gaps and registered break tanks (version 4 – March 2013)

<https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/planning-building/do-i-need-approval/residential-projects/plumbing-drainage/backflow-prevention-program>

Brisbane City Council – Backflow Prevention Program

https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/20171031_-_backflow_prevention_device_fact_sheet.pdf

Brisbane City Plan 2014 – Development Services Fact Sheet

https://www.ipswich.qld.gov.au/residents/plumbing/backflow_prevention_devices

Ipswich City Council – Backflow Prevention Devices

https://www.ipswich.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/97173/af_p0009.pdf

Ipswich City Council – Backflow Prevention Devices Fact Sheet

https://www.redland.qld.gov.au/info/20239/water_meters/556/backflow_prevention_devices

Redland City Council – Backflow Prevention Devices

<https://www.moretonbay.qld.gov.au/uploadedFiles/common/forms/building-plumbing/Backflow-prevention-fact-sheet.pdf>

Moreton Bay Council – Backflow Prevention Fact Sheet

<https://www.unitywater.com/business/fill-stations-and-standpipes/backflow-prevention-requirements>

Unity Water – Backflow Prevention Requirements

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