

# Backflow Prevention

## BACKFLOW PREVENTION BASICS

In 1987, the Department of Natural Resources established a drinking water regulation entitled “Prevention of Backflow.” This regulation places certain responsibilities on owners of backflow prevention devices. There is a potential for cross-connection backflow contamination of the public drinking water supply with lawn irrigation systems, car washes, medical facilities, fire suppression systems, etc. The Department of Natural Resources defines “backflow” as “the unwanted reversal of flow in a water distribution system or a piping system inside a customer’s premises due to changes in the hydraulic pressures of the system.”

Two factors are essential for backflow to occur. First, there must be the interruption in the normal direction of flow in the distribution system. Second, there must be a link, or connection, between the potable drinking water system and the source of contaminant.

If you own a backflow prevention device, it must be inspected and tested annually.

Have your tester forward the report and fee to:

St. Louis County Department of Public Works  
Attention: Cindy Basham  
41 South Central  
St. Louis, MO 63105-1719

Please feel free to contact us, St. Louis County Department of Public Works, or the Missouri Department of Natural Resources Public Drinking Water Program (address and web site listed above), for more information regarding the basics of backflow prevention.

## SPECIAL “TIPS” FROM THE KIRKWOOD WATER DEPARTMENT

- Don’t obstruct that meter pit cover! The round meter pit cover in your yard serves an important purpose. Please don’t cover it with landscaping materials or mulch. Meter reading and maintenance personnel need to access that cover in order to perform a variety of jobs related to your water meter. Obstructing your meter pit cover could result in estimated and inaccurate water bills.
- High water bill? The majority of high water bills are usually due to [undetected leaks](#). The number one culprit? A leaking toilet. The American Water Works Association has some

interesting facts about residential water usage. Feel free to visit their web site, listed in this section.

- Need some assistance in filling out the card the water meter reader left on your door? Take a look at our [examples of water meter dials, and tips on how to fill out a water meter reading card](#).

## **RECOMMENDED WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION**

American Water Works Association  
6666 West Quincy Ave.  
Denver, CO 80235  
[www.awwa.org](http://www.awwa.org)

Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
Public Drinking Water Program  
P. O. Box 176, Jefferson City, MO 65102  
[www.dnr.mo.gov](http://www.dnr.mo.gov)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460  
[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)

Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District  
2000 Hampton Ave.  
St. Louis, Mo. 63139  
[www.stlmsd.com](http://www.stlmsd.com)