

Backflow Prevention

What is Backflow Prevention?

All water supply systems intended for human consumption, food preparation, utensil washing or oral hygiene must be safeguarded from contact with contaminated water. This applies to water services connected to rainwater tanks, Council's main water supply and/or alternative water supplies. A water supply should not be offensive in appearance, taste or odour.

Backflow Prevention is the term used to prevent the reverse flow of water from a potentially polluted or contaminated source into drinking and bathing water supply systems. By installing a backflow prevention device this risk is managed. There are a number of backflow prevention devices available to suit any particular situation.

Where does backflow prevention start?

Backflow prevention starts within the property boundary by isolating a possible contamination source between the towns main or storage tanks (rainwater tanks) and the tap or appliance.

Example of Potential Source of Contamination:

Motels and unit complexes, hotels, vehicle repair workshops, shops, restaurants, caravan parks, medical and dental surgeries, car and plant washing facilities, dry cleaners and laundries, hospitals and funeral parlors, club houses for sports, schools, day care centers and kindergartens, pest control and water carrying vehicles, botanic gardens and so on.

Why does Council keep a Register?

Council is required to keep a register in accordance with the *Standard Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2019*.

Section 101 – Testable backflow prevention devices – obligation of local government

A local government must establish a program for:-

- a) registering each testable backflow prevention device installed at premises in its local government area; and
- b) monitoring the maintenance and testing of each device.

Section 102 – Testable backflow prevention devices – obligations of owner of premises

- (1) This section applies if a testable backflow prevention device is installed at premises in a local government area, whether the device is installed for the first time or to replace a device already at the premises.
- (2) The owner of the premises must register the testable backflow prevention device, by giving notice, in the approved form, to the local government.

Maximum penalty – 20 penalty units.

- (3) However, the owner of the premises need not comply with subsection(2) if-
- a) the device has already been registered under subsection (2) after being installed under subsection (1); or
 - b) a licensee has installed the device under section 103(1)(a) and given the local government notice of the installation as mentioned in section 103(3); or
 - c) a backflow prevention licensee has maintained and tested the device and given the local government notice of the maintenance and testing as mentioned in section 103(3).
- (4) The owner of the premises must also arrange for a backflow prevention licensee to maintain and test the device at least once each year after the device is registered.

Maximum penalty – 20 penalty units.

Section 103 – Testable backflow prevention devices – obligations of owner of licensee

- (1) This section applies if a licensee carries out the following work (the **relevant work**)-
- a) Installing a testable backflow prevention device at premises, whether for the first time or to replace a device previously installed;
 - b) Removing a testable backflow prevention device from premises.
- (2) This section also applies if the owner of premises where a testable backflow prevention device is installed arranges for a backflow prevention licensee to maintain and test the device (also the **relevant work**), whether to comply with section 102(4) or an enforcement notice.
- (3) The licensee must, within 10 business days after carrying out the relevant work, give notice of the relevant work in the approved form to:-
- a) The local government; and
 - b) The owner of the premises.

Maximum penalty – 20 penalty units.

What happens if a backflow prevention device fails the annual inspection?

If the backflow prevention device fails the annual inspection, the plumber is obliged to conduct remedial action to ensure the safety of the water supply. Repairs and cleaning may resolve issues within the device, however if the device is faulty then the device must be repaired or replaced immediately. The cost of this is the responsibility of the device owner.

Renewal Notices:

Notices are forwarded in the anniversary month of when the backflow device was originally installed. If a new device is installed at a property that has existing devices, the original month is used to align due test dates of all devices at the one property.

Where do I locate a licensed plumber?

Licensed Plumbers can be located in your Local Phone & Street Directory under “Plumbers”. Ensure the licensed plumber has the appropriate endorsement to undertake such work.

Why does Council charge an annual fee?

The administration fee covers the cost of maintaining an up to date register as required by legislation. Current fees are available on Council's Website under Fees and Charges.

Who is responsible for payment of annual fee?

The Licensed Plumber who inspects or tests a testable backflow prevention device must, within 10 business days after inspecting or testing the device, give local government written results of the inspection or test, along with payment of all relevant Fees and Charges.

