

CROSS-CONNECTIONS

A cross-connection is when the public water system's lines come in contact with the customer's lines in such a way that could allow contaminants from the customer to flow backwards, or be back-siphoned into the public water system. A good example of how this can happen is if someone is using an attachment on their garden hose to apply chemicals to their lawn. While doing so, their main water line breaks or heavy use from a nearby fire hydrant could create a negative water pressure or vacuum effect at that residence. This could cause a backflow or back siphoning of the lawn chemicals into the residence's plumbing, and even back into the public water supply.

Another cross-connection situation that can happen is when someone uses their garden hose to help unstop a clogged drain or sewer line by submerging the hose into the line while trying to use the water pressure to unstop the line. If a backflow situation developed while this was happening, there is the potential for sewage to be back siphoned into our drinking water supply.

We don't want to alarm anyone. The chances of these situations happening are very small. But when considering the possible consequences, the Town's goal is to have zero chance.

The best way you can prevent backflow from your water spigot is to install what is called a vacuum breaker. This device threads on between the water spigot and garden hose. If you lose water pressure it would prevent any backflow by breaking the vacuum effect of a negative water pressure and eliminate any possible back siphoning or flow reversal. Vacuum breakers are not expensive, and can be found at the hardware stores in Hillsville. **For your own protection, as well as others, the Town recommends that all customers install a vacuum breaker on all outside water spigots.** Vacuum breakers may prevent some water spigots and yard hydrants from draining. Please read manufactures recommendations for winter draining or purchase the frost-proof type that self-drain.

Another area of concern regarding cross-connections is anyone that is hooked up to Town water and sewer, and is also hooked up to a private well. The situation of having our public water supply hooked directly to an untested water source may not be safe. To ensure the safety of everyone's drinking water, the Town has no choice but to require anyone that is connected to the Town's water and sewer system have their plumbing physically disconnected from any private well or have an approved backflow prevention device installed to prevent the well from flowing into the Town's water system.

The Town will be sending out a questionnaire each year to follow the progress of our program. While not required, we would appreciate it if you would complete and return the survey as soon as possible. Your cooperation is needed for us to have an effective program to eliminate cross-connections in our water system. By working together we can all help keep our drinking water safer.