

Backflow Prevention Program FAQs

Arapahoe County Water and Wastewater Authority

What is backflow and what does a backflow prevention device do?

Backflow can happen two ways – **Back Siphonage** or **Back Pressure**

Back Siphonage – when there is a negative pressure in the water distribution system, drawing out the water from a private water system into the public water system. This can occur at any time, such as during a water main break or during a large firefighting effort.

Back Pressure – when the pressure in a private water system exceeds the pressure in the public water system causing normal flow to reverse. A pump used to increase the water pressure within a building's plumbing system to reach a higher floor might cause this.

Backflow Prevention Device – a mechanical valve arrangement designed to prevent the reversal of the flow of water once it has passed through the valve.

Why do backflow prevention devices need to be inspected annually?

Because a backflow prevention device has manual mechanisms and valves, it requires maintenance and annual testing to ensure that it can properly function to protect the water system.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment regulates drinking water quality and standards. The Colorado Primary Drinking Water Regulations ([Regulation 11](#)) state that all regulated backflow prevention devices need to be tested annually.

Who needs to worry about annual backflow testing?

Commercial – Commercial properties must comply with backflow prevention assembly installation and annual testing requirements.

Multi-unit – Multi-unit properties include two or more separate dwelling units served by one meter connection. Properties with more than two units that share a meter must comply with backflow prevention assembly installation and annual testing. Any unit with a

fire sprinkler system must also be protected by a backflow assembly that will be tested annually.

Single-Family – Residential single-unit customer/homeowners do not have to comply with the backflow prevention program requirements unless there is an auxiliary water source on the property, a dedicated irrigation line tapped off of the main, or another hazard that has been identified by ACWWA's backflow prevention program.

Don't the ACWWA field technicians test my backflow devices for me?

Prior to 2025, ACWWA field technicians would test devices at commercial properties that had not complied with annual testing requirements – backflow testing fees would be added to the customer's monthly bill.

As of 2026, ACWWA will no longer test non-compliant devices. The customer will be responsible for scheduling and coordinating backflow tests with third-party testing companies. Failure to comply with testing requirements will result in a penalty fee added to the monthly bill and potentially termination of service.

How do I schedule a backflow inspection?

1. Find a certified backflow tester – using ACWWA's [list of certified backflow testers](#) select a tester and contact them to schedule a backflow inspection. The list ACWWA provides is not comprehensive, so if there are other testers you typically work with, schedule with them. Please ensure they are ABPA or ASSE certified.
2. Before the tester arrives, ensure that they know how many backflow devices they will be inspecting at your property. If you are unsure of the devices that need to be tested, reach out to the backflow program coordinator by emailing Backflow@ACWWA.com or calling (720) 914-8879.
3. Once the backflow tester has conducted the inspection, ensure that the test reports are sent to ACWWA at Backflow@ACWWA.com and the devices passed inspection. If any devices failed the inspection, schedule a repair with the backflow testing company as soon as possible.
4. If you have any questions about whether reports were received by ACWWA, reach out to us via email with the property address and the date the inspection happened.

What if I'm not receiving reminder letters and notifications?

ACWWA will send out reminder letters and notifications on the status of your account's compliance with annual backflow testing requirements. If you are not receiving this

communication, please email Backflow@ACWWA.com with the property address and the account number to get your contact added to the account.