ATTENTION SILVER LAKE RESIDENTS

Please Read the Following Backflow Prevention Guidelines

Carefully and Help Us Keep Our Water Safe!

What is Backflow?

Backflow is when a drop in the incoming water pressure allows a reverse flow from a homeowner's plumbing system back into the public water system. For example, if you have a garden hose submerged to fill a bucket, Jacuzzi, fish tank, etc., and the water system suddenly loses pressure, the flow of water can be reversed, sucking any contaminants in the water backwards into the system.

A Cross-Connection is any physical connection between a possible source of contamination and the public water system. Some cross connections are illegal. For example, if a homeowner uses a cistern or an old well for outdoor watering and it is connected to pipes in the house that are connected to the public water system, that would be an illegal cross connection, even with a bypass valve in place.

Why is Preventing Backflow Important?

Cross connection control is extremely important in public water systems as it is a matter of public health and safety. Many contamination issues in public water systems (including sewage bacteria, viruses, and other pathogens) are not due to the water source but are due to cross-connections. Therefore, it is very important that all customers are aware of the dangers and take necessary precautions.

Examples of Cross-Connection and Backflow Scenarios

- Any plumbed connection to a heating or cooling system.
- Water softener, under-sink reverse osmosis unit, or water filter discharge tubing connected to the drain creates a direct connection to the sewage system.
- A bottled water system such as a water cooler that is connected to the home's plumbing system could contaminate the water system if the bottled water becomes contaminated.
- The toilet in your home was installed prior to 1964 and does not have an anti-siphon fill valve that could allow backflow from the tank into the water supply.
- Soapy water or other cleaning compounds could back siphon into your water supply plumbing through a faucet or hose submerged in a bucket, basin or mop sink.

- An aquarium, dishwasher or sink that fills below the water line provides a conduit for contaminants to enter the water supply plumbing if water pressure is reduced.

- A hose submerged in a swimming pool creates a pathway for pool water to enter your water supply plumbing.

- Fertilizers/pesticides and animal or animal waste drawn into your water supply plumbing from a lawn irrigation system with submerged nozzles.

What Can You Do?

- ✓ Be aware of and eliminate cross-connections and backflow scenarios.

- ✓ Maintain air gaps. Do not submerge hoses or place them where they could become submerged (create a gap of air between supply and container, see attached photographs). The air gap should be a distance of twice the diameter of the outlet pipe.

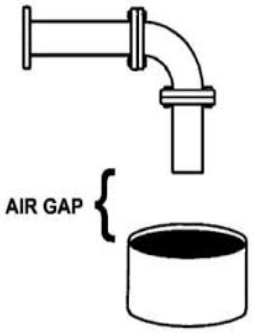

Figure 1. Air Gap Separation

- ✓ Use hose bib vacuum breakers on fixtures (hose connections in the basement, laundry room and outside) (see attached photograph of a hose bib vacuum breaker)

- ✓ Make sure toilets have anti-siphon ballcock assemblies.

- ✓ Install approved, testable backflow prevention devices on lawn irrigation systems.

- ✓ Do not create a connection between an auxiliary water system (well, cistern, body of water, puddles) and the water supply plumbing.

If you identify any cross-connections that cannot be eliminated contact MWP (see contact information below).

Who Do I Contact with Questions or Concerns?

Silver Lake works closely with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) to follow cross connection control requirements for water systems to continuously protect you and your family's health. If you have questions concerning any of the information in this handout or would like to report a possible cross connection or backflow situation, please contact our Town Superintendent at 260-352-2120.

Hose Bib Vacuum Breaker

Air Gap Examples