



Public Notice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
May 1, 2024

CONTACT:
Mike Miller
Public Works Director
mike.miller@ci.florence.or.us
(541) 997-4106

ANNUAL RESIDENTIAL PREMISE ISOLATION BACKFLOW TESTING PROGRAM

FLORENCE – April showers bring May flowers. What does this have to do with backflow device testing? It's spring and it is time to once again perform the City's annual residential premise isolation backflow assembly testing.

Beginning May 20th, the City of Florence will begin the annual testing of residential premise isolation backflow assemblies throughout the City. These tests are required for compliance through the City Code and the Oregon Administrative Rules to help protect our water system. The City is contracting with Olson LLC to perform these tests during the spring. Olson personnel will be conducting the tests during the next several weeks in order to complete the testing cycle in a timely manner.

If the Olson LLC personnel look familiar, they are. Olson LLC personnel have been completing our residential backflow assembly testing the last several years. They are quick, efficient and have done a great job for the City.

For the majority of our residential customers, the testing of the premise isolation backflow prevention assembly is simple and quick. Most customers won't even know that the testing crew has been to their residence.

The testing of the backflow assembly does require the water to be turned off for a few minutes while the test procedure is performed. Our testing procedure is to knock on the door or ring the doorbell to let the customer know what the crew is doing. If water is being used, our contractor will move to the next location until the water is no longer being used by the customer. In the event no one answers the door, the contractor visually inspects the meter to make sure there isn't an appliance using water or to make sure the resident isn't in the shower and didn't hear the doorbell or door knock. We also realize that there are some customers that don't answer the door because they assume the contractor is a solicitor, and in these cases, we rely on the visual inspection of the meter by observing the low flow indicator on the meter, to avoid a water disruption.

Our contractor strives to time the 2-minute water interruption for backflow assembly test to be between usage intervals by the resident so no one is without water or inconvenienced. There can be rare occasions when an expansion tank is installed in the home, that a shower or appliance can be started with the water turned off at the street and water will appear to be available for a short time. This is rare and our contractor tries to avoid the situation by communicating directly with the customer.

The City and Olson LLC extend our apologies if a customer has experienced a surprising water interruption. It is the highest priority of the City and Olson LLC to avoid interruptions and surprises due to the testing of these devices.

Residents are encouraged to call the City of Florence Public Works office with any concerns and questions at (541) 997-4106.

###

Here are some answers to common questions regarding cross connection control.

What is Backflow & Cross Connection?

Our water system is a pressurized system, with water typically flowing in only one direction. A sudden drop in pressure somewhere in the system can reverse the flow and suck substances into the water system that could potentially cause contamination of the drinking water. This is known as backflow. We make every effort to maintain positive system pressure, however, unplanned events such as water main breaks and firefighting activities, might cause backflow to occur.

A cross connection is any plumbing arrangement where potable (drinking) water pipes are connected to a piping system or fixture that carries non-potable water or harmful substances. Any cross connection poses a contamination risk to the water system and must be controlled by a backflow prevention device. Hot tubs, auxiliary water systems such as wells, and fire sprinkler and irrigation systems are some common situations where a cross connection might be present.

Safeguarding the Water Supply

Our cross connection and backflow program seeks to eliminate cross connections wherever possible or assure that backflow protection devices are installed and assist property owners in complying with state regulations. Oregon plumbing code dictates when property owners must install a backflow prevention device. Under [Oregon Administrative Rule 333-061-0070](#), we are responsible for assuring that required backflow devices are installed correctly and tested regularly.

Backflow prevention assemblies are mechanical devices, and like all mechanical devices, can malfunction or wear out over time. Consequently, all backflow assemblies installed must be tested by a certified backflow tester annually to make sure they are working as designed and the results submitted to the City. A [list of state certified backflow testers](#) is maintained by the Oregon Health Authority to help property owners locate qualified testers.

Oregon Administrative Rule 333-061-0070 (5) makes water suppliers responsible for assuring property owner compliance with testing requirements. Failure to comply with required testing may result in disconnection of water service. Contact our Backflow Prevention Program staff to determine if your property is required to have a backflow device at 541-997-4106.

Photos of Olson LLC Backflow Testers:



Jon Parks, Olson LLC



Ethan Olson, Olson LLC



Trevor Ambrose, Olson LLC