



CITY OF FLORENCE
PUBLIC WORKS

BACKFLOW TESTING

THE IMPORTANCE OF BACKFLOW PREVENTION DEVICES

The City of Florence is committed to supplying clean, safe, and reliable drinking water to all its customers. A vital part of this mission is protecting the water system from contamination through proactive safety measures—including preventing backflow.

What Is Backflow and Why Does It Matter?

Backflow occurs when water flows in the reverse direction—from a customer's private system back into the public water supply. This can happen when there's a change in pressure, such as during a main break or firefighting event. If backflow occurs, it can carry contaminants—such as bacteria, chemicals, or fertilizers—into the public water system.

Preventing Contamination Through Backflow Devices

To prevent this, regulations require the installation of backflow prevention devices, which stop contaminated water from reversing into the clean water system. These devices must be tested annually by certified professionals to ensure they are working properly. Annual testing is mandated by the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and enforced through Florence City Code 9-2-3-5.

Florence's Backflow Prevention Program

In Florence, the City owns and maintains residential premise isolation backflow prevention devices—typically installed directly behind the water meter, where the water service enters the property. These devices are tested each year by the City to ensure they're functioning properly and protecting the public system.

However, some properties—particularly those with irrigation systems—also have privately owned backflow devices. These devices must be:

- Maintained by the property owner
- Tested annually by a certified backflow tester
- Reported to the City to meet OHA compliance standards

If you received a notification letter from the City, it's because our records indicate you have a private backflow device that requires testing. In most cases, these are tied to irrigation systems. If you no longer have an irrigation system or believe this letter was sent in error, please contact us. A City technician can do a quick on-site inspection, and if appropriate, we will update our records so you won't receive future notices.

Why Backflow Prevention Devices Are So Important
Here are six reasons backflow prevention matters:

1. **Protects Water Quality** - Prevents contaminated water from re-entering the public water system and ensures clean, safe drinking water.
2. **Regulatory Compliance** - Meets requirements set by the Oregon Health Authority and local code, avoiding fines and legal issues.
3. **Eliminates Cross-Connection Hazards** - Stops dangerous connections between drinking water and sources like irrigation systems, sewage, or industrial chemicals.
4. **Protects Public Health** - Reduces the risk of exposure to pathogens, chemicals, and toxins that could cause serious illness or disease.
5. **Preserves System Integrity** - Prevents contaminants from corroding or damaging the water distribution infrastructure.
6. **Cost-Effective Protection** - Prevents expensive contamination cleanups and safeguards the City's investment in safe water infrastructure.



Questions or Need Assistance?
Visit the City's website for more information:

Backflow Prevention Program
Or contact our Backflow Specialist:
Matthew Hiatt
backflow@ci.florence.or.us
541-997-4106

BACKFLOW TESTING, COMMON QUESTIONS:

- 1. What is a backflow prevention assembly?** It is an assembly that prevents dirty/contaminated water from flowing back into the clean water supply. It helps keep our drinking water safe.
- 2. Where is my backflow assembly?** Usually (but not always) the assembly is located near the water meter.
- 3. How much will this cost?** Certified testers set their own pricing. Tests usually range between \$50-65 per device. You can compare prices to find the best deal for you.
- 4. Why do I need a test every year?** Oregon State law requires annual testing.
- 5. Do I need to keep a copy of the test report?** No, you are not required to keep a copy of the test report.
- 6. What do I do after the test is completed?** After the test, the tester will submit a report to the city. You do not need to do anything beyond this point.
- 7. I am a renter. Am I responsible for this?** The responsibility lies with the person named on the water bill. If that's you, then yes. You may want to discuss this with your landlord or property manager.
- 8. What happens if the test is not complete by the deadline?** Failure to comply may result in enforcement actions by the city to ensure compliance with state regulations.
- 9. What if I have more questions?** Email backflow@ci.florence.or.us or call 541-997-4106.

