

# Cross Connection Control Program Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is a Cross Connection Control Program?**
  - a. The Interior Health Authority has legislated, through the Safe Drinking Water Act, that all water suppliers provide and administer a Cross Connection Control Program.
  - b. The Program is a proactive measure to help prevent contamination of the public water distribution system through potentially hazardous plumbing connections called Cross Connections.
  - c. This Program helps to ensure that NON POTABLE water cannot be introduced into the public water mains due to backflow from private plumbing systems and will also protect occupants inside the buildings from contamination of the drinking water from within.
  - d. Other elements of the program include:
    - Guidelines for controlling Cross Connections;
    - Means of enforcement to ensure the public potable water system is protected;
    - Record keeping of hazards and the backflow devices required for protection, including installation, maintenance and testing of devices (if required);
    - Continuing education program.
2. **How will you or I know, if I have any Cross Connections in my facility?**
  - a. Assessing or inspecting facilities connected to the water distribution system is an integral part of backflow prevention and in view of this, Regional District of North Okanagan - Greater Vernon Water (RDNO-GVW) has begun an assessment program of all Industrial, Commercial, Institutional and Agricultural buildings within the Greater Vernon.
3. **What is a Facility Assessment?**
  - a. Facility Assessments will be a service provided at no cost by RDNO-GVW whereby each commercial (ICI & Agricultural) facility in the Greater Vernon area will be inspected to identify existing Cross Connections, if any, on private plumbing systems.
4. **Why do you need to inspect my facility?**
  - a. RDNO-GVW customers all share and are connected to the public water distribution system. Our assessors will look for Cross Connections within the existing plumbing that could pose a threat to the water system in the event of backflow; this also identifies problems that could affect the occupants of the building.
5. **When will you be inspecting my facility?**
  - a. A representative will be contacting you in the future to arrange access to your building so we can complete the facility assessment with your maintenance person or the person in charge of the facility. Facility Assessments will be on going throughout the year.

6. **Will residential facilities require assessments?**
  - a. No, not at this time.
  - b. A public awareness program will address common household backflow hazards and will recommend safety measures and precautions.
7. **How much is the facility assessment or inspection going to cost me?**
  - a. Facility Assessments will be a service provided at no cost by RDNO-GVW
  - b. Correcting Cross Connections found (if any) during the inspection process will be the responsibility of the customer.
8. **A plumbing inspection was done when the building was built and passed inspection then, so why do I need to have another plumbing inspection?**
  - a. A hazard assessment of the plumbing system is still required. The purpose of the inspection is not to upgrade the plumbing system to current Building Code standards but to identify health threats to the public water system and determine the approved method of protection if required.
9. **What is involved during a facility assessment?**
  - a. A physical inspection of the plumbing system will be completed beginning from the main water inlet to the building and followed to every outlet through-out. (sinks, hose bibs, irrigation systems etc.
  - b. Access to all plumbing outlets, meter pits, mechanical rooms, water supplied equipment, etc., throughout the facility will be required.
  - c. A Facility Assessment Summary Report will be mailed to you with the findings and recommended or required actions to comply with any deficiencies found.
10. **Do you have to shut off the water supply during the inspection process?**
  - a. No, only a visual inspection is required.
11. **Will new buildings be assessed as well?**
  - a. Yes, a cooperative effort between Building Inspection Departments and the RDNO-GVW Cross Connection Control Manager, will ensure backflow protection is required where necessary on new buildings during the Building / Plumbing Permit process.
12. **How long does an assessment take?**
  - a. On average about 1.5 hours.
  - b. Periodic re-assessments may be required on some facilities on an annual or bi-annual basis.
13. **What if a Cross Connection or various Cross Connections are found in my facility?**
  - a. The GVWU Cross Connection Control Regulation Bylaw No. 2106, 2005 states: “No *owner* or other *person* shall permit the introduction of any *contaminant* or foreign matter whatsoever into any *private water system* that is connected *the waterworks system*.”

- b. Customers will be required to eliminate or control potential hazardous Cross Connections that are identified during the inspection process at the customer's expense.

**14. What if I refuse to let you on my property?**

- a. A Reduced Pressure Backflow Assembly, installed on the main water line to or in the facility, will be a mandatory requirement.

**15. What if I refuse to comply with any requirements of the program?**

- a. Water service to the facility may be discontinued;
- b. Fines may be imposed on a daily basis until the customer has rectified the problem;
- c. RDNO-GVW may install a Backflow Assembly on the service connection at the customer's expense

**16. What is all this going to cost me?**

- a. Some Cross Connections can be controlled simply by installing an approved air gap with little or no expense. Others may require the installation of a mechanical Backflow Prevention Device and vary greatly in price pending the size, type and installation requirements.

**17. How do I control Cross Connections?**

- a. By eliminating the Cross Connection by disconnection or removal of unnecessary equipment etc.
- b. By installing an approved air gap (a complete separation between the supply pipe and an overflow rim, e.g. Hose to a floor drain must have an Air Gap).
- c. By installing an approved Backflow Prevention Device designed for the type of hazard and installation criteria.
- d. Cross-connections, such as equipment requiring a water supply connection (eg. a boiler) will require a mechanical Backflow Prevention Device installed on the pipe line servicing the equipment.

**18. What is a mechanical Backflow Prevention Device?**

- a. It is a Device or Assembly installed on the piping system that prevents water from flowing in reverse direction (backflow).
- b. A Backflow Assembly type is a much more reliable backflow preventer for moderate or high hazard applications, and requires annual testing to ensure that it remains reliable.

**19. Do all Backflow Preventers have to be tested?**

- a. No, small non-testable devices designed for low hazard applications do not require testing but may require inspection.
- b. Only testable assemblies require testing.

**20. How often do Backflow Assemblies need to be tested?**

- a. Testing is required upon installation, after repair or relocation and then annually or more often if RDNO-GVW requires.

**21. Who should install and test Backflow Preventers?**

- a. Only Certified Backflow Assembly Testers, registered through BCWWA can test Backflow Preventers.

**22. Do I have to pay for testing and maintenance of the Backflow Preventers in my facility?**

- a. Yes, it is the customer's responsibility to maintain, repair and test Backflow Preventers on the private plumbing system.

**23. How do I find or contact a Certified Tester?**

- a. A list of certified testers is available on our website under the Cross Connection Forms section or at the RDNO-GVW office.

**24. When do I have to comply with any requirements?**

- a. Protection should be installed or addressed as soon as possible once a Cross Connection is discovered that could be a potential high health risk to the water supply system.
- b. RDNO-GVW Customers will be required to comply within a specified time that will be indicated when you receive the Facility Assessment Summary Report.
- c. RDNO-GVW recognizes that significant costs may be incurred by some customers to correct deficiencies and will work closely with you in developing a plan.

**25. How can I find more information regarding the details of this program?**

- a. Contact our Cross Connection Representative at: 250-550-3700
- b. Visit our web site at [www.rdno.ca](http://www.rdno.ca)