

# how to prevent backflow contamination

## how to contact us

customer technical enquiries  
(8am to 5pm weekdays) 13 13 95

visit our website  
[www.watercorporation.com.au](http://www.watercorporation.com.au)

or email  
[backflow@watercorporation.com.au](mailto:backflow@watercorporation.com.au)



## customer correspondence

Water Corporation, Locked Bag 2  
Osborne Park Delivery Centre WA 6916

This information is available in alternative  
formats on request.

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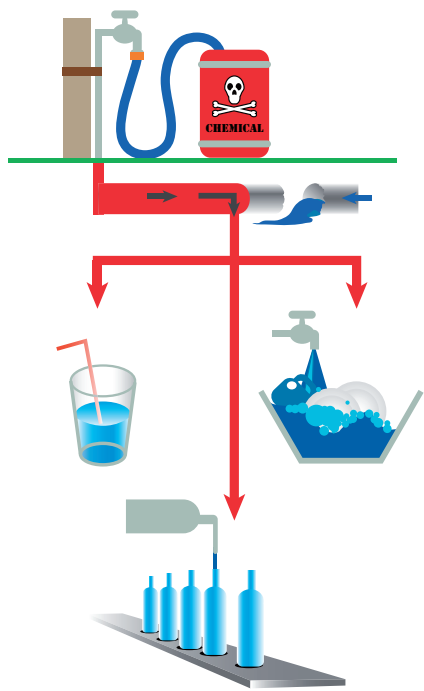


## what is backflow?

The water supply system is designed so that water flows out of your tap under pressure. However, under some conditions, low pressure due to a burst main or during fire fighting, can cause the water to flow the other way (backsiphonage). Reverse flow is known as backflow.

Backflow can also occur if a pump outlet is inadvertently connected to the water supply (back pressure).

Any connection (cross-connection) between the water supply and a potential contaminant could cause the contaminant to flow into your drinking water supply (backflow contamination). A contaminant may be any toxic fluid containing bacteria, chemicals, pesticides or weedicides.



## protection from backflow contamination

Plumbing regulations and the Plumbing and Drainage Standards are designed to protect property plumbing from backflow contamination.

Internal plumbing incorporates air gaps for fixtures such as sinks, troughs, toilets and appliances such as dish and clothes washing machines.

External plumbing requires similar protection including a device known as a hose connection vacuum breaker fitted on all external taps.

In commercial and industrial facilities the Water Corporation requires **every** connection to the drinking water supply to have fitted a backflow prevention device at the **boundary** that is appropriate to the high, medium or low risk hazard posed by the activities carried out at the property. High and medium rated backflow prevention devices will also require annual testing by a licensed plumber to ensure they are working correctly.

Backflow prevention devices may also be required internal to the property, and if so this is the responsibility of the property owner.

## five ways to prevent backflow:

1. Use a licensed plumber for all property plumbing work.
2. Ensure that all potential cross-connection situations are protected with an appropriate and properly maintained backflow prevention device.
3. Seek advice from properly qualified persons on suitable backflow prevention devices and their maintenance.
4. Never immerse hoses into containers whilst filling, or use them in hazardous situations such as clearing blocked sewers.
5. Test medium and high rated backflow prevention devices at commissioning, following any maintenance and every 12 months thereafter.

For further information, contact a licensed plumber. Property owners should refer to the Backflow Prevention Policy brochure available in the publications section of our website.