



What can you do as a business owner?

Some businesses are at higher risk of contaminating the water supply through backflow than others. We want to help you to ensure the water in your business and the community is protected at all times.

The Council has identified some types of businesses that could cause a health risk if a backflow event was to occur. If your business is one of these, we will contact you before completing an inspection and assessment.

If your business is at risk of causing contamination through backflow, the Council will install a backflow device at the boundary to ensure the community water supply is protected.

The boundary device protects contaminants from your business/property entering the water network. Please note, however, that this doesn't protect the occupants within the property or building (see **Protecting your business water supply**, below)



Typical boundary protection

Once installed, the Council will maintain and replace the backflow device, as required.

Annual inspection, testing and depreciation of the backflow device will be arranged by the Council, and the cost of this will be on-charged to the property owner.

Protecting your business' water supply

A boundary backflow device will not protect the water supply used within the business itself. This can only be done through 'internal source protection', which is when a backflow device is installed at the source of potential contamination.

Source protection is a requirement under the Building Act 2004 for all buildings. The cost of installing and maintaining source protection is the responsibility of the property owner.

If you have any concerns about your backflow protection, please contact us on 07 885 0340 and we will carry out a free backflow risk assessment for you.

If you have any queries

If you require more information on what you can do to protect your home or business, or have any questions, please call us. We will be glad to advise you.

Your safety and the safety of others depends on ensuring that the quality of our water supply is never threatened.

Contact Information

South Waikato District Council
Services Section
Phone (07) 885 0340
Torphin Crescent
Tokoroa

www.southwaikato.govt.nz

What you need to know about

BACKFLOW

PREVENTION



Backflow

Introduction

Every day, the South Waikato District Council proudly supplies an average of 8 million litres of water to the South Waikato community.

Before any water is pumped to your home or business, it has gone through careful treatment and quality testing.

The water we supply exceeds the drinking water standards set by the New Zealand Government under the Health (Drinking Water) Amendment Act 2007.



Under this Act, we also need to ensure your health is protected by reducing the risk of our drinking water supplies being contaminated as a result of backflow.

What is Backflow

Backflow is when a liquid, solid or gas flows back into the public drinking water supply, causing it to become contaminated.

This can happen as a result of either 'back-siphonage' or 'back-pressure', and can affect both hot and cold water systems.

For more details on backflow, how it occurs and the hazards associated to it, please refer to the Council Backflow Prevention Management Plan on our website—www.southwaikato.govt.nz

Why is backflow such a problem?

If a backflow event was to occur due to back-siphonage or back-pressure into the public water supply, this could cause sickness, or even death.

There have been cases recorded around the world when dangerous chemicals have entered the public water supply, resulting in illness and death.

There have also been many serious backflow incidents in New Zealand, although they are not often widely published. In one case, caustic soda from a dairy factory back-siphoned into a common water main resulting in at least six people receiving burns, some of them serious.

Preventing incidents like these is why the Council is taking steps to help ensure our water supply is protected against the threat of backflow.

How can backflow be prevented?

South Waikato District Council takes pride in the water we provide, and we see it as a priority to help protect our residents from potential hazards.

The risk of backflow can come from both households and businesses, although certain types of businesses pose a much greater contamination threat.

There are two main ways of reducing the risk of backflow:

- **Maintaining an air gap between the tap or hose outlet and an external liquid**
- **Installing a backflow device**

The rest of this leaflet outlines what you can do as a householder or business owner to help prevent the risk of backflow, what your obligations are if your business (or property) is deemed 'high risk', and what the Council can do to help.

What can you do at home?

We want to help you to ensure your household water supply is protected from the risk of backflow at all times.

There is a risk of backflow occurring whenever the outlet for a tap/hose is submerged into liquid. This risk is very common when filling a gardening spray pack, as illustrated.



Hose Submerged into liquid



Air gap between hose nozzle and liquid

The easiest way to prevent backflow is to ensure you maintain an air gap at all times between the water outlet point (tap or hose) and the external liquid. Refer to the illustration above.



Hose tap Vacuum Breaker

If you use the outside tap to fill a swimming pool or spa pool, or use the tap to fill or wash chemical containers, then a hose tap vacuum breaker is essential. This simple device fits on your outside tap and acts to protect the water supply.

The Council is happy to provide you with a hose tap vacuum breaker, free of charge. Please contact the Council on 07 885 0340 for more information.