



# Backflow Prevention Assembly

## Frequently Asked Questions



### What is a backflow prevention assembly (BPA)?

- Backflow prevention assemblies (BPAs) are devices placed on water service lines to prevent water from flowing backwards into public water systems. Backflow can occur when water pressure drops in the public water mains, such as in the case of a water main break. The difference in pressure pulls water from service lines backward into the mains. When that happens, any contaminants in the water from the residence or business could enter the public water supply.

### Who is required to have a BPA?

- All customers who have potential cross-connections are responsible for preventing contaminants from entering the public water system through their individual plumbing system by installing and maintaining approved BPAs, according to Orting Municipal Code 9-1E-3B.
- The City is required and empowered by Washington Administrative Code 246-290-490 to ensure that its public water supply is protected from cross-connections.

### What is a cross-connection?

- A cross-connection is any connection between piping that carries drinking water (also known as potable water) and the piping or fixtures that carry other types of water or substances that are not safe to drink (also known as non-potable). A couple examples of cross-connections are lawn sprinkler systems, through which lawn chemicals or bacteria could enter the water supply, and boilers, where the non-potable water in the boiler could get into the water supply.

*(continued on next page)*

## What are the testing requirements for BPAs in Orting?

- BPAs must be tested at the time of installation, after any repairs, after any relocation of the assembly, and **annually from the time of installation for as long as the potential cross-connection exists.**
- A report for each test must be sent to the City of Orting at [eberquist@cityoforting.org](mailto:eberquist@cityoforting.org). If the City doesn't receive a passing test report for a customer's assembly each year, the City may shut off the customer's water service, in accordance with Orting Municipal Code 9-1E-3C.

## Who can test BPAs?

- Only Backflow Assembly Testers licensed by the Washington State Department of Health are authorized to test BPAs in Washington. You can find local backflow testing companies through an internet search, or you can view a list of some companies that often test in Orting on the City's website at: <https://www.cityoforting.org/home/showpublisheddocument/7301/638887661821635455>.

## What happens if my BPA fails a test?

- If a BPA fails a test, it will need to be repaired or replaced as soon as possible. The testing company that tested your BPA may be able to make the repairs, or you may need to contact a plumber.
- If a replacement is necessary, a permit from the City is required. You can apply for a permit at <https://us.cloudpermit.com>.

## What is the City's annual backflow testing list, and how do I get added to it?

- The City of Orting hires a testing company each summer to test the backflows of everyone who has requested to be on the City's testing list. The charge for the test (normally around \$40) is then added to the customer's water bill the following January or February. This means the customer doesn't have to find their own backflow tester and arrange their own test each year.
- To join the City's annual testing list, you can email Ella Berquist, the City's Public Works Support and Permits Clerk, at [eberquist@cityoforting.org](mailto:eberquist@cityoforting.org), or call (253) 385-9156. Please include your name and address, and mention that you'd like to join the annual list.

