

Gore District Council – Back-flow Prevention Policy

Introduction

The Health (Drinking Water) Amendment Act 2007 (the Act) section 69ZZZ “Protecting water supplies from the risk of back-flow” requires that a drinking-water supplier (the Council) must determine when it is desirable or necessary for back-flow protection to be used to protect the drinking-water supply. The Act also requires water supply authorities to ensure that the devices are tested annually (minimum) and keep records of this.

This policy outlines the Council’s commitment to protecting the drinking-water supplies of the Gore District from back-flow. This policy does not replace the requirements of the Gore District Council Water Supply Bylaw 2015. Refer the Gore District Council Bylaw which outlines the customer’s responsibility to provide backflow protection to the Council’s water supply.

Application

This policy applies to any person being supplied, or who has made an application to be supplied with water by the Council. All such persons are deemed to accept the terms and conditions contained in this policy, and any subsequent amendments.

This policy is to manage back-flow at the point of supply preventing contamination of the networked supply. Back-flow downstream of the point of supply (i.e. affecting the internal reticulation) is covered by the provisions of the Building Act 2004, and the protection requirements for this are administered as part of the building consent process.

What is back-flow?

Back-flow is when an undesirable liquid/contaminant flows back into the drinking-water supply. There are two types of back-flow:

- Back pressure, occurs when the pressure in the downstream plumbing is higher than the supply pressure, this pushes the water back into the supply line.
- Backflow, occurs when a temporary drop in water pressure occurs and water is siphoned into the drinking water pipeline.

General Provisions:

1. All customers with a connection to a Gore District Council water supply must have a backflow prevention device (appropriate to the property’s risk rating) installed at the property boundary.

2. Based on the level of risk, the appropriate level of protection will be at the discretion of the Council; however, the requirements under clause G12 of the Building Code will be used as guidance.
3. All testable backflow prevention devices shall be installed and commissioned by a suitably qualified person, subject to the Council approval. Verification of the backflow installation from an IQP shall be provided to the Council at the time of installation.
4. Internal backflow prevention devices listed on the properties compliance schedule will be considered when determining the risk to the Council supply. All testable backflow devices within the property boundary shall be included on the compliance schedule for that property.
5. A backflow risk assessment will be undertaken for all new water connection applications. As a minimum, all new connections to the Council water supply shall require a non-testable dual check device.
6. The Council will provide a specified bulk water filling station with permanent backflow protection to minimise any backflow risk associated with bulk water carriers abstracting water. Any water abstraction direct from a network fire hydrant will require the appropriate backflow protection to be installed as approved by the Council's 3 Waters Asset Manager.
7. The Council will complete a preliminary risk assessment of all extraordinary use connections (as defined by the Water Bylaw) and any other properties deemed to present a backflow risk every five years, or when there is a significant change in activity at the property.
8. If the Council deem the backflow risk at a property requires an assessment by an Independent Qualified Person (IQP) or additional backflow protection exceeding the minimum requirement of a non-testable dual check valve is required, the property owner shall bear all cost associated with this.
9. A backflow register of all extraordinary use connections and any other properties deemed to present a backflow risk shall be kept. This will record such details as the latest risk assessment, the level of risk to the property, details of any internal backflow protection at the property, the required level of protection to the Council water supply and latest certification testing details.
10. All testable backflow prevention devices at the point of supply shall be tested annually. Where an air gap is installed this shall be visually inspected annually. Unless a specific exemption is granted, the backflow device testing will be completed by the Council or their contractor, with all costs associated with this being charged to the occupier of the property.
11. The Council will provide advice and education to property owners and occupiers about the risks that can be caused by backflow and how it can be prevented.