

Backflow Preventer Use survey

The City of Freeport's Water & Sewer Department is committed to providing quality, cost-efficient service in the delivery of safe drinking water to all residential and commercial users.

Safe and reliable drinking water is a carefully manufactured product. In order to help ensure safe drinking water, the City adopted a Cross Connection Control Program, City Municipal Code: Chapter 1042.22.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) requires every water supply to develop and implement a cross connection (backflow prevention) control program. A requirement of the program is to send a survey to all residential water customers every two years. All residential water customers are requested to complete the survey, which takes only a few minutes.

How do I respond to the survey?

Residents can complete the survey online by [clicking here](#). Please note that there are some required fields, but not all fields need to be filled in.

If you do not have access to complete the survey online, please call the Water & Sewer Department at (815) 233-1686 and request a survey form to be sent to you.

What is a cross connection and a backflow preventer?

Cross connections are potential connections between a potable (drinking) water supply and a non-potable source, where it is possible for a contaminant to enter the drinking water supply. Cross connections should be protected by a device called a backflow preventer. A backflow preventer is a device that allows the water to flow in one direction and prevent the piping or device hooked to the water supply line from flowing back into it.

Backflow preventers are the property of the water customer and the responsibility lies with the customer for required annual testing and maintenance. The water customer must contract with a licensed tester to perform the required annual tests and any necessary repairs. If you need a list of plumbers with a backflow certification, please call (815) 233-1686.

Regarding cross connection and backflow preventer use, does the City of Freeport create and control backflow requirements or does the State of Illinois?

In response to the unfunded state mandate established under Title 35 of the Illinois Protection Agency's (IEPA) Administrative Code and Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), Title 77, Part 890, Illinois Plumbing Code, all public water supplies are required to have a backflow prevention program. These codes delineate that there should be no arrangement or connection by which an unsafe substance may enter a water supply (cross connection). The mandate requires that all such connections to a public water supply be the responsibility of the official custodian of the supply (in this case, the City of Freeport).

Where do backflow mandates come from and who is going to enforce these mandates?

The Cross-Connection Control Program in Illinois is one of several tools intended to protect water consumers in the state. Section 18 of the Illinois Environmental Protection Act (P.A. 89-445, eff. 2-7-96; 90-773, eff. 8-14-98) and 35 Ill. Adm. Code 607.104 provides the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) direction from both the Illinois legislature and Illinois Pollution Control Board. These statutes establish that no person can threaten a water supply and that local water supply officials are responsible for protecting their water mains from connections that have the potential to allow the backflow of contaminants into their respective distribution systems. Further, 35 Ill. Adm. Code 602.115 gives the Illinois EPA authority to develop and modify "Agency" regulations regarding cross-connection control at community water supplies.

What happens if I do not fill out the survey?

All water customers are required to complete the survey. There are no penalties or fines for not completing the survey, however, we encourage everyone to complete the survey to assist the City in compiling accurate records and meeting compliance with IEPA. We ask for your cooperation with our program.

1042.22 CROSS-CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER SUPPLIES OR USES.

(a) No mains or service pipes shall be connected, in any way, to any piping, tank, vat or other apparatus containing liquids, chemicals or any other matter which may flow back into the mains or service pipes and endanger the water supply.

(b) No person shall cause a connection to be made, or allow one to exist, between the public water supply system of the City and a second or different source of supply, for commercial, domestic, sanitary, fire protection, boiler feed or any other purpose whatsoever.

(1977 Code § 71-223; Ord. 89-81. Passed 12-18-89.)

(c) No person shall establish or permit to be established, or maintain or permit to be maintained, any connection whereby a private, auxiliary or emergency water supply, other than the public water supply of the Water and Sewer Department, may enter said supply or distribution system, unless such private, auxiliary or emergency water supply and the method of connection and use of such supply have been approved by the Manager of the Water and Sewer Department and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, provided, however, that no arrangement or connection shall be permitted whereby an unsafe substance may enter the public water system.

(d) The Manager or his or her authorized representative shall have the right to enter, at any reasonable time, any property served by a connection to the public water supply or distribution system served by the Water and Sewer Department for the purpose of verifying the presence or absence of cross-connections, and the Manager or his or her authorized representative shall have the right to enter, at any reasonable time, any property served by a connection to the public water supply or distribution system for the purpose of verifying information submitted by the customer regarding the required crossconnection control inspection. On demand, the owner, lessees or occupants of any property so served shall furnish to the Manager any information which he or she may request regarding the piping system or systems or water use on such property. The refusal of such information, when demanded, shall, within the discretion of the Manager, be deemed evidence of the presence of improper connections, as provided in this section. (Ord. 96-88. Passed 1-6-97.)