

## **Backflow Q & A**

To protect the County's water system, Davie County's Backflow/ Cross Connection Control Ordinance requires that all single-family residential irrigation customers have an approved backflow prevention assembly installed and tested annually.

**Question:** What is Backflow?

**Answer:** On rare occasions, water pressure is interrupted—perhaps by a water main break, a power failure, firefighters battling a nearby blaze, or some other disruption in water service. When there is a significant loss of pressure, water can flow back into the public water supply system. When water flows backward into the public water supply, it is called “backflow”.

**Question:** My system has been installed for many years and this is the first time I have received a letter. How did the County know I had an irrigation system?

**Answer:** The County's backflow coordinator preforms inspections to identify if an irrigation system is present (i.e. very green grass, backflow preventer, sprinkler heads or irrigation valve boxes) or a separate irrigation meter.

**Question:** My neighbor has a lawn irrigation system, but hasn't received a letter. Why?

**Answer:** The County's backflow coordinator does regular inspections to identify lawn irrigation systems. However, some may not be highly visible. If we receive information (an address or name) we will conduct a closer inspection to verify the presence of an irrigation system and will update our data base. As always your information will not be mentioned when notifying another resident.

**Question:** Is the Backflow/Cross Connection Control Program a new requirement?

**Answer:** The County has had this requirement since 2011. We first began enforcement of this requirement with commercial and industrial water customers. All commercial and industrial services were required to have backflow prevention on their basic water service as well as their in ground irrigation systems and fire lines. We began moving forward with this requirement for residential irrigation systems.

**Question:** Why is annual testing required?

**Answer:** To ensure that the required backflow preventer is functioning properly. Mechanical backflow preventers are an assembly with springs and moving parts and are used in situations where an air gap cannot be used. Over time and continuous wear, these assemblies will fail or need parts replaced. When an assembly fails, it is no longer preventing backflow from occurring. Annual testing and inspection insures that the assemblies are kept in working condition.

**Question:** Before moving to Davie County I lived in an area that did not enforce annual testing for backflows prevention devices on lawn irrigation systems, so why does Davie County?

**Answer:** Lawn irrigation systems are considered “high risk “cross-connections because a backflow incident could introduce fertilizers, pesticides, and other lawn chemicals into the drinking water. Not to mention tiny insects and animal feces. To prevent this and keep the water safe, the County adopted requirements to ensure safe, quality drinking water that is free from any contaminations.

**Question:** Who is responsible for making sure the device is tested?

**Answer:** The property owner is responsible to have the device tested annually. Davie County is tasked by state law to maintain the records of backflow preventers and make sure testing is done annually.

**Question:** Who can test backflow preventer devices?

**Answer:** Only a certified backflow tester can test backflow preventers.

**Question:** Where can I find a certified tester and how much does it cost?

**Answer:** Most local plumbing, utility contractors and irrigation contractors have certified testers who perform the test. There is a partial list of certified testers that is included at [WWW.DavieCountync.gov](http://WWW.DavieCountync.gov) official website. If a company that you would like to use is not on the list, be sure they are in fact certified. Davie County does not recommend or endorse any particular company or tester and the list is provided as a convenience to our customers only. Customers are advised to perform their own due diligence before hiring someone to complete testing on their device.

**Question:** My lawn irrigation system is currently “inactive” .....do I still need to have a backflow preventer and have it tested annually?

**Answer:** If it is only turned off at the valve, a backflow preventer and annual testing is required. If it is permanently disconnected from the water supply, see next question.

**Question:** My irrigation system has been disconnected or removed - what do I need to do?

**Answer:** An inspection will need to take place to ensure the system is disconnected and capped off. You will need to contact the backflow coordinator Josh McChesney (336)-753-6096 or email to [jmccchesney@daviecountync.gov](mailto:jmccchesney@daviecountync.gov) to schedule the inspection. Once the inspection has been completed our records will be updated.

**Question:** I don't want to use my sprinkler system anymore. What can I do so I don't need to have a backflow preventer or have it tested annually?

**Answer:** Discontinuing Irrigation Service by property owners only.

If you discontinue the use of an irrigation system, you have the option to remove a separate irrigation meter at no cost; call (336) 753-6090 to make your request.

If you do not have a separate meter, you can contact a licensed plumber or irrigation contractor to disable and cap off the irrigation below grade. This action requires a plumbing permit and

Inspection by a Davie County plumbing inspector to ensure the work performed meets NC Plumbing code.