

COVID-19 Guidance for Cross Connection Control Program Administrators and Backflow Assembly Testers

Ongoing maintenance of a cross connection control program by each Utah public water system (PWS) is considered an essential function for the protection of the water distribution system from contamination. This includes cross connection hazard assessments and inspections and backflow assembly testing. The following activities should be maintained during the COVID-19 crisis:

- Any newly discovered cross connections must be corrected immediately to protect public health: locking out water meters while corrective actions are being taken would be appropriate if it is needed to prevent water distribution system contamination.
- Backflow prevention assembly testing should continue as scheduled when possible. However, since testing is an annual requirement, PWS's should consider providing flexibility to customers on backflow assembly testing due dates, provided testing can be completed within the calendar year. The Utah Rules for Public Drinking Water Systems require a backflow assembly be tested **"annually"**. For example, an assembly that was tested in 2019 can be tested at any time Between January 1 and December 31, 2020.
- Failed backflow assemblies should be repaired or replaced immediately. PWS's should consider providing assistance to customers to ensure testing and corrective actions can be completed in a timely manner. For example, backflow assembly repair and replacement services when testers or contractors are not available, or customers are unable to coordinate.
- Backflow assembly testers are essential workers, whether they are PWS employees, are contracted by the PWS, or are hired directly by customers.
- Backflow assemblies should be in areas where maintaining safe social distance would not be a concern. For backflow assemblies where a safe distance cannot be maintained (for example, interior devices) consider delaying those tests until later in the year and moving up other, safer test locations.
- If the PWS has customers that directly hires a backflow assembly tester, typically from a list provided by the PWS, and they cannot afford to pay for testing due to economic hardship, seek alternate solutions to satisfy the testing requirements (i.e. PWS directly contract for the testing of those devices and recover payment through regular billing). The PWS should exhaust every avenue before shutting-off someone's water during this emergency.
- When performing cross connection hazard assessments or inspections, be sure maintaining safe social distance would not be a concern and that proper protection against covid-19 exposure is used if necessary. For information to prevent exposure to COVID-19, go to coronavirus.utah.gov.

DDW Cross Connection Control contact: Gary Rager grager@utah.gov 801-536-4498