

Backflow and Cross-Connection FAQs

General

What is backflow?

Backflow is when polluted or contaminated water is subject to a reversed direction of flow and has the potential of entering the public potable water system. It can occur at any cross-connection between potable and non-potable water lines and is typically caused by a significant change in water pressure.

Why are backflow assemblies and backflow testing necessary?

The most common technique to prevent polluted or contaminated water from flowing backwards into the public water supply is through the use of backflow assemblies that can be installed to prevent backflow from occurring. In the case of an unexpected or dramatic change in water pressure, this assembly will stop potentially contaminated water from entering the clean water supply. However, these backflow assemblies must be properly installed, maintained and tested to confirm that they are functioning properly and to ensure that clean water lines remain free of contaminants.

Who is responsible for backflow assembly testing?

The responsibility of testing and maintaining backflow assemblies falls solely on the property owners and/or HOA managers (Responsible Party).

Who mandates the backflow program?

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Water Quality Control Division is responsible for ensuring that water suppliers comply with Regulation 11- Section 11.39, by requiring all water purveyors that own and operate public drinking water systems to protect the systems from potential contaminants through cross-connections.

I have not received the backflow notification letters. How can I make sure I receive the letters?

If you are the property owner or HOA manager for a property that requires backflow testing and have not received backflow testing notification letters, please make sure your account's billing information is updated by calling the Longmont Utility Billing Department at 303-651-8664 or by submitting updated information by filling out the form at [Responsible Party Address and Contact Information Changes form](#).

Please keep in mind that it is the property owner's/HOA manager's responsibility to keep their account information current and accurate. If you do not receive notification letters because your account information is not updated, this will **NOT** suffice as an excuse for missing your testing deadline.

The notification process for backflow testing is as follows (effective January 1, 2024):

- **45 days before the due date:** A Notice of Reminder will be sent, including detailed information about your backflow prevention assembly testing requirements.
- **1 day past the due date:** A Notice of Violation will be issued, providing information about your specific backflow assembly and its testing status.
- **31 days past the due date:** If you have not submitted the required test or an approved testing schedule to the City Backflow Prevention and Cross-Connection Control Program (BPCCP) Coordinator before the test due date, a fee will be added to your utility bill. Please note that written approval from the BPCCP Coordinator is necessary for a schedule extension.
 - The City-contracted testing company will contact customers who have not submitted a test result or have a written schedule extension approval to schedule backflow assembly testing.
- **61 days past the due date:** If the testing is not completed or scheduled with our contractor, you will receive a Warning of Escalated Civil Enforcement.
- **91 days past the due date:** If the required test or an approved alternative schedule is not submitted to the City BPCCP Coordinator, a Civil Penalty of up to \$500 per assembly will be assessed. Again, written approval from the BPCCP Coordinator is required for a schedule extension.
- **91 days past the due date:** For accounts that have not submitted a test report or an approved alternative schedule, all remaining accounts will be scheduled for service interruption on the main water supply line. This action will continue until all required backflow prevention assemblies are properly controlled and tested before the end of the year.

I saw a service fee charged to my account. What is this about?

Beginning in 2024, a service fee will be charged to the customer's utility bill if they do not complete their annual backflow testing requirements by their property's **annual due date**. This service fee will go towards funding the City's contracted backflow testing service that water customers will be **required** to use if their testing has not been completed on time or if the customer does not have a written approval of extension to have their testing performed.

Testing

How do I submit my backflow test report?

At this time, testers have two options to submit backflow tests to the City of Longmont: the online form or the paper form:

Online Form - [Backflow Assembly Test & Maintenance Report form online](#)

Paper Forms - If you prefer to download the test form, you will need to fill it out and submit by sending it as an attachment in an email to backflow@longmontcolorado.gov. The test form is available for download in the following formats:

- [PDF](#)
- [Word](#)
- [Excel](#)

I cannot complete the testing within the given time. What do I need to do to avoid service charges and/or penalty?

If you cannot meet the testing due date, please email backflow@longmontcolorado.gov or call 303-651-8416 to request an extension.

I missed the time frame for conducting the test. Now what should I do?

- Beginning in 2024, customers who do not complete their backflow testing requirement by the due date will be required to schedule testing with the City of Longmont's contracted testing service. At this point in the process, you will see a fee added to your utility bill that will go towards paying the City-contracted tester who will complete your backflow testing requirement and submit results to the Longmont Backflow Program.
- Do not schedule with your own tester past the annual due date unless you have written approval for an extension from the BPCCP Coordinator.
- **NOTE:** You will have a 10-day timeframe to request a written approval for extension after the annual testing due date.

Who performs the testing?

Backflow testing can be scheduled and completed by a certified testing contractor of your choice as long as the tests are completed by the annual due date associated with your property. If the testing is not completed by the annual date, property owners/HOA managers will be required to schedule and complete the backflow testing with the City of Longmont's contracted testing company and your utility bill will reflect the service fee for the backflow testing.

If I am late submitting my backflow tests, how much does a backflow test cost through the City of Longmont's backflow testing service and how do I pay for it?

- The cost of testing backflow assemblies through the City-contracted testing service will be based on two criteria: **a)** Backflow assemblies that are easily accessible (i.e. above ground) will cost **\$81.25**
b) Backflow assemblies located in a confined space (i.e. in a vault or crawlspace) will cost **\$162.50**
- The fee will be applied to the utility bill for each backflow assembly tested.

I am a tenant, and I received a backflow service fee added to my utility bill. Am I responsible for paying this?

No, the property owner or HOA manager is responsible for paying this fee. Please refer to the Longmont Municipal Code 14.06.010 - Section 2.

Will I get a copy of the report from the City's contracted tester?

Yes, the contractor will be required to send a copy of the completed test form to the Responsible Party.

What happens if the backflow device does not pass the test?

In all occurrences where a backflow assembly has failed its annual testing, whether the test was completed by the annual due date or not, the Responsible Party will need to complete any repairs or replacements of the backflow assemblies with **their chosen contractor** within **60 days** of the failed test. Customers who have a failing backflow assembly will receive a letter in the mail regarding the process for repairing or replacing their backflow assemblies.

What if I did not schedule the test with the City's contractor; what happens next?

- If you fail to schedule a test with the City's testing contractor within 60 days past the annual testing deadline, you will receive a Warning of Escalated Civil Enforcement. This warning will grant you 30 more days to complete the backflow testing associated with your property with the City's contracted tester. If the testing is still not completed by the 90th day after the due date, you will be issued a Civil Penalty of up to \$500 per assembly that does not meet the annual testing requirement.
- Even though you are issued a civil penalty, testing is still required before the end of the year and water suspension will be pursued if testing is not completed.

Cross-Connection Surveys

What is a cross connection?

A cross connection is any actual or potential connection between the drinking water lines and potential sources of pollution or contamination such as a piping arrangement or equipment that allows the drinking water to come in contact with non-potable liquids, solids, or gases, hazardous to humans in the event of a backflow.

What is a cross-connection survey?

A cross-connection control survey is a comprehensive inspection of new and existing water connections, fixtures and appliances to determine whether the public water supply is protected from cross-connection hazards downstream.

What properties are required to be surveyed?

All non-single-family (NSF) connections and waterworks must be surveyed (evaluated for cross connections). This includes all commercial, industrial, multi-family, agricultural facilities, as well as treatment plants, storage tanks and pump stations. Cross-connection control is only required if a cross connection is identified. There are occasions where single family residents may need a control measure implemented. Common examples are dedicated irrigation lines, homes that have fire suppression systems, and homes with boilers.

How will I be notified if I am required to have my property surveyed?

The City will reach out to you in order to schedule a survey. You will be required to grant access and be present at the time of survey. If the City does not contact you, then you are not required to participate in the survey process for the given calendar year.

Civil Penalties and Water Service Suspension

Do I avoid service interruption if I pay the civil penalty?

No, water service suspension will be pursued in order to protect Longmont's water supply even though you have been issued a civil penalty, this is a State regulatory and Longmont Municipal Code requirement. To avoid service interruption a backflow test is required for that calendar year.

Can I appeal the civil penalty?

Yes, a Civil Penalty can be appealed, please refer to the City ordinance [14.06.040](#).

How do I avoid civil penalty charges?

Civil Penalty charges can be avoided by scheduling and completing your annual backflow testing requirement on time.

When do I get a civil penalty?

Civil penalties are issued 91 days after the annual backflow testing due date.

Do I get a notification that says I will be charged a civil penalty?

Yes, you will receive a notice in the mail regarding the escalation to civil enforcement 61 days past the annual backflow testing due date. After this notice, customers will have 30 additional days to schedule backflow testing with the City's contractor in order to avoid civil penalties.

When will the City perform service disruption?

The City will pursue water service suspension towards the end of each year for customers who do not complete their backflow testing requirement.

Do I get a notice for service disruption?

Before suspension of water service is pursued, door hangers will be posted at the location of non-complying properties noting water suspension at the end of the calendar year.

