

## **Backflow Prevention**

*Protecting Water Protecting People*

### **QUESTIONS COMMONLY ASKED ABOUT BACKFLOW PREVENTION**

#### **Q: What is backflow-prevention?**

*A: The prevention of reverse flow in a water system from the normal or intended direction.*

#### **Q: What can cause something like this to happen?**

*A: Backflow and/or back-siphonage can be created in a water system by a drop in supply pressure due to heavy demand or use such as fire fighting, repairs or breaks in the supply pipe, etc.*

#### **Q: So, why is back-flow prevention important to me? What does this have to do with us? It's not our problem if you people can't design the system so we have enough pressure, without the pipes bursting all the time.**

*A: If everyone would use the same amount of water all the time this could become more of a reality. However, we all know this is not likely to happen. So it becomes every consumer's responsibility to protect his own system as well as other users of the public water supply system against any potential contamination or pollution which may be generated on or from his premises, which could backflow or be back-siphoned into his and/or the main supply system.*

#### **Q: Why am I responsible for backflow-prevention?**

*A: The Federal Government passed the Safe Drinking Water Act in 1974, and Georgia adopted these federal standards the same year. In 1977, Georgia passed the Rules for Safe Drinking Water which states:*

*"A supplier of water or any person having control of facilities which may cause the contamination of public water system has the responsibility to prevent water from unapproved sources or any contaminants from entering the public water system."*

*The Georgia Department of Natural Resources; Environmental Protection Division, in 1983 amended this rule and mandated that all public water systems develop Cross Connection Control and/or Backflow Prevention Programs.*

#### **\*\*Q: Is there a city ordinance that covers this?**

*A: Yes, City of Villa Rica 21-9, A-G*

#### **Q: Is there not a Grandfather Clause in regard to the retrofit requirement?**

*A: No, a contaminant and/or pollutant which might enter a system would be just as much a health hazard and create the same amount of damage regardless of the system's age. Older systems could in fact be a greater liability risk due to leakage, unauthorized changes, make-shift connections and etc.*

**Q: Why was this not brought to our attention at the time we were constructing the facility or before final approvals were given, and C.O. issued?**

*A: If a plan review meeting was held on the facility after 1983 there probably was a comment on the attachment sheet, that a backflow-prevention device would be required at the meter. However, in many incidences it was either omitted inadvertently, never placed on the bid drawings and/or just not installed by the contractor. Inspection of the device(s) prior to Final C.O. was not required in the past due to lack of available manpower and the time lag between setting the meter(s) and actual tie-in of the service to the facility.*

**Q: Why has this facility been singled out?**

*A: No facility has or is being singled out. Compliance letters are sent in order of evaluations that have been made based on; the type and amount of water use, the nature of material handled on the property, the number of individuals served, the degree of system complexity and/or potential for modification, the probability of existing cross-connections and the hazard involved should a backflow occur.*