

**Menasha Utilities**  
**Cross Connection Questions and Answers**  
**CROSS-CONNECTIONS CAN CONTAMINATE OUR SAFE WATER**

**What is a cross-connection?** A cross-connection occurs when a pipe designed to carry safe drinking water from Menasha Utilities is connected to a pipe containing unsafe water or other liquid material. Cross Connections can be simple things around the house like a hose that is submerged in a pool, carwash bucket, bathtub, laundry sink, or a pesticide sprayer connected to a garden hose. Contaminants can enter the distribution system through a siphon. If the Distribution system losses pressure rapidly from a water main break, unsafe substances can be siphoned into the water supply. This means that contaminated water in a pool, carwash bucket, laundry sink, or pesticide sprayer could be drawn into the water system.

**What is the Utility doing to prevent cross-connections?** Federal and State Laws require all water utilities to establish and implement cross-connection control programs. City ordinances have been adopted giving Menasha Utilities the authority to inspect all properties and order removal of cross-connections found. Non-compliance will result in the disconnection of water service to the user and possible fines. This includes the largest industrial plant to the smallest individual home. Protection of the water supply is critical to the health of our families. Menasha Utilities takes this responsibility very seriously.

**Will my home be inspected?** Homes are currently being inspected. New or remodeled homes are always inspected for cross-connections during construction. In existing homes, water meters are replaced on a 10-year cycle. During the meter replacement, technicians also inspect for cross-connections. A normal home inspection will take approximately 30 minutes.

**What will the inspectors be looking for?** One of the most common cross-connections in homes is a laundry sink with a threaded faucet for a hose connection. The hose could be submerged in the sink, which contains a toxic liquid, resulting in a health threatening cross-connection. Another common residential cross-connection can occur when a garden hose is connected to an outside hose faucet. If the other end of the garden hose is then placed in a swimming pool, or is being used to spray weed killer or liquid fertilizer on your lawn, or is simply lying in a puddle on the ground, a serious cross-connection has occurred. Another common residential cross-connection can occur if the wrong type of toilet tank ballcock assembly is used. If the wrong type is used, water can be drawn out of the toilet tank back into the house's plumbing and Menasha Utility's distribution system.

**How will I know what is found during the inspection?** The cross-connection inspector will be completing a "Residential Cross-Connection Inspection Form". A copy of this form will be given to the property owner when the inspection is completed. This form will explain what was in compliance as well as what change(s) need to be made.

**What can prevent cross-connections from occurring?** Backflow preventers can reduce the risk and protect our community from widespread illness and disease. They are devices that use a combination of check valves or hydraulic breaks that prevent water from moving backward into the water system. Backflow preventers come in many sizes, specifications and degrees of complexity depending on the problem being addressed.

**How will I know if the backflow preventer I'm installing is an approved device?** The American Society of Sanitary Engineering (A.S.S.E.) has performed the necessary research and developed the standards accepted by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, and the Menasha Utility Water Department. Any device that is labeled with an "A.S.S.E. #" will be considered as an approved backflow prevention device. Toilet tank fill devices must be labeled with A.S.S.E. # 1002. The inspection form provided by the Menasha Utility inspector will list the

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required A.S.S.E. # which needs to appear on each device depending on the type of backflow protection needed.

**How quickly do I need to make the required change(s)?** Corrections need to be made within 30 days from the inspection either by the property owner or a licensed plumber.

**What happens if a property owner doesn't make the necessary corrections or refuses to allow the inspector to check the plumbing?** According to the City of Menasha Municipal Code SEC.9-2-15, the Utility has the authority to disconnect the water service.

**What do I need to do after the corrections are made?** Once the required plumbing changes have been made, call Menasha Utilities at 967-3431 to schedule an appointment for re-inspection. Appointments for re-inspection will be scheduled Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Menasha Utilities inspector will verify that the necessary changes were made. A copy of the inspection form documenting the results will be given to the property owner if all non-compliant items are resolved.

**What is the cost to the property owner?** The property owner is responsible for having the proper backflow devices installed. The property owner is also responsible for any charges, materials, or labor that is not supplied by Menasha Utilities. Menasha Utilities does not charge for inspections or re-inspections

Cross-connections are a serious health threat and unsafe to all water users. Drinking water is regulated federally by the Environmental Protection Agency. Despite strict regulations, extremely dangerous situations can occur when backflow contaminants are inadvertently drawn into the drinking water supply. Cross-connection control is a long-term investment which requires a cooperative effort between health officials, Menasha Utilities, and property owners. The Water Utility greatly appreciates your help in keeping our water supply safe.