



Cross Connection Frequently Asked Questions

Without proper protection devices, something as useful as your garden hose has the potential to poison your home's water supply. In fact, over half of the nation's cross-connections involve unprotected garden hoses.

Cross connections are installed each day in the United States because people are unaware of the problems they can create. Death, illness, contaminated food products, industrial and chemical products rendered useless are some of the consequences of such connections. As a result, many hours and dollars are lost due to cross connections.

What is a "cross-connection?"

A cross-connection is a permanent or temporary piping arrangement, which can allow your drinking water to be contaminated if a backflow condition occurs.

A cross connection is a point in a plumbing system where the potable water supply is connected to a non-potable source. Briefly, a cross connection exists whenever the drinking water system is or could be connected to any non-potable source (plumbing fixture, equipment used in any plumbing system). Pollutants or contaminants can enter the safe drinking water system through uncontrolled cross connections when backflow occurs.

Where Are Cross Connections Found?

Cross connections are found in all plumbing systems. It is important that each cross connection be identified and evaluated as to the type of backflow protection required to protect the drinking water supply. Some plumbing fixtures have built-in backflow protection in the form of a physical air gap. However, most cross connections will need to be controlled through the installation of an approved mechanical backflow prevention device or assembly. Some common cross connections found in plumbing and water systems include:

1. Wash basins and service sinks
2. Hose bibs
3. Irrigation sprinkler systems
4. Auxiliary water supplies
5. Laboratory and aspirator equipment
6. Photo developing equipment
7. Processing tanks
8. Boilers
9. Water recirculating systems
10. Swimming pools
11. Solar heat systems
12. Fire sprinkler systems