Customer Service

Providing the best service to our customers, testers and staff.

Kathy Riley

Goal of Customer Service

• Problem Solve
• Educate customers
• Make them eager to comply
• Leave us a good review

Feedback on bad customer service

• Person was rude on the phone.
• Person made me feel stupid.
• Person on the phone transferred me to another person.
• At least you answer your phone.
• I spoke with my neighbor and they never heard about a backflow.

My reaction to the comments

• Person was rude on the phone.
  — I'm sorry about that; your call was sent to wrong department.
• Person made me feel stupid.
  — The person on the phone is new
• Person on the phone transferred me to another person.
  — Now you have me, the right person and HOW may I help you?
• At least you answer your phone.
  — Thank you, just doing my job.
• I spoke with my neighbor and they never heard about a backflow.
  — Only homeowners with lawn irrigation, have a backflow.

Routine Phone Calls

Backflow Letter

Web site address
Letter must be informational

Failure to comply may result in discontinuation of water service as referenced in the City Ordinance.

Charlotte City Code, Chapter 23, Article V, Sec. 23-181. (C)

As a reminder, the City sends out this letter 45 days prior to the month your test is due. Upon receipt of this letter, it is your duty to hire an approved certified tester to perform the backflow test on all assemblies. NOTE: The list of approved testers has changed starting this year. A list of approved testers is listed on our website: http://www.charlottewater.org/backflow.

Information for backflow tester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information for Tester:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 inch domestic service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meter Number: 200511963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Address: 124 FLOYD SMITH OFFICE PARK DR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Number: 354039-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location: A/G, RIGHT SIDE OF PROPERTY, ON HY 29, LAST 3 #'S OF THE SERIAL # ARE 081, 2-1/2IN.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Educate your customers

- Backsiphonage-The reversal of flow in a system caused by a negative pressure or vacuum in the supply piping.
- Backpressure- The pressure in the downstream piping rises above the pressure in the supply piping.

Educate your customers

- Customers expect clean safe drinking water once it leaves treatment plant.
- Once the water leaves treatment and goes to homes or businesses, water companies have no control of the safety of the water, Customers do.

Educate your customers which helps with retrofitting

- How do you stop potential dangerous situations from occurring?
  
  Eliminate the cross connection

- If that can’t be done, install a backflow device.
- Backflow device-one way valve wherein water is allowed to pass in only one direction if water attempts to reverse flow, the valve will close and the flow will be stopped.
Daily water usage for web site and social media pages

Moving along

- Gave examples on educating public
- Now I want to talk about those who provide the work for compliance.

—Backflow Testers/Installers

Congratulations, you’re taking the backflow certification course!

- Will you be working for a private company?
- Will you be working for yourself?
- Which cities or municipalities will you be testing?
- What equipment will I need?

Working with municipalities

- Check if city, town or municipality have a backflow program.
- What requirements are needed?
- What documentation is required?
- Just don’t start testing.
- Hundreds of reports are returned, why?

Municipalities within the area

Backflow Orientation

Working with municipalities
Sign and Date Agreement

Tester Application

Backflow Prevention Test Kit

Don't forget to get it calibrated!

Backflow Prevention Test Kit

List of Approved Companies in County

Submitting reports to municipality?

- Responsibility of Tester
- Responsibility of the Property Owner
- Customers have been known to contact municipality the day the device was tested to ensure it had been received!
- Customers will delay payment until municipality receives and processes report.
Reminder - Why customers can’t find a company on list of approved companies.

- Certification has expired
- Test kit is not calibrated
- Tester was removed due to disciplinary action.
- Tester renamed or changed companies
- Please inform municipality if you change companies!

Why is my backflow being tested twice a year?

- Some backflow testing companies have been known to test a device before and after device it’s winterize.
- Tester tested the device without customer notification.
- Letter from municipality went to headquarters of a company. They hired a local company and the tenant also hired a company. Device tested twice.

Has my backflow been processed for this year?

- Customers have been known to follow up ASAP after testing.
- Customers will refuse payment until test has been received and processed.
- Customers will share their issues with a testing company with their neighbors.

Competition among testers

- With so many companies on an approved list, who do you choose?
- Testing companies getting creative with their company name, $38 backflow test.
- Testers have reached out to groups such as homeowners associations, preconstruction visits and placing flyers in newspaper boxes to grow their business.

Social Media - Nextdoor.com

Backflow testing

- Does anyone have any recommendations on someone that can perform backflow testing on my irrigation system? We are in the Cabarrus County side...
  Reply added on 29 May 16

- Looking for someone to winterize my irrigation system.

Backflow on Social Media

- Recommendation for someone to perform the back flow test for me? The Concord Backflow Department (yes, there really is a Backflow Dept.) sent me a list of about 200 suggested inspectors so I could really use a recommendation here. I have no idea what something like this costs, if it’s a standard fee, etc. Thanks!
  Posted on 6 Mar to Highland Creek and EB nearby

Social Media - Nextdoor.com

- Frank Hamelly
  Backflow tester
  Recommendation for someone to perform the back flow test for me? The Concord Backflow Department (yes, there really is a Backflow Dept.) sent me a list of about 200 suggested inspectors so I could really use a recommendation here. I have no idea what something like this costs, if it’s a standard fee, etc. Thanks!
  Reply added on 8 Mar
Other Customer Comments

Michele Robinson, Highland Creek - Mar 8
Testing the backflow has nothing to do with conserving or not conserving water. It’s making sure the pressure in your irrigation is still working so that everyone’s water doesn’t get contaminated with a siphon effect. 😊

A local municipality response

Kathy Riley, Eastfield - Mar 8
I work for the Backflow Group in Charlotte. Backflow preventers are required, on the residential side, for those with irrigation systems, to ensure no contaminants go back into the water supply. FYI - when you pay for the service, the money is being paid to the business, not the city. Companies do vary in pricing, please pick one that works for your budget.

Identify yourself before you test.

Being a Backflow Prevention Tester

• More than just testing a device
• It’s working with other agencies such as municipalities
• Providing great customer service.
  – Educating Customers
  – Turning in reports on time
  – Leave a copy for your customer.

Being a Backflow Prevention Tester

• Hundreds individuals seek backflow certifications every year.
• It only takes 1 backflow prevention tester to do something wrong to make all backflow prevention testers look bad.
• With so many testers, customers will ask around seeking the best service and price.

Being a Backflow Prevention Tester

• Water is vital to our daily lives. Protecting our water supply is key!
• We are putting our trust in YOU!
Educating Staff

Host a Backflow 101 class.
Have staff attend a Cross Connection Control class.

True story

• Water Technician had trouble locating a meter in the field.
• Overheard dispatcher trying to help.
• Technician said he found a backflow.
• Jumped into action.
• Based on information off backflow assembly serial number, I was able to locate meter.

A few days later.....

• Dispatch requested a meter turn on.
• Technician on site was greeted by neighbor next door.
• New development and had the homeowner had a water leak.
• Dispatcher, was able to find customer information and determine it was a leak on backflow assembly.
• Dispatcher informed neighbor who last tested backflow and to contact company for assistance.

In conclusion

• Backflow Prevention is important.
• There are ways we can education our customers, backflow testers and staff.
• Education needs to be on a continuous.
• The more others know, the better.....
• Water is vital to our daily lives. Protecting our water supply is key!

Thank you!

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