

Backflow FAQ | more info can be found at : www.mercerisland.gov/backflow

1. Why do I have to test my backflow prevention assembly (ies) every year?

Backflow prevention assemblies protect your drinking water from potential sources of contamination. The only way to ensure they are working properly is to have them tested by a certified backflow assembly tester (BAT). The Uniform Plumbing Code (Section 603) and the Washington Administrative Code (Section 246-290-490) require annual testing of installed backflow prevention assemblies.

2. What is the BAT (Backflow Assembly Tester) list provided? Why do I not see the tester I used last year?

We provided the list of Backflow Assembly testers/companies who opted to be listed as a tester when renewing their certifications this year. Not all BAT's who test on Mercer Island will be listed. Regardless of who you choose to test your backflow please ask if they are up to date on their paperwork to test on Mercer Island.

3. How do I know how many assemblies I have on my property?

A list of all the assembly (ies) are listed on the back page of the notification letter. Each assembly will have some information regarding the assembly, Serial #, Hazard ID#, and hazard it is protecting, along with information that will help the tester locate the assembly. Please let your tester know what this is and how many assemblies they need to test. Having this information will help them input the results into our online portal accurately.

4. I just had my assembly(s) tested, why am I still getting this letter?

Please contact your test company/tester to ask for a confirmation code. This confirmation number is provided to the tester once they submit the results online to us at the City. You will have a unique code for each assembly tested so if you have 3 assemblies, they should provide you with 3 codes.

All backflow assemblies need to be tested Yearly and submitted for the Calendar year by June 30th.

For example, if an assembly was newly installed and tested with the date of November 15, 2019, it will need to be re-tested for the 2020 Calendar year. However, if an assembly is tested or newly installed on Feb 12, 2020 it is before the due date of June 30, 2020 so the next due date will be June 30, 2021.

Also be sure to check **ALL** assemblies on the property are up to date. The assemblies needing to be tested are provided on the back of the reminder mailer. Often the case is an assembly was overlooked when the tester was out, or a new assembly was installed and tested but the existing assemblies on the property were not tested at the same time.

5. Is there a cost to getting my Backflow Assemblies tested?

Yes. As a City we do not set a standard price for this service. Each backflow test company or tester is responsible for testing and submitting the test results via our online portal. When choosing a tester/company please verify they are set up to test on Mercer Island and ask for a confirmation number once the test is completed. This confirmation number is provided to the tester once they submit the results online to us at the City.

6. My irrigation is not being used this year, or I turned it off to save water do I still need to get it tested?

Yes. If the irrigation system is physically connected to the water system, your backflow prevention assembly must be tested. We will suspend the testing requirement if the customer provides a physical disconnect between the irrigation system and the public water supply by removing the backflow prevention assembly and capping the water supply line. You must contact our Community Planning and Development department at 206-275-7605 or email epermittech@mercergov.org to decommission the connection you are protecting, in this case of the irrigation by cutting and capping and paying permitting fees and getting it inspected.

7. My house is currently being re-built/remodeled and there is currently no water running to the property, how do I test my assemblies?

Please call the public works line 206-275-7608 or email backflow@mercerisland.gov to work with the Water Quality Technician on a plan for your situation.

8. I did not get a reminder letter/ or I have misplaced my letter, can I get a replacement copy?

If you do not have any backflow assemblies on your property, you will not receive a letter. If you are unsure, please call the public works line at 206-275-7608 or email backflow@mercerisland.gov . If you need another letter sent out, we can send it electronically, please email backflow@mercerisland.gov and in the subject line note "Resend reminder letter" and provide the address to the property the assembly (ies) are on.

9. I just purchased or moved into this property, how do I know if the backflow has already been tested by the previous owner or Tennent?

Please call the public works line 206-275-7608 or email backflow@mercerisland.gov . If you are receiving a letter most likely the property has not been tested yet. We will be able to look up your account and provide the information on which company last tested the assembly (ies) and the date it was last tested.

10. What will happen if I choose not to test my backflow prevention assembly (ies)?

Mercer Island must take the following enforcement action when backflow prevention assemblies are not tested or maintained as required:

In accordance with the Washington Administrative Code, we are required to terminate your water service.

"13.40.050 Termination of water service.

Failure of the customer to cooperate in the installation, maintenance, repair, inspection, and testing of backflow preventers and/or air gap separations required under this chapter shall be grounds for immediate termination of water service to the premises. (Ord. 543 § 1, 2006)"