



Tucson Water Backflow News

www.tucsonaz.gov/water/backflow.htm

Summer 2012

STAFFING UPDATE

Following suit with the rest of the City of Tucson, our section has undergone a few changes that you will notice around town & in the office. Cross Connection Control Specialist: Tom Clark, Barbara Keathley: Administrative Assistant & Karen Dotson: Program Supervisor are no longer in our section, but are out enjoying their well deserved adventures of newly retired living. Fearless Cross Connection Control Specialist: Becky Carpenter moved on to another department for the City. A new face among our office staff that replaces Barbara is: **Kristina Castanon**. Throughout her City of Tucson work career, Kristina started in 1993 and has worked for Tucson Water since 2001. We are very pleased to hear of all departments & sections, Backflow is her very all time favorite.Recently promoted **Melodee Loyer** is our new Program Supervisor. She's been with Tucson Water for over 5 years. With Melodee's championed leadership skills & knowledgeable assistance, our section's background scenes will continue to run just like clockwork....**Jeff Britt one of our new CCC-Specialists**, has been a longtime Tucson Water employee for a number of years and has always demonstrated an up for the challenge attitude. From his previous position within the department, Jeff was ready for a change and found that the highly coveted world of Backflow Prevention and Reclaimed Water was going to be the best move for him. Once selected as a new hire, Jeff was able to pass and obtain all needed certifications required for this current position effortlessly. From the beginning, we knew he'd

staffing update continued:

be a perfect fit for our group....**Bob Rich** is another new hire that you may have seen around the southeast ends of town. We were lucky enough to pick Bob up from his longtime, previous job as Sr.Plumbing Inspector for the City of Tucson. Bob replaces Tom and because of his previous behind the scenes view of what goes on from an inspector & customer perspective, he is a great addition to our group. Last but not least, our most recent new hire is **Craig Groethe**. His official position within our section was designated for Reclaimed items, but don't be surprised if you ever see him out assisting with backflow related issues. Craig brings with him numerous years of direct plumbing field knowledge from working in his own business as a backflow tester and most recently prior to his recruitment here, he was employed by the Town of Sahuarita working in the Plumbing Department. As you can see, we are very pleased with the new staff on board & look forward to continuing to work directly with everyone.

Backflow Testing

Certifications are valid for 3 YEARS. DO NOT PROCRASTINATE UNTIL THE MONTH YOU EXPIRE TO RECERTIFY!!





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Tucson Water will not register a tester that only verbally informs us that he/she passed the ABPA or PIPE accreditation required for Backflow Testing Certification. If you do not have current proof showing valid certification dates, we will be unable to update your tester record. You are not to perform backflow tests until an updated copy of your recertification is provided to our office. If you do choose to test without providing us the updated card, your tests will be rejected by iBAK.

As a reminder that was effective July 2011, our section was mandated by Mayor & Council to charge an **\$18 fee** for all new & recertifications for registered testers that are testing within the Tucson Water jurisdiction.. We also charge a **separate \$18 fee** for the record keeping of new or updated calibrations for your backflow testing gauge. Since your test equipment is calibrated annually, you will be charged the \$18 fee upon receipt of your updated calibration certificate.

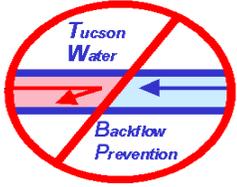
For those of you that have already set up your Backflow Permit's & Registration's accounts, beginning **July 2012** we are making internal changes that affect how you recertify yourself or your gauge. If your account has a past due amount of either \$18 fee for recerts or a past due \$82 permit fee that has been unpaid for over 30 days, we will not recertify the tester or gauge until the account is paid and current. Please make sure these balances are getting paid and do not go delinquent!

QUICK BACKFLOW FACTS

- Tucson Water only monitors the SERVICE PROTECTION. Soda machines, ice makers, etc may get tested for your customer's however; we are not the ones requiring these internal tests.
- Installations & replacements MUST BE a MINIMUM of 12" ABOVE GRADE, so please do not use the dig around technique because it will always fail an inspection!
- Vaulted bfa's always need adequate drainage. Check w/the area Specialist if an assembly looks "Iffy" to you before you take the time to test!
- Insulated or wrapped bfa's need their serial numbers to be VISIBLE. The relief valve is to remain open & the test cocks exposed. If you mummify these items for your customers, we will have to utilize our "by any means necessary" tactics so that we have access to the mentioned items regardless of your customer's expense. So if you do see these, or your customers ask you to insulate their bfa's, please advise them of what is appropriate what is not.

FREEZE OF 2011 RECAP

As you all know, the beginning of February 2011 was a memorable time for not only Tucson Water, but for the testers and the overall plumbing industry. If you weren't a tester at that time or were underneath a rock during the first few days of February, a number of unsuspecting customers & semi prepared customers awoke one morning to find their homes & businesses submerged in ice cold water. Gushing geysers that turned into swells of valuable flowing water could be seen streaming down almost all major streets due to pipes & bfa's freezing from the exceptionally cold weather. What a whirlwind of a time it was indeed, and only you know how to recant your personal experience of how the days that followed the freeze went. Many of you were overwhelmed with work for these customers who needed repairs, permits and replacements.



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freeze continued:

Plumbing supply stores ran out of assemblies and their needed parts; what else could have gone wrong? On the brightside, many of you testers were able to maintain a high level of professionalism toward these highly demanding customers who needed their water back on: NOW NOW NOW! Responsible tester's informed their paying customers of the required permits needed for their replacement assemblies and also offered advice on how to protect their bfa's in the future against freeze damage with proper insulation techniques. The customers that were allowed temporary by-pass systems to be installed per their Specialist's approval were rechecked & closed out with approved methods of backflow protection. If we never acknowledged it before, our staff truly appreciates all the hard work involved and commends those of you that utilized your always professional demeanor. Thank you for your assistance to ensure the Tucson Water system is kept safe for all!

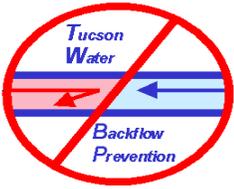
One observation our Specialists have seen in the field, is from the bfa's that miraculously survived the big freeze, those assemblies have now been noted to be functioning on their "last legs". When we do encounter the occasional assemblies that were left outstanding due to unacceptable installation or permit reasons, the customer is notified on what their next steps are so that they can get their bfa in compliance.

STOLEN BACKFLOWS

With an increase of financial difficulty among our community, unfortunately we are seeing an enormous rise in the theft of backflow assemblies. On a daily basis, the Backflow office will have a minimum of at least one stolen backflow request per day. The Tucson

stolen backflows continued:

Police Department is working diligently with trying to track down these thieves and to narrow down which scrap yards are accepting these stolen items. Please note, the customer is responsible for the maintenance/care of their private backflow assembly. Advise your customers not to make it easy for these thieves to have simple access to assemblies, making it easy to steal. Cages and locks do not guarantee the bfa will not be targeted, however it does make the thief have to work a little harder to get what they're after. All replacement assemblies will require a permit so that the new bfa may be tested & registered into our system. The customer may pull their own permit if they are the homeowner or occupant of a residence. Any other customer must have a licensed contractor pull their permit. We do not issue permits to the handymen of buildings nor the building owner. If you see a crime in progress, do not attempt to apprehend or make personal contact with the culprits. A gathering of information, such as a thorough description of the person or people involved, the vehicle information with a plate number, the location and time the crime was occurring with a call to 911 is the best way to go. Sooner or later, they will be caught. We have been told by representatives for the commercial properties that they plan to prosecuted for this theft. Tucson Water also plans to pursue the criminals for tampering with our water system.



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EVENTS and DATES TO REMEMBER

- **20th Annual AZABPA Conference**
When - Friday June 1, 2012
Time - 7:30am- 4:00pm
Where - Chandler City Hall /Council Chambers
175 S. Arizona Avenue
Chandler, AZ 85224
www.azabpa.org
Copy & paste this link for the flyer:
http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?llr=fh4brhfab&v=001dK288jsKZ5IcUxe1fq4qN8DV-et6cu8lfvX3UIf-NIxHsd9u_uM_6ue1FKcu4Q9-9eVdU1MfO-yhcwfyXyfU1BUZvjjwBC6RZAUNPvruZlcLcHWYcUon1KByywFSmufcKtM92iK2MErx1STtNXjA1YAnzOvRja-sBjCY9OScXp0VigPQRIGIPDoWFUEB5v9qtUI3z16IWROK_M_w7-M-snSv12YuWJk6Ox8iZ6qvt09MfudTD82YVw%3D%3D
- **Tucson Water Reclaimed Site Tester Training Class June 5th**
The first 20 testers that previously expressed interest in the class have already been notified with a reminder.
- **July 2, 2012**
BF permits & registration's accounts **must be current** to recertify testers & their equipment.

CONTACT US:

NW Zone 1 Randy Purdy 520-349-1478
NE Zone 2 Jeff Britt 520 -349-3605
SW Zone 3 Ron Engelkes 520-349-1476
SE Zone 4 Bob Rich 520-349-9138
Reclaimed Water & other Backflow:
Craig Groethe 520-349-1475

Backflow Office: 520-791-2650

Hours 8:00am – 4:00pm M - F

**If arriving to complete a permit or for other registration/in person items and as a courtesy- please do not arrive later than 3:30pm in the event your visit is complex in nature or in the event the City Cashier will be needed for your backflow transaction.*

TESTERS CORNER

This area of our newsletter is a work in progress and we need YOUR HELP. Please feel free to send us any items you'd like to see published within our backflow newsletter! Valuable FYI types of submissions are great considering you are our extra set of eyes around town. We are not limiting you from sending in any other types of items such as cartoons, jokes, short articles on your personal testing experiences, etc; as long as they are backflow related. All entries received will be reviewed to make sure they are appropriate to distribute among City of Tucson policies. We look forward to seeing your response, so please send your Tester's Corner items to: TW_Backflow@tucsonaz.gov .