

CROSS CONNECTION CONTROL PROGRAM

Lead-free Requirements for Backflow Prevention Assemblies

Background

Plumbing products may be leaching lead into drinking water. Ingestion of lead can be harmful to humans. In 2009, the State of California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) enacted laws to reduce the amount of lead allowed in plumbing fixtures intended to convey and/or dispense water for human consumption. The California Health & Safety Code (CA H&SC) was amended on January 1, 2010 to eliminate lead from plumbing fixtures including backflow prevention assemblies.

When lead-free backflow prevention assemblies are required

The lead-free plumbing product requirement applies to backflow prevention assemblies and devices which are used to prevent the reverse flow of contaminants and pollutants into the drinking water system. The San Mateo County Cross Connection Control Program requires that any backflow prevention assembly or device that comes into contact with drinking water be lead free. If a backflow prevention assembly with any potable downstream use fails when a field test is performed, the assembly cannot be repaired and must be replaced with a lead-free assembly.

Lead-free backflow prevention assemblies and devices are not required:

- on a dedicated fire water service meter or branch line¹
- on a dedicated irrigation water service meter or branch line
- on a dedicated industrial water service meter or branch line
- on a dedicated recycled water meter service

How to determine if a backflow prevention assembly is lead-free

Backflow prevention assembly manufacturers have plumbing product lines that are lead-free and denote that the assembly is lead free in the model number (e.g. LF909 with “LF” meaning “lead-free”). San Mateo County Cross Connection Control Certified backflow testers are knowledgeable of the lead-free requirements and can help to determine the appropriate backflow prevention assembly.

Resources

For more information about low-lead plumbing product requirements:

<http://dtsc.ca.gov/PollutionPrevention/upload/Lead-in-Plumbing-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

For additional information about the San Mateo County Cross Connection Program:

<http://smchealth.org/crossconnection> (650) 372-6200

¹ A branch line is a pipe that stems from the main lateral line from the water service meter.

