



CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

REPORT TO MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

DATE: January 20, 2025

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Earle M. Chesley, P.E., General Services Director

Subject: Advisory of Residential Irrigation Backflow Test Protocols

Recommendation

Accept this report. Establishment of a residential irrigation backflow test fee will be included in the annual ordinance and non-ordinance fee approval process.

Background

In accordance with NHDES Env-Ws 364, Backflow Prevention, the City will begin conducting residential irrigation backflow tests in our continued efforts to protect the City's water supply and distribution system from potential contamination. Backflow tests are tests completed on devices that are installed on potentially hazardous connections to the water distribution system. Residential irrigation systems pose a low hazard threat as fertilizers and other lawn treatment chemicals are used and could enter the system in a backflow situation, putting customers health at risk.

Discussion

In the rollout of this testing program, customers whom have residential irrigation systems and accounts will be notified of the new requirement by mail. The notice will describe the means by which testing may occur. In most cases, where the residential irrigation backflow device is easily accessible and mounted on the outside of a property, a City of Concord Meter Technician in a marked City vehicle, will conduct the test after knocking on a homeowner's door to announce his or her arrival. In the event that a customer is not home, the test will be conducted and a door tag will be left advising the customer that the test was conducted.

In instances where there is some obstacle or obstruction that would prevent unfettered access to testing the device, office staff will reach out to the customer to schedule a testing appointment

date and time. If the City is still unable to gain access, after all reasonable attempts have been made, the device will be considered failed and service will be disconnected as described below.

Following the test, customers will be notified if the device on the residential irrigation system failed. In the event of a failure, customers will be provided information on the reason for failure as well as options for correcting the failure. If within 30 days, the required fix is not made to the backflow device, the City will need to disconnect service to the system, as prescribed by NHDES Env-Ws 364 to protect the customers. In the event of a passed test, no action is required.

Where residential backflow testing may be a simpler and quicker process than Commercial/Industrial tests, the proposed fee will be \$25.00. Current Commercial/Industrial fees are \$85.25 per test. The \$25.00 residential testing fee is among the lowest charges observed when the comparison is made to the so called “7 Sisters” representing larger and like sized communities in the region.

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