



Water Matters

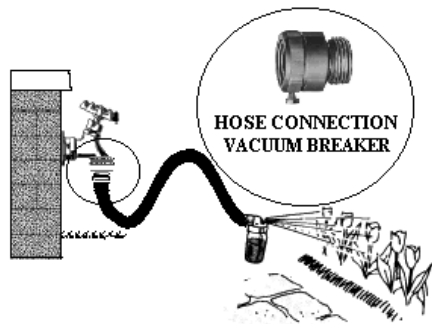
June 2003
Moscow, Idaho

in the City of Moscow

www.ci.moscow.id.us

City Protects Household Water Supply

Irrigation systems installed around homes have the potential for dangerous backflow problems. Backflow can occur when the pressure in the water main drops below the line pressure in your home, causing a "soda straw" effect or "backsiphonage." This effect can draw water that may be contaminated by pesticides and/or fertilizer into your home or city water supply. You may not even be aware that the water in your home has been contaminated. Backflow contamination could endanger the health of a household, neighborhood, or community.



The hose connection vacuum breaker protects the domestic water supply from chemicals applied through garden hoses. They are required on all new home construction.

Starting in 2003, a five year comprehensive program to identify and correct all potentially hazardous residential irrigation systems within the City of Moscow begins. All irrigation systems, existing or new ... must be equipped with an approved backflow prevention assembly. Only properly installed, state approved backflow prevention assemblies fulfill all drinking water regulations and provide health protection for your family and neighbors. **Owners will be required to upgrade their irrigation systems within 30 days of notification.**

Visit these water resources on line:

- www.ci.moscow.id.us
- www.pcei.org
- www.uidaho.edu/pbac
- www.pwcn.org

A Special Offer from the Moscow Water Department

To encourage residents to voluntarily comply with State and City drinking water regulations specific to Residential Irrigation Systems, the City of Moscow will **waive all required plumbing permit fees for retrofitting existing unprotected irrigation systems during 2003.**

Is your household water supply properly protected? Talk to your irrigation contractor or call Tod Gosselin at the Moscow Water Department (883-7111) for a free irrigation system survey (water conservation devices are also available for free; see page 2).

This offer has been made possible by the Moscow City Council, that recognizes the need to protect the public water supply.

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CITY OF MOSCOW WATER DEPARTMENT

LAWN IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

WHAT IS A "CROSS CONNECTION"? A cross connection is a point in a plumbing system where the drinking water is actually or potentially connected to a contamination source.

WHAT IS "BACKFLOW"? Just like it sounds "backflow" is water or other unwanted substances flowing in the opposite direction of its normal or intended course.

ALL IRRIGATION SYSTEMS, new or existing **MUST BE EQUIPPED** with an approved backflow prevention assembly. Only properly installed, state and city approved backflow assemblies meet the Idaho State Drinking Water Regulations and Moscow City Code. Backflow assemblies are necessary to protect the health of your family and neighbors. Contaminated water from an unprotected irrigation system can enter your drinking water supply or the public water supply.

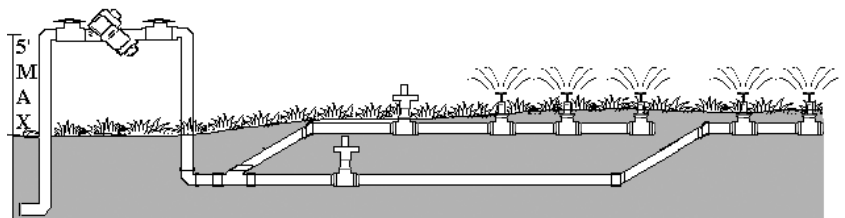
All backflow assembly installations required by the City of Moscow **REQUIRE A PLUMBING PERMIT**. All piping and materials must meet current City of Moscow plumbing codes.

Contact Tod Gosselin at the Moscow Water Department (883-7111) for a free pamphlet outlining your irrigation system options, or a free irrigation system survey.

Irrigation Systems Feature Three Options

Three approved options are available to prevent water backflow in automatic irrigation systems installed in city residences. They are the Double Check Valve Assembly (below, right), the Pressure Vacuum Breaker, and the Reduced Pressure Backflow Assembly. Each option differs in its ability to accommodate practices such as chemical irrigation of lawns, seasonal air purging, and system installation above or below grade. To learn which of these options best suits your needs, contact Tod Gosselin at the Moscow Water Department (tgosselin@ci.moscow.id.us or 883-7111).

Residents should also check their outside faucets for hose connection vacuum breakers (above, left) that prevent contamination through the garden hose. These devices are required on all new homes.



Above is an example of a Double Check Valve Assembly, one of three approved options for protecting our water supply from potential residential irrigation systems contamination.

Outdoor Water Conservation

Water is a crucial resource. Remember last summer when Well #9 failed to operate properly? That well is responsible for providing 40% of the City's water. City residents responded well to the emergency, and within one day, City water use dropped from 5 million gallons per day to 2.5 million gallons per day. It is important to remember that water conservation is not something that should just happen in an emergency, but is an ongoing effort. With that in mind, here are some tips for conserving water in your yard and garden.

- * Water before 8 a.m. or after 6 p.m. and avoid watering on windy days.
- * Water in several short sessions rather than one long session. This allows your lawn to better absorb moisture and grow deeper roots.
- * Many plants and lawns only need water once per week. Over-watering promotes shallow root growth, making your lawn less hardy.
- * Adjust the timer on automatic sprinklers according to seasonal water demands.
- * Install a rain shut-off device on automatic sprinklers.
- * Use soaker hoses instead of sprinklers.
- * Maintain a lawn height of 2 1/2 to 3 inches to help protect the roots from heat stress and reduce the loss of moisture to evaporation.
- * Avoid planting turf in areas that are difficult to irrigate properly such as steep inclines and isolated strips along sidewalks and driveways.
- * Aerate clay soils at least once per year to help the soil retain moisture.
- * Cluster plants with similar water requirements.
- * Consider planting native or low-water-use plants wherever possible. Many of these plants require less maintenance, little or no water, and provide habitat for native fauna, especially birds.
- * When creating a landscape plan, take into consideration how the yard will be used and how it can provide the greatest benefit with the least amount of maintenance.

Free Water Conservation Devices!

The Moscow Water Department provides a variety of free water conservation devices to help city residents conserve water indoors and out. To receive your free water-saving devices, stop by at 120 West A Street or call 892-8655.

Wet Fact:

Did you know that Moscow relies entirely on ground water from the Grande Ronde and Wanapum Aquifers for its supply of municipal, domestic, and institutional water? Water in the Grande Ronde Aquifer has been dropping by 1-2 feet per year without much recharge. This water is at least 10,000 years old (*source: 2001 Annual Report of the Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee*).



Moscow resident, Jason Mills demonstrates how his rain water collection system works on the back of his shed. Jason uses his water to grow corn, peppers and tomatoes in front of his home on A street. Jason built the system mostly with recycled materials and collects 165 gallons at a time. Photo: www.pcei.org

Please fill out the enclosed Moscow water survey!

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