

# RESIDENTIAL FIRE SPRINKLER TESTING

CITY OF ROCKWALL  
Public Works  
Department



City of Rockwall  
*The New Horizon*

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## Residential Fire Suppression System Backflow Testing Requirement

The residential fire suppression system at your property requires a testable backflow prevention assembly. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the City of Rockwall strictly enforce these safety regulations.

Because fire protection systems contain stagnant water that poses a severe health risk, this setup must undergo a physical test. Moving forward, this physical backflow test is required annually on this same anniversary date.

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### Why is this Device Required?

A residential fire suppression system requires a backflow preventer because the water sitting inside fire sprinkler pipes is highly stagnant and toxic, posing a severe health hazard if it reverses into your drinking water supply.

### The Problem: "Dead" Water

Unlike the pipes feeding your kitchen sink, fire sprinkler lines are closed loops where water sits undisturbed for years. Over time, this trapped water causes several dangerous reactions:

- **Bacterial Growth:** The warm, dark environment inside the pipes breeds harmful bacteria and pathogens.
- **Chemical Contamination:** Pipes leech hazardous heavy metals like lead, mercury, and zinc directly into the stagnant fluid.
- **Sludge and Odor:** The liquid degrades into a thick, black, foul-smelling oily sludge filled with rust and scaling.

## **The Catalyst: Hydraulic Pressure Flips**

Water normally flows from the high-pressure city main into your home's lower-pressure plumbing. However, sudden drops in municipal water pressure—caused by a water main break or fire crews opening a nearby fire hydrant—create a vacuum or "siphon" effect. Without a mechanical block, this pressure drop will violently suck the toxic sprinkler sludge backward into the municipal water line or your home's fresh drinking taps.

## **The Solution: The Backflow Assembly**

A backflow prevention assembly consists of spring-loaded mechanical check valves that act as strictly one-way gates. They allow clean water to pressurize your fire system but instantly slam shut if they detect any backward drop in pressure, ensuring cross-contamination is impossible.

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## **Action Steps Required by the Homeowner**

1. **Hire an Approved Tester**
    - Hire a licensed Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester (BPAT).
    - The operator must be registered with Rockwall via SC Tracking Solutions.
  2. **Execute the Physical Test**
    - The tester must physically test the safety valves to verify mechanical function.
  3. **Electronic Report Submission**
    - Your tester must upload the digital passing report directly to the SC Tracking Solutions Database within 48 hours.
    - *The city no longer accepts paper or email form*
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## Where to Find Registered City Testers

- **Public Backflow Tester Directory:**
    - Visit the live, up-to-date registry online at the SC Tracking Solutions Public Directory at [www.sctrackingsolutions.com](http://www.sctrackingsolutions.com) and then by selecting the "Need a Service Provider" menu.
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## ● Enforcement Notice

**Failure to maintain annual compliance will result in code enforcement action.** The City of Rockwall reserves the right to issue legal citations, apply monetary fines, or terminate municipal water service to non-compliant properties.

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## Questions & Support

- **Database & Portal Tracking Help:**  
Contact SC Tracking Solutions at **(866) 232-0174**.
- **City Code & Enforcement Regulations:**  
Contact the City of Rockwall Service Center at **(972) 771-7734**.