



PRESS RELEASE: Town of Antigonish Implementing a Cross-Connection Control Program

Release Date: July 20, 2018

In order to continue to provide our residents with safe, clean drinking water, the Town of Antigonish is implementing a Cross Connection Control Program for our Water Utility.

The purpose of this program is to protect residents of the Town of Antigonish and other Utility users from contaminants that may enter the water system through cross-connections or backflow. "What we are trying to do," explains Chief Administrative Officer, Jeff Lawrence, "is prevent potentially harmful materials from inadvertently coming into contact with the public water supply." The provisions for the program are outlined in the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board's Schedule of Rules and Regulations and are a regulatory requirement of our Water Utility by the Department of Environment and the National Building Code.

Contamination – which can mean non-toxic as well as potentially toxic material being sent into the water supply – can be caused by cross connections of piping (that is, a situation where a potable water supply line is connected to a line that contains a contaminant) or backflow or back-siphonage (that is, where changes in pressure caused by repairs, water breaks, fire fighting, etc. can result in water flowing back into the water supply).

"This is primarily a risk management initiative," noted Mr. Lawrence, "as backflow devices are required on buildings where there is a greater potential for contamination of the water supply." It is expected that many of these devices are already in place where they are required; the work is in demonstrating that they are installed and tested.

The Town of Antigonish Water Utility has approximately 1,600 metered water connections, and just over 80% of connections are considered to be of low risk of contamination. "We want to focus on the higher risk connections first and work our way down to the lower risk connections," explained Mr. Lawrence. High risk connections would include buildings containing sprinkler systems and uses that include funeral homes, doctor's offices, dentist's offices, laboratories, nursing homes, etc. Moderate risk connections would include residences with pools, restaurants, apartments and commercial or industrial buildings. Residential homes are considered a low risk.

The prevention of back flow can be managed with the installation of specifically-designed devices, which can include:

- Air Gap (AG);
- Reduced Pressure Principle Assembly (RP); and
- Double Check Valve Assembly (DCVA).

The Department of Public Works has developed a helpful guide which explains the various types of assemblies and how they are used which can be accessed from our website.

“Under the program, customers will assume the responsibility for ensuring that backflow prevention devices are installed and tested on an annual basis,” states Mr. Lawrence. Backflow systems must be tested annually because the devices have internal seals and springs that are subject to wear and fatigue, which can compromise their effectiveness.

For more information, please visit our website: [Town of Antigonish, Water & Sewer Services](#)

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