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## Operating Procedures for Cross-Connection Control Program

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### 2021 Instructions for Authorized Backflow Prevention Assembly Testers

The purpose of these instructions is to set forth the responsibilities of and requirements for backflow prevention assembly testers in the City and County of San Francisco (City). The instructions describe the requirements for operating in San Francisco, how to submit testing information, and how to communicate with the City departments involved in the Cross-Connection Control Program. Information provided by testers is used to maintain the Cross-Connection Control Program database and assists the City in creating new accounts and updating existing accounts. It is important that testers ensure the accuracy of reports and information submitted to the program.

These instructions are organized into the following sections:

- 1 Permit to Operate
- 2 Authorized Tester Responsibilities
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#### 1 Permit to Operate

Testers who operate within the City must obtain a permit to operate from the San Francisco Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Branch (SFDPH-EHB). Requirements for obtaining a permit are summarized below.

- All applicants for a permit to operate must hold a valid “Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester” certification from the American Water Works Association, American Backflow Prevention Association, American Society of Sanitary Engineers, or Northern California Backflow Prevention Association. Applicants must pay an initial application fee, pass an exam administered by SFDPH-EHB, and pay an annual license fee. The tester or the tester’s employer must maintain general liability insurance (described below) and annually provide proof that any test kit used within the City has been calibrated. The

permit to operate is issued to the tester, not the employer, and it is the tester's responsibility to keep the permit current.

- General liability insurance must be in full force and effect for all activities performed under a permit to operate. The insurance must include coverage for bodily injury, personal injury, including death resulting therefrom, and property damage insurance, with limits not less than \$1 million each occurrence combined single limit. The City and County of San Francisco, its officers, and employees must be named as additional insureds under the policy, and a cross-liability clause must be attached. The insurance must provide 10-day prior written notice of cancellation, non-renewal, or material change to SFDPH-EHB. SFDPH-EHB will not issue a permit to operate before receiving a certificate of insurance meeting these requirements. This requirement does not apply to testers who are City employees.
- To maintain a permit to operate, testers must be in good standing, have a current "Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester" certification from a recognized testing organization, have attended the annual tester meeting (or taken online training), maintain insurance, provide proof of use of a calibrated test kit, and pay the annual license fee. Fees are billed to individual testers or their employers through the City's Office of the Tax Collector.
- Permittees who change employment and continue to work in San Francisco must contact SFDPH-EHB and provide the following information:
  - End date with the previous employer and start date with the new employer.
  - Current certificate of liability insurance if the new employer does not already have one on file with SFDPH-EHB.
  - Updated contact information.
- Permittees who stop working in San Francisco permanently must contact SFDPH-EHB to close out their permits to avoid incorrect billing of annual license fees.
- A tester's permit to operate may be suspended or revoked for cause, for failing to comply with the requirements of Article 12A of the San Francisco Health Code, or for failing to pay the annual license fee.

## 2 Authorized Tester Responsibilities

- All testers must attend the Annual Meeting for Backflow Prevention Assembly Testers, hosted by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission's (SFPUC's) Water Quality Division (WQD) and SFDPH-EHB. Alternatively, testers may complete an online training program. SFDPH-EHB will inform testers about how to access the program, which must be completed by January 31 (or other specified date) of each year.
- Testers must attach backflow tags to assemblies that have passed testing. (See Section 3 for how to obtain tags.) Tags must be from the current year: even if the test due date was the previous year, the tag attached should reflect the year that the assembly was tested, not the year that testing was due. Note that if an assembly is delinquent, it might need to be tested twice in the same year to get it back on schedule.

- Bypass assemblies require separate test reports and backflow tags in addition to those for the main assembly. Note, however, that RPDA-II and DCDA-II assemblies are considered single assemblies and only require one test report and one tag.
- Testers are responsible for entering their own test data into the Cross-Connection Control Program’s *Cross-Connection Assembly Management System (CCAMS)*. (See Section 10 for how to submit test information.) Test results must be entered within five business days of the test date, **unless** an assembly fails testing and cannot be repaired the same day. In that case, test results must be entered into CCAMS **the day of the test** so that WQD is informed of the failure.
- All assemblies installed in San Francisco must be on the “Approved Backflow Prevention Assemblies” list developed by the University of Southern California (USC) Foundation for Cross-Connection Control and Hydraulic Research.
- Assemblies must be installed in the orientation approved by USC. Any modification of an assembly—such as relocation of valves, bypass arrangements, and jumper connections, whether temporary or permanent—invalidates the foundation’s approval and is not permitted. The only exception allowed by USC is that flanged shut-off valves 2.5 inches or larger may be rotated by one bolt hole.
- Testers **must submit test results electronically** via CCAMS. (Section 4 describes how to set up a CCAMS account.)

### 3 Obtaining Backflow Tags

- Backflow tags are sold by the SFPUC Customer Services Bureau (CSB), located on the first floor of 525 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco. Tags may be purchased by Authorized Backflow Prevention Assembly Testers or up to two designated representatives of testing companies. CSB accepts payments by cash (in person only), company or cashier’s check, and money order. (No personal checks or credit cards accepted.) Checks should be made out to SF Water Department.
- Normally, the bureau is open from 8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday. To purchase tags in person, the buyer must provide official identification (e.g., driver’s license), name of the company being represented, and payment. Tags obtained in person may be purchased in any amount. **However, because of the COVID19 pandemic, CSB is currently (as of January 2021) not open for in-person sales. WQD will inform testers when in-person sales resume.**
- **Until in-person sales resume, tags may be obtained in two ways:**
  - **By US Postal Service Certified Mail:** Mail a purchase request form (link available at [sfpuc.org/backflow](http://sfpuc.org/backflow)) with payment to Customer Services Bureau, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, 525 Golden Gate Avenue, 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94102. The request may also be deposited in the night mail box outside the entrance of 525 Golden Gate Avenue. Deposit by 8 am Wednesday mornings for fastest service. CSB will mail the tags by certified mail on Thursdays. Mail orders require a minimum purchase of 10 tags.

- **By appointment at WQD's offices in Burlingame** (1657 Rollins Road): This service is intended to assist testers with unexpected needs for tags and should not be considered for frequent use. Owing to the pandemic, WQD has limited staff on site. For routine purchases, please plan to obtain tags from Customer Services Bureau via the US Postal Service. Tag sales at WQD will only be available until the resumption of regular in-person sales at Customer Services Bureau.

Sales are limited to a maximum of 25 tags. Email a completed purchase request form, "Expedited Tags, 25 Maximum" (link available at [sfpu.org/backflow](http://sfpu.org/backflow)), to [backflow@sflower.org](mailto:backflow@sflower.org). You will be contacted at the phone number you provide on the form to set up an appointment for pickup. Appointments are available on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays (excepting holidays). **You must have an appointment to pick up your tags.** When you arrive at WQD, stay in your car and call the number on the form, and someone will come out and meet you at your car. Bring correct payment (check or money order) with you to the appointment.

- **Backflow tag exchange in January 2021:** In January only, test companies may make a one-time exchange of up to one hundred 2020 backflow tags for an equivalent number of 2021 tags. To make an exchange, fill out the "Request to Purchase/Exchange Backflow Tags" (link available at [sfpu.org/backflow](http://sfpu.org/backflow)) and mail it to or drop it off at Customer Services Bureau with payment. The fee for an exchange is \$15, for any number of tags up to the maximum of 100.
- The cost of backflow tags for the first half of 2021 is \$21 each. The cost increases to \$24 per tag on July 1, 2021.

#### 4 Establishing a CCAMS Account

- To access CCAMS, a tester must have a current permit to operate. CCAMS allows testers to access test forms, submit test results, and see their test history at [CCAMS.sflower.org](http://CCAMS.sflower.org).
- After being approved for a permit to operate, the tester will be emailed a password to be used with the email address provided.
- If a tester works for more than one company, a separate email address and password are required for each company.
- Once a tester has a username and password, CCAMS can be accessed at [CCAMS.sflower.org](http://CCAMS.sflower.org). Testers can only enter information into CCAMS for tests that they performed personally.
- Testers will be notified via CCAMS whether or not the information entered is approved or rejected. If rejected, the information must be re-entered.
- It is recommended that testers add [noreply@sflower.org](mailto:noreply@sflower.org) to their email contact lists so that emails from CCAMS are not treated as spam.

## 5 Backflow Prevention Assembly Information Forms

- Testers must enter into CCAMS all test results for existing, replaced, or repaired assemblies.
- A hard copy of the Backflow Prevention Assembly Information form is sent to customers along with the 30-day notice indicating that testing is due. Testers can use this form as a reference for information pertaining to the backflow prevention assembly to be tested. The notices also include the customer's personal identification code (PIC) and the service point identification (SPID) number associated with the assemblies at a given service address.
- Testers can either download the Backflow Prevention Assembly Information forms from CCAMS or obtain them from the customer. To download the form from CCAMS, testers must obtain the PIC number(s) from the customer.
- If a customer cannot locate PIC number(s), then the customer may obtain the PIC number(s) or preprinted test forms by calling (650) 652-3199. To access an account, the customer must have the SPID number or service address (for multiple taps). Only the customer, not the tester, may obtain PIC numbers directly from WQD if the 30-day notice is sent to a San Francisco address.
- Customers may authorize their testers via email to get PIC numbers directly from WQD. If you notify your customers via email that their assemblies need testing, copy *backflow@sfgwater.org* on the original message and ask the customer to "reply all" to authorize the release of the numbers. PIC numbers will be emailed to testers within one working day.
- If the 30-day notice is sent to an "accounts receivable" department outside of San Francisco, or a tester has a contract with an out-of-city customer to perform annual testing, the tester may call WQD in the month that a site is due for testing to obtain PIC numbers to allow downloading of the forms from CCAMS. This exception is made so that testers can proceed with testing for out-of-city customers in a timely manner. Note, however, that staff may contact the customer before releasing PIC numbers.
- If a customer needs to obtain PIC numbers at a time not associated with annual testing, for example, because a leaking assembly needs repair, the customer may call WQD at (650) 652-3199. To access his or her account, the customer must have the SPID number or service address (for multiple taps).
- CCAMS now accepts customer accounts, which allow customers to choose one or more preferred test companies and have those companies notified by email when their assemblies are due for annual testing. This feature eliminates the need for customers to provide their preferred testers with PIC numbers.

## 6 New Installations

- New installations must be entered into CCAMS on the “Assembly Management/Add Assembly” tab. Note that this form should only be used in three cases:
  1. An assembly is newly installed at a specific location and is not a replacement for a previous assembly at that location.
  2. An assembly does not have a backflow tag. In that case, inform the customer and ask for permission to test the assembly. If the customer does not agree to testing, email [backflow@sfgov.org](mailto:backflow@sfgov.org) and provide location, make, model, and serial number of the assembly, as well as the hazard.
  3. An assembly is not on the site’s paperwork and has a backflow tag that is out of date.
- Note that if an assembly is in violation of installation requirements (modified, not on USC list, wrong orientation, etc.) and cannot be tested, check the “In-Violation” box under the “Unable To Test” section.
- Whether or not an assembly gets tested, ask the customer for a plumbing permit number.
- Enter the meter number, if known, on the New Installation form in CCAMS. This information is important for associating the correct customer with a particular backflow prevention assembly.
- Clearly identify the hazard. If you don’t know the hazard, select “Other.”
- Be sure to put in the assembly orientation. The dropdown menu on the New Installation form only includes USC-approved orientations. Don’t rely on the assembly cut sheet: assemblies must be installed in the orientation approved by USC.
- Under “Exact Assembly Location,” be as specific as possible (e.g., “Building B, 2nd Floor, north wall utility closet labeled J2”; “Basement, 25 feet east of the northeast corner, below stairwell”). If the assembly is in a multi-unit building, be sure to enter the unit number.

## 7 Removal, Replacement or Relocation of Backflow Prevention Assemblies

- Only a licensed plumber may remove, replace or relocate a backflow prevention assembly. A plumbing permit for the work must be obtained from the Department of Building Inspection, Plumbing Inspection Division (DBI/PID), unless the facility falls under a different jurisdiction (Port of San Francisco, Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development [OSHPOD], or state Fire Marshal). In that case, a permit or other authorization must be obtained from the relevant entity.
- DBI/PID permits can be obtained online at <https://sfdbi.org/onlinepermit>. For support, email [DBIOnlineServices@sfgov.org](mailto:DBIOnlineServices@sfgov.org) or call (628) 652-3240 (Central Permit Bureau).
- Plumbing inspections can be scheduled several ways:
  - Online: <https://sfdbi.org/inspection-scheduling-procedures>.
  - By calling Inspection Services at (628) 652-3400 between 7:30 am and 3 pm.

- By calling DBI/PID's scheduling number, (628) 652-3401, which allows you to schedule, reschedule or cancel an inspection, as well as obtain results, 24/7.
- Enter plumbing permit numbers into CCAMS or ask owners to provide permit numbers to WQD by phone or email.
- Report the removal of a backflow prevention assembly in CCAMS. If the removed assembly was replaced with another assembly, follow the instructions in the next bullet point.
- Report the replacement of a backflow prevention assembly in CCAMS. If the assembly being removed or replaced was tested, be sure to record the results of the test in the "Initial Test" area of the form. For the new assembly, mark the check box next to "Replacement Information Below" and enter the replacement assembly information in the fields below. Then record the test results for the new assembly in the "Final Test" area of the form.

It is important that the information for both the old and new assemblies be reported on the same form. That way, the customer will have the correct serial number and associated backflow prevention assembly inactivated, and the old and new assemblies will be tied together in CCAMS.

- Replacement of assemblies having a bypass with an RPDA-II or DCDA-II (or vice versa): CCAMS treats an assembly with a bypass assembly as two separate assemblies, each of which requires its own test report and backflow tag. However, RPDA-II and DCDA-II assemblies are considered single assemblies and only require one test report and one tag.

If an assembly without a bypass is replaced with an RPDA-II or DCDA-II, then a single form is used to report the replacement. However, if an assembly with a bypass is replaced with an RPDA-II or DCDA-II, then the mainline assembly is reported on the same form as the replacement assembly, and the bypass assembly is reported on a separate form as being removed.

Similarly, if an RPDA-II or DCDA-II is replaced with an assembly having a bypass, then the new mainline assembly is reported on the same form as the removed RPDA-II or DCDA-II, and the new bypass assembly is reported separately as a new installation.

## 8 Plumbing Permits

When filling out a plumbing permit application, be sure to specify:

- Location of the backflow prevention assembly, hazard (e.g. boiler, fire system), and assembly type, model, make and serial number.
- Whether the permit is for a new installation, removal, replacement or relocation.

## 9 Recording or Correcting Information in CCAMS

- If you wish to add a contact to the account, such as a chief engineer or person to call, add it to the “Comments” field of the test report.
- If you believe that information in CCAMS is incorrect, such as the location or make of a backflow prevention assembly, enter the correct information into the “Comments” field of the test report. Staff will review the program’s database and verify the information.
- If customer information (name or mailing address) needs to be updated, the customer must contact CSB at (415) 551-3000 to have the changes made. Information will then be updated in CCAMS by the following Monday morning.
- Customers who wish to change a testing date to another month or synchronize multiple accounts can arrange this by contacting WQD.

## 10 Submitting Test Information

- Test results must be entered into CCAMS within five business days of the test date **unless** an assembly fails testing and cannot be repaired the same day. In that case, test results must be entered into CCAMS **the day of the test** so that the Cross-Connection Control Program is informed of the failure.
- After entering test results into CCAMS, testers have a five-day window for modifying the results. If modifications need to be made after five days, a tester must contact WQD to have the test canceled. The tester may then reenter the test information. Note that a “fail” result causes an assembly to be automatically routed to SFDPH-EHB for enforcement action. However, entering a subsequent “pass” result returns an assembly to normal status. Once a “pass” result is entered for an assembly, the test’s PIC number can no longer be used to access that assembly in CCAMS.

## 11 Reporting Problems Observed in the Field

- If a backflow prevention assembly fails a test, record the test results in the “Initial Test” results area of the test form. Then contact the customer and request authorization to repair the assembly or recommend that it be replaced. If the assembly cannot be repaired or replaced the same day, test results must be entered into CCAMS **the day of the test** so that the Cross-Connection Control Program is informed of the failure.
- If an assembly cannot be tested because it has no water supply or is inaccessible, inform the customer and do not enter any information into CCAMS.
- If a backflow prevention assembly has been modified or incorrectly installed (e.g., illegal by-pass, relocated shut-off valve, or wrong orientation), take a picture of the assembly showing the violation and report the violation in CCAMS by checking “Unable to Test” and then “In Violation.” If using the CCAMS mobile application, upload the picture directly to CCAMS; otherwise, email the picture to [backflow@sfgwater.org](mailto:backflow@sfgwater.org) along with a description of the violation. The assembly will be locked in CCAMS so that only the CCAMS Administrator can access the assembly’s record. Test results cannot be entered until the Cross-Connection Control Program receives evidence that the violation has been corrected.

After the violation has been corrected, take at least two pictures of the assembly, one close up and a second distant one. If possible, include a picture of the assembly's serial number in the close-up; otherwise, take a separate picture of the number. Email the pictures to [backflow@sfwater.org](mailto:backflow@sfwater.org) and request that the assembly be unlocked in CCAMS. After the correct installation has been verified, the assembly will be unlocked, and the tester will be able to enter test results in CCAMS.

- If a tester finds a cross-connection hazard that is unprotected, that is, with no backflow prevention assembly or the wrong type of assembly, the tester must inform the customer of the hazard and the potential health risk associated with it. The tester must also report the situation to the Cross-Connection Control Program immediately (by telephone if the hazard has no protection at all). An assembly that is the wrong type for the hazard should not be tested.
- If a tester finds an existing backflow prevention assembly that is not tagged, follow the procedures described in Section 6, New Installations.
- Contacting Cross-Connection Control Program staff from the field can save you time and resources; often, questions can be answered or issues rectified on the spot. In addition, vital information that you might not otherwise know to record might be needed from the site.

## 12 Other Information

If test results for a given month are not entered into CCAMS by the 6th of the following month, the database automatically generates a "Notice of Violation," and the customer might receive this notice after having paid for testing. If this happens, testers should confirm that the test results were submitted to CCAMS and explain the situation to the customer. Testers and customers can call Cross-Connection Control Program staff at (650) 652-3199 to check on the compliance status of their accounts.

## 13 Violations and Penalties

Testers must meet all of their responsibilities described in these instructions. Tester permits to operate may be suspended or revoked for violations including, but not limited to:

- Late entry of test results (more than 5 business days after test).
- Failure to submit accurate test reports.
- Failure to attend annual meetings or complete online training.
- Failure to follow testing procedures in the USC Foundation for Cross-Connection Control and Hydraulic Research *Manual of Cross-Connection Control*, 10th edition (or latest edition), for example, testing an assembly that has been modified or installed in an incorrect orientation.
- Falsification of test results, for example, entering the wrong date so as to appear to be submitting results within five days of testing.

Enforcement may include warning letters, notices of violation, citations to conferences or administrative hearings, or permit revocation.

**14 Contact Information**

Water Quality Division	
<p>Cross-Connection Control Program Water Quality Division San Francisco Water, Power and Sewer 1657 Rollins Road Burlingame, CA 94010 (650) 652-3199</p> <p>Utility Services Representative <i>backflow@sfgwater.org</i> (650) 652-3127</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plumbing permit submission (if not submitted in CCAMS)</li> <li>• Photos/correspondence for assemblies that have been modified or whose records are locked in CCAMS</li> <li>• CCAMS technical issues</li> <li>• PIC number(s) or preprinted test forms</li> <li>• Changing/synchronizing test months (customers)</li> <li>• Questions about testing notices or other general cross-connection control issues</li> </ul>
<p>CCAMS website: <a href="http://ccams.sfgwater.org/">ccams.sfgwater.org/</a>                      WQD Cross-Connection Control Program website: <a href="http://sfpuc.org/backflow">sfpuc.org/backflow</a>                      Main website with consumer information and Water Quality Reports: <a href="http://sfpuc.org/">sfpuc.org/</a></p>	

Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Branch	
<p>Cross-Connection Control Program Environmental Health Branch San Francisco Department of Public Health 49 South Van Ness Avenue, Suite 600 San Francisco CA 94103</p> <p>Michelle Kanemoto, Senior Environmental Health Inspector <i>Michelle.Kanemoto@sfdph.org</i> (415) 252-3943</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permits to operate (obtaining and cancelling)</li> <li>• Tester certification updates</li> <li>• Certificate of liability insurance</li> <li>• Test kit calibration documentation</li> <li>• Updating test company and contact information</li> <li>• Test company registration/renewal</li> <li>• Questions about notices of violation</li> </ul>
<p>DPH Cross-Connection Control Program website: <a href="https://www.sfdph.org/xconn">https://www.sfdph.org/xconn</a></p>	

Department of Building Inspection, Plumbing Inspection Division	
San Francisco Department of Building Inspection 49 South Van Ness Avenue, Suite 400 San Francisco CA 94103 (628) 652-3400 Automated Inspection Scheduling: (628) 652-3401	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plumbing permit assistance and scheduling</li><li>• Exceptions: Facilities that fall under the Port of San Francisco, OSHPD, or the State Fire Marshal</li></ul>
DBI Instant Online Permit website: <a href="https://sfdbi.org/instant-online-permit">https://sfdbi.org/instant-online-permit</a> DBI Permit tracking website: <a href="http://dbiweb.sfgov.org/dbipts/">http://dbiweb.sfgov.org/dbipts/</a>	