

**Backflow Testing on a Budget,
*Why Proper Training is Important***

- ▶ Budget
- ▶ Training
- ▶ Ethics

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Whose Budget?

- **Water Purveyor's**
- **Private Contractor's**
- **Customer's**

Who owns the assemblies?

- **The Water Purveyor**
- **The Customer**

Who tests the assemblies?

- **Water purveyor employees**
- **Contractors hired by the Customer**
- **Contractors hired by the utility company**

The Water Purveyors' Goals:

- Produce and deliver safe drinking water
- Maintain the system
- Provide quality service at lowest possible cost

Annual Testing by Utility
Employees
or
by Private Contractors

Do it right the first time!

What about
Short Cuts?

As human beings we tend to
think we have a better idea. We
can do it better and faster.

Play to win
or
Play to have fun?

Build for the future
or
Rip off every
customer once?

Repeat Business
Word of mouth

Proper training to identify & repair

Good training = lower costs to the customer

Level of Knowledge

- A tester who knows very little about the workings of the backflow prevention assemblies will tend to spend a lot of time trying to fix the assembly or replace the complete assembly instead of repairing it.

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Testers / Contractors

Are your testers properly trained?

How many hours of training?
16, 24, 32, 40 or more hours?

Testers / Contractors

Do you know if your testers were properly examined before receiving certification?

Training is available to help testers safely repair large diameter assemblies.

Poor Training...

- Inadequate Training
- Fear of Repair (large assemblies)
 - *Pass assembly rather than fail it*
- Improper Test Procedures
 - Tester was taught obsolete procedures
 - Tester takes a few shortcuts

Results of poor training...

- *Information is not accurate*
- Test not performed (drive-by)
- Skipping a year
- Tester intentionally fails the assembly
Replace rather than repair
- Wrong information intentionally submitted (malfeasance or misconduct?)

Charleston Example

3 levels of tester

- General Tester
- Advanced Tester
- Master Tester



REPLACE ONLY WHEN NECESSARY!

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- **Ethics**

Children will behave if you
expect them to behave.

Adults are no different!

Improper or unnecessary repairs

Develop a Reasonable Policy
Things to consider:

Notify testers of policy changes

- ◆ meet in the field
- ◆ hold monthly meetings
- ◆ receive written complaints

Enforce your Policy
Also consider:

Require proof of repair

- ◆ study effects of water chemistry
- ◆ turn in broken parts
- ◆ put serial number on part

Testers / Contractors

Field test performed by unauthorized person ?

Tester certification is different than a plumber's license

Poor Test Results

- Paperwork incomplete or filled out improperly.
- Information or test results are not accurate.

Level of Knowledge

- **An unethical tester who is very knowledgeable about the workings of the backflow prevention assemblies may purposely cause a failure.**

Impose Penalties

- **Removal from the list**
- **Proper legal steps**
 - gather the data**
 - work with utility's legal staff**

What's important to your Program?

Customer confidence

What makes the customers unhappy?

Having to install a backflow preventer

Installing that ugly valve above ground

What makes the customers unhappy?

Unreasonably priced annual field tests

Unfair pricing for repair parts and labor

Customers may refuse to have assemblies tested or repaired.

- **Service Contract**
- **Turn off the water**

And all this may result in...

Loss of Customer Confidence or Loss of Business



- You get what you pay for.
- Your budget should include training
 - Proper training can reduce costs
 - Good training for utility employees can help discover unethical employees, testers and contractors.
 - A well run program will reduce costs.

BOTTOM LINE...
**KEEP THE CUSTOMERS
HAPPY!**
This keeps the cost down
and builds your business!

Questions?

Tips for Water Purveyor

What keeps the customers
happy?
**Responding immediately
to customers'
complaints**

What keeps the customers happy?

Knowing that someone in the utility company is looking out for the customers' interest

**Keep an eye on your testers and inspectors.
(public or private)**

Know the current price and availability of repair parts.

Be visible and be available.

Respond quickly to complaints.

Respect your customers
Make the choice to visit with customers face-to-face rather than use the telephone or mail

Earn Respect from your Testers

- Provide training and guidance
- Give advice
- Conduct regular meetings
- Provide spot testing
- Be very visible
- Be helpful rather than an adversary

**Have your legal
counsel review a
Code of Ethics
for each private
tester to sign**



**DOCUMENT YOUR
PROBLEMS**

If the water purveyor utilizes private contractors to complete the annual field tests.....


The water purveyor should take extra precautions before placing a contractor on the acceptable testers list.

The water purveyor should require contractors have a business license and proof of insurance.

Most honest contractors/testers welcome the water utility imposing and enforcing rules and regulations.

This creates a “level playing field” for all of the contractors.

This also insures that only those persons who are serious about being involved with your CCC program will ask to be placed on the approved testers list.



Would you prefer an honest, well trained repair technician, or ??

