

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

March 2, 2007

Dear Irrigation Contractor:

RE: Residential Lawn Irrigation Systems

This spring the Grand Rapids Water System plans to expand its cross connection control program to include testing of residential backflow prevention devices installed on the water supplies to lawn irrigation systems.

During the past few years, The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) has elevated awareness of the potential hazards that residential cross connections pose to public water systems. It is the responsibility of the water purveyor to have a comprehensive cross connection control program for the elimination and prevention of all cross connections.

The Water System currently provides water to more than 67,000 residential (retail) customers, many of which have connections to lawn irrigation systems. MDEQ Cross Connection Rules and the State Plumbing Code require that irrigation systems have approved backflow prevention devices installed on their supply lines. The devices are required to be installed by a Plumbing Contractor who has acquired a plumbing permit. Most of these devices are required to be routinely tested. The test must be done at least once every five years by a licensed plumber who has obtained a "Certificate of Award" by the Michigan Plumbing Board.

This past summer 16,913 residences were surveyed of which 2,178 (12.88%) had irrigation systems. The area surveyed was from the northern most boundary of the water system southward to Leonard Street. Next summer, we plan to commence with our surveys where we left off working in a southward direction. The surveys will be conducted during July and August of each year as this is the best time to identify homes with irrigation systems. By surveying approximately 20% of the residences annually, we will have covered the entire retail service area (Grand Rapids, Tallmadge Township, Walker, Grand Rapids Township, Cascade, and part of Kentwood) within five years.

Customers identified this past summer with irrigation systems will begin receiving notices this coming spring. Prior to sending notices, we intend to notify the public by placing a "Public Notice" in the Grand Rapids Press. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at (616) 456-4170.

Sincerely,

Mike Hielkema

Cross Connection Control
cc: Wayne Jernberg, P.E. Hydraulic Engin

1900 OAK INDUSTRIAL DR. N.E., GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49505

Grand Rapids Water System Residential Cross Connection Control

Residential customers of the Grand Rapids Water System who have a lawn irrigation system may receive a letter and test form in the mail this spring.

During the past few years, The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) has elevated awareness of the potential hazards that residential cross connections pose to public water systems. It is the responsibility of the water purveyor to have a comprehensive cross connection control program for the elimination and prevention of all cross connections. A cross connection is an arrangement of piping which could allow undesirable water, bacteria or chemicals to enter your drinking (potable) water system as a result of backflow.

The Water System currently provides water to more than 67,000 residential (retail) customers, many of whom have connections to lawn irrigation systems. MDEQ Cross Connection Rules and the State Plumbing Code require irrigation systems to have approved backflow prevention devices installed on their supply lines. Most of these devices are required to be routinely tested. The test must be done at least once every five years by an individual who has obtained a cross connection control "Certificate of Award" from the Michigan Plumbing Board.

Customers with irrigation systems who do not receive a notice this year can expect to receive notice within the next five years informing them their backflow prevention device will need to be tested.

A pressure vacuum breaker like the one shown here is the most common type of residential backflow prevention device. However, some systems may be equipped with a reduced pressure principle backflow preventer or atmospheric vacuum breakers located downstream of control valves.



Inquiries concerning compliance should be made to the Grand Rapids Water System.

Joellen C. Thompson, PE, Acting Manager
Grand Rapids Water System