
Environment Committee

HB 1242

Brief Description: Regarding annual backflow preventer inspections and tests.

Sponsors: Representatives Orcutt and Rivers.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Prohibits water purveyors from conducting annual backflow preventer inspections and tests.
- Requires water purveyors to develop a list of local people or firms who are qualified to conduct backflow preventer inspections and tests and requires the list to be distributed to the purveyor's customers.

Hearing Date: 1/27/11

Staff: Courtney Barnes (786-7194).

Background:

Backflow Prevention Assemblies.

A cross-connection is any actual, or potential, physical connection between a drinking water system and any other non-potable substance (liquid, solid, or gas). Backflow occurs when water or other substances flow in the opposite direction than intended allowing contaminants to enter the public water system or a consumer's plumbing. A backflow incident occurs when biological, chemical, or physical contaminants enter the drinking water supply through unprotected cross-connections. Backflow prevention assemblies are mechanical devices installed on water service lines (or at plumbing fixtures) to prevent backflow of contaminants into drinking water through cross-connections.

The State Board of Health (Board) is required to adopt rules for Group A and Group B public water systems [RCW 43.20.050]. The Board has adopted rules to require backflow prevention assemblies and annual tests. The rules adopted by the Board require purveyors to ensure that

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backflow preventers are inspected and tested annually [WAC 246-290-490]. A purveyor is an agency or subdivision of the state, a municipal corporation, firm, company, mutual or cooperative association, institution, partnership, person, or any other entity that owns or operates a public water system [RCW 70.119A.020].

Backflow Assembly Tester.

Certified Backflow Assembly Testers (BATs) are authorized to inspect, test, maintain, and repair backflow assemblies, devices, and air gaps that protect a public water system. The DOH requires BATs to pass the state's certification examination and hold a valid certificate. The Green River Community College administers the state's BAT certification program established by the DOH in cooperation with the Waterworks Operator Certification Advisory Committee. The DOH has authorized the Green River Community College to maintain a list of certified BATs who may provide testing services to the public. Only certified BATs who have authorized disclosure of this information are listed.

Summary of Bill:

Purveyors may not conduct annual backflow preventer inspections and tests required by rules adopted by the State Board of Health.

Purveyors must develop and maintain a list of local people or firms who are qualified to conduct annual backflow preventer inspections and tests. The list must be distributed by mail, web site, or other electronic means to purveyor customers who are required to have annual backflow preventer inspections and tests.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.