

OWASA Encourages Customers to Install Valves in Plumbing Systems for Shutting Off Water; Offers Free Tags to Mark Location of Shut-off Valves

To help reduce the potential for water loss and property damage, OWASA encourages customers to make sure their plumbing system has a valve for shutting off water when needed due to a leak, for repairs, etc.

Having a shut-off valve may also make it unnecessary to contact OWASA to turn off water at its meter serving a home, business, etc. due to a leak, leak repair or installation of a water fixture. OWASA charges a fee (\$45 during normal weekday business hours, \$80 at night and on weekends) for turning off water at the meter.

Customers who would like a free tag to mark the location of shut-off valve(s) are invited to contact OWASA at **919.968.4421** or **info@owasa.org** or to get a tag in the OWASA offices at 400 Jones Ferry Road, Carrboro.

Property owners and customers who do not have a water shut-off valve are encouraged to contact licensed plumber(s) for information about having one installed. The NC plumbing code applies. For more information: **info@owasa.org** or **919.968.4421**.



Shut-off valves are often installed in a closet or in the crawlspace at the front side of a house or other building.

The laminated tag from OWASA, with a wire for hanging it near the shut-off valve, is shown above.

Kayaks available for rent at University Lake and the Cane Creek Reservoir

We now offer kayaks for rent at University Lake and the Cane Creek Reservoir as well as canoes and flat-bottom boats. There are 6 kayaks available at each lake. The rental fees for kayaks are:

OWASA customer or Orange County resident: \$15 per half-day plus a lake use fee based on age for each person using the kayak. For example, the lake use fee for a person aged 13 to 64 is \$4.50.

Other customers: \$22 plus lake use fee based on age.



CONTACT US

Orange Water and Sewer Authority
400 Jones Ferry Road
Carrboro, NC 27510

Customer Service phone and e-mail:
919.537.4343
customerservice3@owasa.org

Office Hours:
8 AM to 5 PM, Monday-Friday

Emergencies and Main Office phone:
919.968.4421
www.owasa.org; info@owasa.org

What is Backflow Prevention and Why is it Important for the Public Health?

What is backflow prevention?

Backflow prevention refers to equipment that prevents water in a private system from flowing backward through an OWASA meter and into the public water system.

Why is backflow prevention important?

After water goes into private water equipment or pipes at some kinds of locations, it is possible that the water may become contaminated. While the risk of contamination is normally very low, backflows of contaminated water have caused illnesses in the U.S.

How can water flow backward from a private water system or equipment into OWASA's public water system?

If there is severe damage or a major leak in a large OWASA pipe and a large amount of water is released, water in nearby pipes would be drawn toward the leak. If the suction or "back pressure" from a leak is strong enough, water in private systems could be pulled back through OWASA meters and into the public water system.

Water can also be drawn backward from a private water system to the OWASA system when a very large amount of water is used to fight a fire.

While these conditions are very unusual, water utilities and public health organizations across the US have learned from experience that public water contamination and illness can result from backflows.

For more information about water contamination from backflow, we invite you to contact us at **919.537.4292** or **info@owasa.org** or visit the US Environmental Protection Agency's website and search for backflow contamination.

OWASA's backflow prevention ordinance

Water utilities are required to have regulations and programs to protect the public health through backflow prevention. Our standards require backflow prevention devices for equipment and facilities including:

- Restaurants
- Laboratories
- Businesses, institutions, etc. with processes which use water in a way that may lead to contamination
- Swimming pools
- Irrigation systems

The owner is required to notify OWASA when a backflow preventer is installed and has been tested by a certified technician. Then, annual testing is required and the owner is responsible for keeping the test records for three years.

Can a backflow preventer fail?

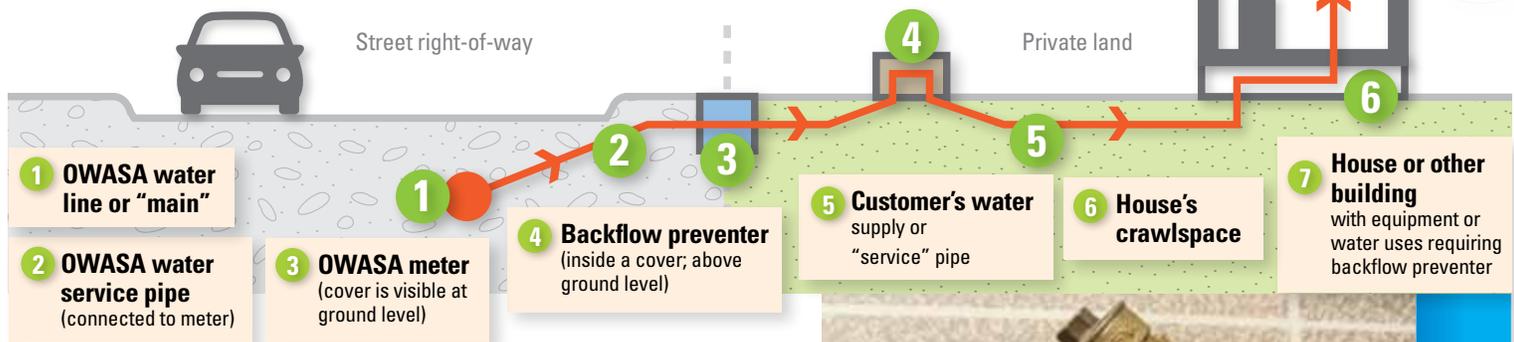
Yes. Backflow preventers have seals, springs and moving parts that can deteriorate over time.

For more information including whether a backflow preventer is needed for your home or business, please contact us at **info@owasa.org** or **919.537.4292**.

For information on our website, please go to **www.owasa.org**, click on **What We Do**, click on **Developers, Contractors and Engineers** and scroll to the backflow prevention links including our ordinance.

Location of a Typical Backflow Preventer

and related items in OWASA water system and private water or plumbing system



Important Note!

How can I find out whether I should have a backflow preventer?

If you have or install an irrigation system or swimming pool which uses OWASA water and does not have a backflow preventer, or if your business may need to have a backflow preventer, please contact us at **info@owasa.org** or **919.537.4292** so we can provide information about the type of device that may be needed.



Backflow Preventer

Español

Este boletín informativo contiene información sobre los servicios de agua y alcantarillado de OWASA. Para obtener una traducción, por favor llame al **919.537.4221** o mande un correo electrónico a: **info@owasa.org**. ¡Muchas gracias!