BACKFLOW TESTERS — GUIDE

How to read a backflow test report

Check identity, initial results, repair notes and the final report before closing a notice.

Updated November 10, 2026

Start with the assembly identity. A passing report for the wrong serial number does not explain the status of the assembly on your notice. EPA's February 2003 manual includes a sample cross-connection test form. Washington's rule requires records for assembly type, manufacturer, model, size, serial number, location, inspections, tests, repairs and the person who did the work.

Check the header

Compare the service address, utility account or asset number, assembly location, manufacturer, model, size and serial number. Ask the tester to resolve discrepancies with the utility. Keep a record of any corrected serial number rather than silently changing an inventory row.

Check the test date and the named tester. Ask for the credential and registration details the utility requires. A company name alone does not identify who performed the test. If the form records test equipment, keep that information with the report.

Read initial and final results separately

A report may show an initial test, work performed and a final test. Keep all parts. A final passing result can follow an initial failure. Ask the tester which component failed and which work changed the result. Do not erase the earlier result from the property record.

Pressure readings must be interpreted against the correct assembly type and approved test procedure. This guide does not supply a universal pressure threshold. Ask the tester to explain each reading and the applicable pass criterion. A report without a clear result needs clarification before you treat the notice as closed.

If the assembly fails

Washington's WAC 246-290-490(7)(f) requires defective, improperly installed or failing protection to be reinstalled, repaired, overhauled or replaced as appropriate. The rule also calls for tests after repair. That does not mean every failure requires full replacement. Ask for a written diagnosis, proposed remedy and retest plan.

Contact the water utility about its deadline and any required action while the assembly is out of service. For a fire line, coordinate with the responsible fire protection contractor and facility contact before any interruption. Do not operate valves yourself based on a failed report.

Confirm delivery and acceptance

Ask who submits the report and how you receive the receipt. Washington requires reporting in a manner acceptable to the purveyor. Toronto says certified specialists must use its online form. A

PDF emailed to you may not be the submission the utility needs.

Keep the report, repair authorisation, final result and acceptance confirmation together. Set the next reminder from the utility's instructions. Do not reset the official deadline solely because the invoice date changed.

Sources

All sources below were fetched on 2026-11-10. Dates beside titles identify publication, revision or access dates. This guide is information for planning. Confirm the current requirements with your water utility.

- US EPA, Cross-Connection Control Manual, February 2003.
- Washington Legislature, WAC 246-290-490, effective 2022-01-01.
- City of Toronto, Backflow Prevention Program, modified 2025-09-24.

Frequently asked questions

Does a failure always mean replacement?

No. Ask for the diagnosis. The cited Washington rule describes repair, overhaul, reinstallation or replacement as appropriate.

Is a paid invoice enough?

Keep the completed report and confirm that the utility received and accepted it.