



AGENDA INFORMATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Water Utilities
CM/DCM/ACM: Cassey Ogden
DATE: January 26, 2026

SUBJECT

Receive a report and hold a discussion regarding updates to the Cross Connection Control and Backflow Ordinance.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

This action supports Key Focus Area: Support Healthy and Safe Communities.

BACKGROUND

The Cross-Connection Control and Backflow Prevention Program safeguards the City of Denton public drinking water system from backflow events.

Backflow events occur when water flows in the opposite direction of normal flow, potentially crossing from a customer's private plumbing system back into the public water distribution system. Cross connections are any actual or potential connections between a drinking water system and a non-drinking water source. If not adequately protected, contaminated water can enter the public supply during a backflow event.

For example, in 2016, the city of Corpus Christi issued a multi-day "Do Not Use Water" advisory for 320,000 residents after an industrial backflow incident. An asphalt emulsifier from a refinery entered the drinking water system through an unprotected cross connection between the refinery's water process and the city's potable supply.

Denton City Council approved a Cross-Connection Control and Backflow Ordinance in 1997 to prevent incidents like Corpus Christi's from happening. However, it was never codified due to a clerical error in which a 1998 Drainage Ordinance was mistakenly inserted in its place. A 2024 legal review confirmed that the 1997 ordinance is unenforceable as a result.

To correct this issue, staff drafted an updated ordinance that aligns with current regulatory standards and the industry's best practices. The proposed ordinance introduces several key updates, including:

- Requiring backflow prevention assemblies at the service connection for all new non-residential premises
- Revising requirements for certified testers to register with the City
- Expanding staff authority to conduct site surveys for compliance
- Establishing clear enforcement procedures, including fines and water service interruptions for both emergency and non-emergency violations

In collaboration with the Building Safety Department, redundant backflow provisions were repealed by the Irrigation Systems Ordinance. Simultaneously, Building Safety updated the Irrigation Ordinance updated the Irrigation Systems Ordinance to align with current Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) standards and electronic submittal processes.

The Cross Connection Control and Backflow Ordinance was developed collaboratively with multiple departments. The Fire Marshal's Office verified compliance with current fire protection standards. Building Safety coordinated installation requirements with the Plumbing Code and Customer Service Inspections. Risk Management reviewed the registration and insurance requirements for certified testers to ensure alignment with City policy.

PRIOR ACTION/REVIEW (Council, Boards, Commissions)

Nov. 18, 2025: Council Work Session Discussion

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: Agenda Information Sheet

Exhibit 2: Presentation

Respectfully submitted:
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Water Utilities and Street Operations

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