



AGENDA INFORMATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Water Utilities
CM/DCM/ACM: Cassey Ogden
DATE: February 3, 2026

SUBJECT

Receive a report, hold a discussion, and give staff direction regarding updates to the Cross-Connection Control and Backflow Prevention 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's 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 Prevention Ordinance in 1997 to prevent incidents like Corpus Christi's from happening. However, the current ordinance presents regulatory and enforcement challenges because the City's organizational structure has changed, industry and state regulatory standards have changed, and the ordinance was not codified, which can make the application of criminal penalties more difficult.

To correct these issues, staff drafted an updated ordinance to repeal and replace the existing ordinance. This will be codified and align 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

- Incentivizing the use of USC-approved assemblies to ensure all new installations meet the industry's most rigorous performance and reliability standards.

This 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.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends repealing Ordinance No. 97-369 and adopting the Cross-Connection Control and Backflow Prevention Ordinance.

PRIOR ACTION/REVIEW (Council, Boards, Commissions)

Jan. 26, 2026: Public Utility Board Work Session, *Cancelled due to Winter Storm Fern*

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1- Agenda Information Sheet

Exhibit 2- Presentation

Respectfully submitted:
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