

Officer responsible Water Services Manager	Author Bruce Henderson
Corporate Plan Output: Supply of Water, 9.3.25	

The purpose of this report is to inform Councillors of progress that has been made towards the implementation of the Council's policy on Water Supply Backflow prevention. An information leaflet has been distributed with this agenda.

BACKGROUND

Councillors will recall that in February of this year this Committee received a report on the risk of backflow contamination from customers (particularly industrial and commercial) plumbing systems into the public water supply system. The Committee recommended (and the Council endorsed) the following policy:

1. That all-future new connections, 40mm diameter or smaller, be fitted with dual non-testable check valves, and that the extra cost of these be incorporated into the connection charge.
2. That all future new connections 50mm and larger be required to be fitted with an appropriate testable backflow prevention device and that this device be tested at least annually at the owner's expense.
3. That dual non testable check valves be retrospectively installed on existing connection up to 40mm in diameter as meters are required to be renewed, or when other major work is required to be undertaken on such connections.
4. That a programme specifically to retrofit existing connections with backflow devices not be commenced at present but the issue be reviewed in two years' time.
5. That the bid for additional funding for the backflow survey of commercial and industrial premises be considered at the Committee's Annual Plan meeting.

The intention of the survey in 5 above was to produce appropriate informative literature, and use this by visiting large water users to raise the awareness of the risk of backflow. Those users who were found to be putting the water supply system at risk would then be informed of their responsibilities and persuaded to mitigate against the risk by installing suitable backflow prevention devices.

Subsequent to this the Council allocated \$125,000 in the 1999/2000 Annual Plan for this work.

PROGRESS TO DATE

In respect to the standard new connections, 40mm size or smaller, a specification has been prepared, tenders called for, and a contract let for the supply of stopcocks that will (in conjunction with the meter) meet the Council's policy requirements for backflow prevention. These will be used on all new connections in the future.

The requirement for new connections 50mm and greater to have testable backflow prevention devices is already being implemented. Some issues have arisen in this respect but they are being resolved on a case by case basis. One of the benefits of applying this policy is that the additional cost of the devices (especially the very large ones) is that applicants are re considering their actual requirements and down sizing their connection accordingly, rather than installing a larger one “just in case”. Another issue that has arisen is the situation with fire sprinkler connections and one or two other special cases where it is clear the connections use only poses a very low risk to the water supply system are being granted dispensations. For example fire sprinkler systems have a special check valve fitted to them that is monitored (by the NZ Fire Service) and sets an alarm off if water leaks back passed it, and it is required to be serviced regularly. In these circumstances the additional checks valves has been seen as being unreasonable and the requirement waived.

The retrospective upgrading of existing connections as the meter is renewed has not yet started but will when supply of the stopcocks mentioned for the new connections commences.

Work towards surveying commercial and industrial premises is advancing. One staff member has had intensive training on the technical aspects of backflow prevention. Preparation of literature explaining the backflow issues from a customer’s point of view is well advanced and should be going to print in a months time. A Job Value Statement has been prepared for a person to undertake the survey work, and it is anticipated that this position will be filled in October. Work is underway to identify the priority customer types for the survey. Similarly some work has been undertaken on the preparation of a database, and appropriate co operative links have been established with the Environmental Services Unit to ensure the efforts of the two units in this respect are aligned and not duplicated. Actual survey work should commence towards the end of the calendar year.

In summary while the implementation of this policy has been a little slower than desired, good progress is being made and the policy as outlined above should be fully implemented by the end of the calendar year.

Chairman’s

Recommendation: That the information be received.