

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A FAILED BACKFLOW TEST

If your backflow preventer fails the test, it needs to be cleaned or repaired and in some cases it may need to be completely replaced and a successful re-test performed. These backflow devices fail at a rate of 10-15% after one year. To help customers understand the typical Double Check Valve Assembly (DCVA) and why it fails or what the readings mean the following information will help to explain what to look for.

DCVA-Double Check Valve Assembly

The DCVA contains two independent check valves that prevent backflow. Each valve must hold 1 PSID or greater to pass the test. Each check valve consists of a rubber disc, disc holder, and a spring. The rubber disc is pressed down by the spring against a seat and this prevents backflow. Over time, like car tires, these rubber discs wear down to the point that they do not hold 1.0 PSID or greater. When the check valve tests @ 0.0 – 0.9, it fails the tests and is listed as “Leaked” on the report. This does not mean that it is leaking water out of the assembly; it just indicates that it does not hold the minimum requirement. New DCVA’s generally test @ 2.0-4.0 PSID. When you see a reading of 1.0-1.3, it is very common to see that valve fail the following year.

General causes of failure:

1. Test reading of 0.1 – 0.9 PSID: This indicates that the valve is still preventing backflow, but not at the minimum requirement. Potential causes for this failure: a) Disc is worn down, b) Mineral deposits on the disc holder (this slides in a guide), c) Dirt on the disc, d) All of the above.
2. Test reading of 0.0 PSID: This indicates total check valve failure (not preventing backflow at all). Potential causes for this complete failure: a) Rock/debris stuck in the check valve, b) Disc completely worn out, c) Broken spring, d) Damaged check valve seat, e) Dirt in assembly.

What to do when you receive a failed report:

1. Understand each check valve reading, and read the notes on the test report.
2. Have the test report with you when you call for the repair or replacement.
3. There is three options for a failed DCVA:
 1. Clean DCVA, this may have already been done. Take DCVA apart and wipe clean rubber disc and disc holder then flush.
 2. Replace worn parts (rubber disc, disc holder, spring) there are replacement kits for most DCVA.
 3. Replace DCVA, replacing the DCVA may be necessary, a new DCVA at a home improvement store sells for approximately \$100.
4. Once the cleaning, repair or replacement is completed the DCVA needs to be re-tested and submit the report to the District.

The Woodinville Water District appreciates your cooperation in helping to protect your drinking water.