




CITY OF SANTA FE

Memorandum

Date: January 22, 2026
To: Governing Body, Water Conservation Committee, Public Works and Utilities Committee, Finance Committee
From: Justin M. Gonzales, Cross Connection Specialist *JMG*
Via: Jesse D. Roach, Interim Public Utilities Department Director 
RE: Water Division Backflow Prevention and Control Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The proposed bill amends Exhibit A of Section 25-4.1, SFCC 1987, to update definitions, create a new rule number 7 and directs the City of Santa Fe's Water Division to adopt Backflow Prevention and Control rules for the city of Santa Fe ("City") from the *Uniform Plumbing Code* and University of Southern California's *Manual of Cross-section Control*. The bill also implements inspection and administrative fees, as well as fines for specific violations of the Backflow Prevention and Control rules.

BACKGROUND:

Backflow is an undesirable reversal of water flow from a customer's service connection into the municipal water system. This reversal of water flow could be water or mixtures of water and other liquids, gases, or other substances into the distribution pipes of the City's potable supply of water. This can be caused by sudden loss of pressure due to a main break or other disruption in the City's water system.

Backflow prevention and control rules are necessary for the City to prevent contamination of the potable water supply. Backflow preventers that are not regularly tested and properly monitored add to the risk of backflow contamination. While plumbing code requires installation of backflow prevention devices, there is currently no mechanism to ensure that those devices are in good working order. This ordinance will ensure regular testing with results submitted to a central database. There has been at least one instance within Santa Fe when backflow preventers were bypassed on fire systems and drinking water was contaminated resulting in sickness.

The Water Division Backflow Prevention and Control Program will be defined by the proposed ordinance, and a supporting set of policies and procedures. These components together outline the responsibilities of the City's water customers, backflow prevention assembly testers, and backflow prevention assembly repair technicians to control and minimize the possibility of backflow contamination to Santa Fe's water supply.

ATTACHMENTS:

Bill
Fiscal Impact Report