

**Southern California Chapter
American Backflow Prevention Association
ABPA
NEWSLETTER**

GETTING INVOLVED - Eric Foltz

It has been a little over a year now since a few of us got together and started investigating the possibility of creating a chapter of ABPA here in Southern California. In the last year we have made progress in making the chapter an organization that everyone in the backflow industry can look to for advice, educational opportunities, and a place to be involved. Involved in the continuing evolution of the industry, and the industry is evolving.

The level of professionalism is getting higher as is the level of the skills of the people in the industry, which makes it more important for everyone in the industry to stay abreast of new developments, new legislation, and new products available in this industry. This is where the ABPA fits in the industry, and where the S.C. Chapter will fit in locally.

The goal of the Chapter is to promote the free exchange of information between people involved in all aspects of the backflow prevention industry, from the individual tester, to the inspector, to the manufacturer. Our goal is to bring all of these people together on an equal basis to work towards improving the industry in S.C.

The most important component in making this work is *you*. We need the involvement of everyone. Only in this way can we get an accurate view of what is happening out there. The testers bring the experience of being the one with their hands on the assemblies protecting our water supplies. The inspectors bring the knowledge of the local laws and regulations. The manufacturers bring us the products that we use everyday. All of us working together can only better the industry as a whole.

If you would be interested in getting more involved and becoming a leader in Southern California Backflow Prevention, please contact me or any of the other Directors.

CROSS-CONNECTION INCIDENTS

by Dick Carlson

Where are the dead bodies? This is a question frequently asked in connection with cross-connection control programs. Unfortunately, this is an area where reports of actual incidents are seldom made -- but it does happen.

In January 1993, employees at a major San Diego area industrial site reported "salty" tasting drinking water. An investigation revealed that an auxiliary fire system was activated which drew water from the San Diego Bay. A valve which cross-connected the drinking water system with the auxiliary fire system was inadvertently left open. Consequently, the fire system pumps over pressurized the potable system and contaminated the drinking water distribution lines with San Diego Bay water. To add to the problem, this happened during the period of the January rains and this portion of the bay was contaminated by storm water runoff.

To resolve the incident, the company disinfected all drinking water lines and offered free gamma-globulin shots to all employees.

Was the cross-connection itself resolved? A meeting was held between the health department and a representative from the affected company to discuss preventive measures. The incident could have been prevented with a routine post meter inspection program. However, the water agency where this industrial plant is located does not have a cross-connection control program that extends beyond the service meter.

WATER RECLAMATION AND CROSS-CONNECTION CONTROL - Dick Carlson

Water Reclamation Programs and Cross-connection Control -- where is the connection? In

point of fact there is a very significant connection. Reclaimed water (actually highly treated sewage) has been approved for use in a variety of situation. From landscape irrigation to water closet, urinal, and trap primer supply, reclaimed water is becoming a significant part of the water supply system in Southern California. For every gallon of reclaim produced an equivalent gallon of potable water is saved for domestic use.

Projects involving reclaimed water are in varying stages of development throughout San Diego County, from the initial planning phase to daily user from operational systems. This takes us back to the question of what is the tie in between water reclamation and cross-connection control? The answer is that on most of the sites where reclaimed water is to be used there is also a potable water distribution system. The two cannot be linked or cross-connected. Although sewage undergoes an extensive treatment process to meet the requirements for the various uses, it is not potable and cannot be used as potable water. The system must be totally separated, both on-site and off-site. In addition to review and inspection by state and local health departments, part of the responsibility to maintain this separation should fall to the local cross-connection control coordinator.

Another area of concern is the backflow prevention devices that reclaim purveyors are requiring at the points of connection to protect the main reclaim distribution systems. Who tests these devices? Are these devices still considered "approved devices" when used on non-potable systems? If a device on a reclaimed system is tested, can the same test kit be used on a potable system backflow device?

This is a developing area that will be of great interest and concern to both the public and private sector in the years to come.

FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEMS - Eric Foltz

Why is there so much animosity between the Fire Sprinkler and Backflow Industries? We both have the same primary goal -- *to protect the public safety*

So why does it seem that industry "professionals" from both sides can't sit down together and come to an agreement, or at least a compromise?

In my dealings with the Fire Sprinkler Industry I have found that their primary concern is cost, while the water suppliers are concerned with protecting their water systems from either pollution or contamination. While I support the Fire Sprinkler Industry completely in their desire to have sprinkler systems installed, I also feel that they must guarantee that the water in those systems is contained. The only approved means of containment at this time is though an approved backflow preventer, the type of assembly to be determined by the degree of hazard associated with the sprinkler system. If there is only a pollution or aesthetic threat such as would be found with a system using black iron pipe, then a double check detector check assembly would probably be sufficient protection. A reduced pressure principle detector assembly should only be used if there is a health hazard such as chemical additives for rust or algae control.

Most of the concern of the fire sprinkler industry seems to be that the reduced pressure assemblies, which have a significantly greater head loss, will be required on all of these systems, thus requiring the installation of jockey pumps, storage tanks, etc., which affect the overall cost of the project. We as water purveyors need to be aware of this when we prescribe backflow protection. We need to assess the "degree of hazard" and try to work with the Fire Sprinkler Industry to better protect the public. I think the Fire Sprinkler Industry needs to be more understanding of our needs to meet both the primary and secondary drinking water standards, as determined by both state and federal regulation.

Hopefully, by educating personnel on both sides of this issue we can all come to an understanding that will benefit the public through increased protection from fire and increased protection of the public water system.

Come by and visit us at our next scheduled meeting. The USC Foundation for Cross-Connection Control and Hydraulic Research will be demonstrating field test procedures with a repair demonstration being conducted afterwards. We would like all of you to join us. There is no charge for our meeting and membership is not required. The meetings begin promptly at 6:00 p.m. and end at 8:00 p.m. We ask that you please RSVP so we are able to get a good count of attendees.

May 27th at
El Toro Water Dist.
24251 Los Alisos
El Toro
Contact Eric Foltz 714-837-1660

June 3rd at
Vallecitos Water Dist.
788 W. San Marcos Blvd.
San Marcos
Contact Mike Kidd 619-744-0460