

BPAQ Newsletter

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Backflow Prevention Association Queensland Inc. June 2007

Welcome to this edition of the BPAQ Newsletter. I hope you enjoy this newsletter and all submissions or items of interest are welcomed for inclusion in future editions.

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Backflow on rainwater tanks

It seems the water shortage and the installation of residential water tanks will create more backflow head aches. Brisbane City Council has indicated that for future council rebates, rainwater tanks are to be plumbed into the domestic water supply. As part of the installation, they will require a backflow preventor as part of the installation. Will the Dual Check Valve be suitable or should it be Double Check Valve?

Around the Traps

David James (President of the BPAQ) has relocated from Ipswich to Hervey Bay. David has taken a position with Wide Bay Water. We wish David all the best with his new role.

The Backflow prevention Association Queensland Inc. is a volunteer organization made up from members across all aspects of the plumbing and water supply industry. Current members include Local Authority Employees, Manufacturers and Agents, Plumbing Contractors, Education and Training Officials etc. Membership is currently only \$30.00 per year. Get involved in your industry, become a part of your industry voice. Apply for membership to PO box 4205 Eight Mile Plains QLD 4113.

Editorial Comment:

Pressure Vacuum Breakers (PVB); Is the time right to see these return to Australian plumbing installations?

With the reductions seen in supply pressures across Australia, we are seeing a growing incidence of spitting reduced pressure zone devices. This causes disgruntled owners to call a backflow plumber to 'fix' the valve only to find it is operating as it should. The customer (rightly) gets a bill for the plumber's time only to have the valve start spitting again over night when the pressures drop.

Or what about the proposed minimum supply pressure of 210kPa? Many RPZ devices have a pressure drop of approximately 150kPa so imagine how much water you will get inside the property.

The pressure drop across the RPZD is something we all know and have taken into account when installing or designing a piping system, but as we now face a time when we don't have the available pressure to open the checks, what do we do with a high hazard application?

Easy you say? Go back to a registered air gap and problem is solved. You are correct, but why did we move to mechanical devices in the first place? Because air gaps are too easily bypassed!

What other options do we have? – The answer is the Pressure Vacuum Breaker. It is considered suitable for high hazard applications in the USA. It was initially approved for high hazard applications in Australia as well, but over the years it has dropped out of the list of devices approved for high hazards here. Why?

You may say it was because of the installation requirements reduced it's applications, you may say it was because it is prone to spitting water as the float closes, but I don't think it was either. It could be argued that it was dropped from the list of approved devices because the RPZ could be used for all high hazard applications without having to consider the application other than what pressure do we have. As well there were no Australian manufacturers of such a product so why support a valve that may take some market share?

Now introduce the **Spill Proof Pressure Vacuum Breaker**, which has been introduced in the States in the last few years and we have a High Hazard suitable Device that does not spit. It still needs to be installed higher than the highest outlet as before but it does give us an alternative when the supply pressures prohibit the use of the RPZ device.



PVB



SPVB

Obviously no space issues here!!



I think this plumber should get a prize for symmetrical layout in design. Or, maybe the 'N' Pattern Febco device replaced an earlier in-line type of device.

If you see something of interest like this, please send me a pic and we can share it with the members.

The Latest Backflow News from The USA

There is a push again toward adopting national standards for Backflow Prevention Device installations. There appears to be a general consensus across many States that Backflow Prevention is now a top priority as Codes and regulations are being written and revised to protect the drinking water from the hazards of backflow occurrences.

Currently the general trend is that when containment devices are installed, a device that offers the highest degree of protection is used and installed as close to the water meter as possible. This does two things. **1.** By being next to the meter, it reduces the chance of cross connections happening and circumventing the device. **2.** By installing a high hazard device, the water supplier is assured of the level of protection independent of the type of business in the premises. (clause 2 only refers to commercial / industrial connections)

Another emerging trend is that backflow devices are coming back above ground as the ongoing problems associated with flooding pits etc make it harder to control the cross connection. The University of Southern California Foundation for Cross-Connection and Hydraulic Research suggest that if the test cocks on a backflow device are submerged. They by definition become a direct cross connection. All you need is a leaky test cock and the cross connection is made. **(I wonder how many Double Check Valves are installed in irrigation boxes around Australia? Editor)**

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(Contact Editor Peter McLennan 0413604434)

*** artwork ready**