



Air Gaps Prevent Water Contamination

Any hose connected to the domestic water supply plumbing must not sit in water

The Town of Hillsborough is responsible for protecting the drinking water supply from contamination or pollution, which could result from improper practices. Any water customer with the potential to create a cross connection and a backflow hazard must be aware of the restrictions that the town enforces to protect the drinking water supply and to ensure public health and welfare:

1. No direct connection is allowed between the public drinking water supply and any potential source of contamination.

Example — A direct connection would occur if a garden hose became submerged in a swimming pool, hot tub, soapy water bucket, pond, or pet water dish.

Potential sources of contamination must be isolated by an air gap or a reduced pressure zone backflow assembly. An air gap is the unobstructed vertical distance between the lowest opening of any pipe or faucet and the flood rim level of the receptacle receiving water or waste. The vertical, physical separation must be at least twice the effective opening of the water supply outlet and at least 1 inch above the receiving vessel's flood rim.



No touching! An air gap keeps the water supply physically separated from a potentially contaminated body of water.

Note: For the full definition of an air gap, see the American Water Works Association's Manual of Water Supply Practices on Backflow Prevention and Cross-Connection Control (M14).

2. A hose bib vacuum breaker certified by the NSF 61 standard should be maintained on every outside spigot.

The American Water Works Association recommends replacing vacuum breakers every five years or if they are failing. A breaker spraying water out of its weep holes indicates failure of the device.

3. The Town of Hillsborough recommends that consumers avoid filling swimming pools, hot tubs, ponds, or other bodies of water during system flushing season — March and occasionally in the fall.

When hydrants are flushed, pressure in the water system is reduced. Water could backflow into the public water supply system if water main pressure is lower and a hose becomes submerged in a body of water being filled.

During the annual March flushing, the town's water is disinfected by chlorination instead of chloramines (ammonia and chlorine). The change could upset the balance of a pool, pond or spa.

The town posts flushing periods on its website and social media platforms.