

Cross Connections



Protect your drinking water!

We often take clean water for granted, but contaminants can get into our water supply through a cross connection - a link between your household water supply and a source of contaminants.

A good example is spraying pesticide with a garden hose. If the water pressure drops or is interrupted the pesticide can be sucked into your home water supply.



This poses a serious health threat. However, a few simple precautions will protect you, your family and your neighbours.

What is the possible danger with using hoses?

There are many places around the home where a hose is used. Some examples are fish tank fills, laundry hoses, flexible shower heads, and sink rinsers.

The danger comes when the end of a hose is connected to or submerged in a potentially harmful substance and there is a drop in water pressure. The drop in pressure may occur if there is a watermain break or repair, or if there is a large amount of water withdrawal such as fire fighting or watermain flushing (cleaning). This drop in pressure causes a reversal of the normal flow of liquids in the piping system, thus allowing harmful substances to enter and pollute your home's water supply.

A hose creates the most common cross connection in the home.



You may unknowingly be contaminating your home's drinking water by attaching a spray bottle of pesticide to a hose, or leaving the end of a hose in a child's wading pool, hot tub, or ornamental pool.

How do I protect my drinking water from contamination?

It's as easy as one... two... three.

1. Never place the end of a hose in a substance that can be sucked back into the drinking water.
2. Do not place the end of a hose any closer than 25 mm (one inch) to a source of contamination.
3. Attach a Hose Connection Vacuum Breaker (HCVB) on your tap prior to attaching the hose (see diagram).

Remember to drain the outside HCVB before winter arrives or it will freeze and break.

HCVBs are available at local building materials and plumbing suppliers.

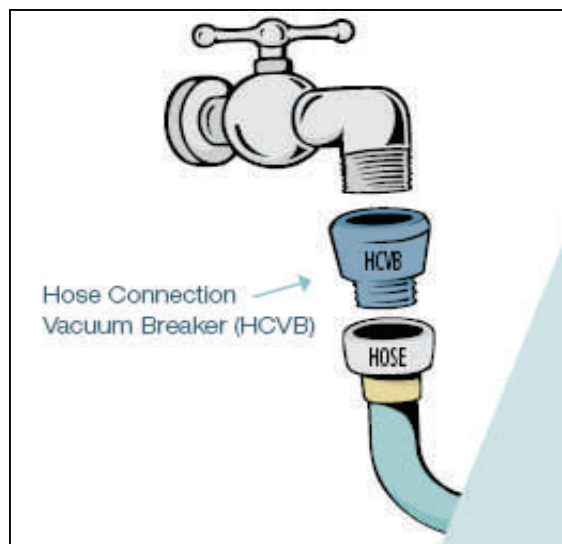


Diagram source: City of Calgary

What about boilers and irrigation systems?

Contaminants may also enter your drinking water through in-ground irrigation systems, water conditioners and heating boilers. Check the Yellow Pages for a listing of contractors and plumbers for further information.

Protecting drinking water is everyone's responsibility

Where can I find out more?

If you have any questions about drinking water safety, please do not hesitate to contact the Government Service Centre or Regional Health Authority nearest you.

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Drinking Water Awareness