

Backflow Prevention and Controls
December 12, 2024
Questions and Answers

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Below you will find the summary of the questions and answers (Q & A) from the live Webinar Series. For clarity and brevity, the live session of Q & A was trimmed from the original recording. Please keep in mind that this document is meant as a job aide. It does not create or confer any right for or on any person and does not operate to bind federal, state, or local food safety regulatory agencies. If you have questions concerning interpretation or application of various portions, please reach out to your District Supervisor for assistance. A current District Map is posted at the top of the page where you found the recording and Q & A document.

Q: Do commercial laundry machines have internal backflow prevention devices built in? I have been told that from multiple establishments.

A: You can have a pretty high level of confidence that they do have an air gap built into those commercial machines. Look on the back side of the machine, you will generally see a wide black or white box that sits on the outside of the unit. That is the physical air gap.

Q: Clarifying that if there is a three compartment sink it can have an air break and is NOT required to have an air gap?

A: Correct. The best way to frame it in your head is:

waste drain lines => air break

potable water line => air gap

It's worth pointing out that you may have local ordinances in place that say an air gap is the only thing that is allowed. Local ordinance can certainly supersede the minimum standard required by the State of Missouri.

Q: Clarifying that the air break just has to be 1" for the waste water disposal (dishwasher, three compartment sink, ice machine, etc.) on kitchen equipment?

A: The wastewater drain can be an air gap or an air break and must not be directly connected to the waste line.

The air gap dimensions must be a minimum of 1" or twice the diameter of the water line only applies to a potable waterline.

Q: We have a situation where I believe two stores share the same sprinkler system and in the back of the building where the RPZ unit is, there's water all over the floor. It looks like it's been leaking, but I don't know who is responsible for that unit or if they are even required to have it tested.

A: If it's on the fire sprinkler system, it's probably a double check valve so the unit should be tested. That's spelled out very clearly in the lodging code, but not so much in the food code. I would highly suggest getting that unit tested because the food code prohibits any cross connection, and it does have the potential to have a negative impact on that regulated facility. The public water supply would want their water protected as well. These situations can be tricky, but ultimately the responsibility for compliance falls to the regulated facility and they will have to work it out with the other parties regarding who is going to pay for it, etc. District staff can assist you with these situations.

Link to the news article regarding backflow:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HGdN1tx1qI>

Lodging regulation through DNR:

<https://www.sos.mo.gov/cmsimages/adrules/csr/current/10csr/10c60-11.pdf>