

The Direct Connection



A newsletter dedicated to Cross Connection Control and Backflow Prevention www.abpa-sa.org

SEPTEMBER Vol. 34 Issue 9

Lawn Irrigation Systems – High Hazard or Low Hazard Cross Connection?

The following is a review of irrigation systems, their operation, and considerations in the classification in the determination of high hazard (Health Hazard) cross connection or low hazard (Non-Health Hazard) cross connection. Over the years, Texas, along with a few other states have struggled some with irrigation Backflow Preventer requirements.

One of the first things the average person must understand is the fact that water pressure goes from a higher pressure to a lower pressure. Water pressure is not always constant and there are many variables that create these backflow situations. These situations can be very minute such as a pressure fluctuation caused by demand or the complete loss of water pressure due to water main breaks, fires in the area, high demand, piping design, etc. Additionally, pumps and elevations can create back-pressure situations.

There have been many cross-connection contamination events involving backflow situations. For every one documented it is estimated that 20,000 - 30,000 go undetected due to dilution. In documenting incidents in San Antonio for many years, we never documented an incident involving a residential lawn irrigation system. We did however, have an industrial site back-pressure almost a million gallons of contaminated water from an irrigation auxiliary water source into the city supply. The connection between the city supplied irrigation system and the auxiliary source was created without the water system's knowledge. A Water Quality complaint involving illnesses led to the discovery of this incident. Also, we have been told about residential backflow situations involving standard lawn irrigation systems where the potable water was contaminated.

Wonder why we never officially documented an incident on any other irrigation systems? Let's review how irrigation systems operate. There is a master valve and independent zone controllers. These valves only withstand 1/2 psi back-pressure. With the loss of water pressure – if the backflow preventer is not working as designed, the water in the irrigation system will be drained back into the potable water system. The irrigation system “does not have to be on for the system to be drained into the drinking water supply”. In San Antonio, a licensed irrigator and backflow tester actually set up an irrigation system display to demonstrate this at various irrigation conferences. The potable water was contaminated.

Backflow Prevention Assemblies – Studies have shown through annual testing of backflow prevention assemblies a failure rate(fouled checks) of 10-20%. If a backflow preventer is not tested for approximately 10 years the failure rate is in the area of 85%. What does this mean? Loss of water pressure – failed backflow preventer – and you are drinking water from your irrigation system! It's Diluted! **Cont. Page 7**

Gauge testing for members starts at 5:00 PM at SAWS

September meeting Details

Meetings of the San Antonio Chapter ABPA are held the second Thursday of every month except December. Dinner and refreshments are served at 6:00 p.m. sharp with the meeting starting at 6:15. The next meeting is:

Date: Thursday September 12, 2024

Time: 6:00 PM Pre-registration only required to receive a meal

**Loc: SAWS Bldg. 2 Conference Room
2800 US Hwy 281 North.**

**Program: Corporate Transparency Act
Presented by: Katrina Hamrick**

Meeting Sponsor:

**No alcoholic beverages
allowed**

Next Meeting: September 12, 2024

Big Thanks to

**American Backflow Products
for sponsoring and providing
training.**

**Jennifer Segler for creating an
interesting method of
presenting questions to quiz
members.**

**American Backflow for the
Wilkins seat removal tool for
the Raffle.**

September Agenda

- 5:00 p.m. General discussion and quorum confirmation
- 5:15 p.m. Call Meeting to order.
- 5:16 p.m. Secretary's Report. Read and approve the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 5:20 p.m. Treasurer's Report. Discussion and approval of the treasurer's report.
- 5:25 p.m. Supply Officer's Report
- 5:30 p.m. Vice President's, Directors', and any other reports for the good of the chapter. Comments, new business, any discussion.
- 5:40 p.m. Training Report. Training & Meal Sponsors
- 5:45 p.m. Webmaster Report
- 5:50 p.m. President's Report. New & old business
- 6:00 p.m. Meal is served.
- 6:15 p.m. General Membership Meeting & Training
 1. Report from the Directors Meeting. President
 2. City, regional, and national reports. James Cantrell and/or any City personnel present.
 3. Training program for the evening.
 4. Raffle prize drawing.

Ongoing Goals of ABPA-SA Chapter

1. Educational Outreach with public by presenting at PHCC meetings, engineering firms, schools, and neighborhood associations. Continuing goal.
2. Greater use of TCEQ website. Tracking of CEUs, Services available. Personal education.
3. Increase member awareness of importance of chapter meetings. Increase attendance and public awareness.
4. Increase website resource information. More detailed links to more information like TCEQ, COSA, and any place that would be helpful to our members

"Direct Talk" by the President

The September 12th meeting will be held in the SAWS conference room in the Tower II building located at 2800 U.S. Hwy. 281. Gauge testing starts at 5:00 PM and is iffy after 5:30 PM. The meal will start at 6:00 PM and the meeting will start at 6:15 PM. You may attend the meeting **without** pre-registering, however, if you would like a meal, you will have to register via the email you will receive before the meeting. Stay safe.

Trinidad *Chairez*

Here is a good website for emergency information: www.sanantonio.gov/emergency/

Chapter Chatter

By Your, on Vacation Secretary, Greg Shean

Off on the Wrong Flight: At an unnamed big city airport and airlines. Greg and his wife were in a fully occupied Boeing 787. The pilot came over the intercom that the airplane needed two lithium batteries. They were not changed and had a 90-minute charge time. After that the pilot said there were not enough ground crew to push the 787 back from the jet way and he was going to get some more. Next was the pilot telling everyone that there was about 100 pieces of luggage still on the tarmac. After a 2 ½ hour delay, we were off. Had to go through customs at the arrival and missed our connecting flight. Customs took about 1 ½ hours with nothing to declare. Got another flight out 5 hours later, super, but our luggage arrived 4 days later at our destination. The vacation was worth it.

Quiz High Scorers: The players used a made-up name so tracking individual scores was difficult during the quiz. After it was over, the four high scores, not in order, were Robert Stricker, his son Jeff, Troy Baird (Fred was not at the meeting), and Joe Young (aka Backflow Joe, our BAVCO rep and Program Coordinator). Three of the four of them use to be a team. Not fair. Now, they competed as individuals.

The fishing event this year will be on October 11-13, 2024. More information later.

MINUTES SAN ANTONIO CHAPTER-ABPA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING Thursday, August 8, 2024

Trinidad Chairez, President, presided over the meeting. The ABPA San Antonio Chapter meeting started at 6:01 PM in the Tower 2 Conference Room at SAWS HQ.

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS – PRESENT	EXECUTIVE OFFICERS – ABSENT
Trinidad Chairez – President	
Jeff Stricker– Vice President	
Greg Shean – Secretary	
Art Trejo – Treasurer	
Keith Waldrep – Past President	
OFFICERS SPECIAL TO THE CHAPTER – PRESENT	OFFICERS SPECIAL TO THE CHAPTER – ABSENT
Carl Michaud – Gauge Testing/Certification	Bill Hamrick – Membership and Newsletter
Joe Young – Program Director	Jim Cantrell – Liaison to SAWS
Matthew Wilgen – Webmaster	Supply Officer - Vacant
Jeff Meeks – Sgt. At Arms	

DIRECTORS AT LARGE – PRESENT	DIRECTORS AT LARGE – ABSENT
Bruce Rathburn – 2 years	Fred Baird – 1 year
Robert Stricker – 2 years	Bob Clark - 1 year
	Jeff Hoffman – 2 years
GUESTS PRESENT: Jennifer R Segler, American Backflow, Regional Sales Representative, Tallahassee FL 32304	Doug Taylor, American Backflow, National Sales Manager, Tallahassee FL 32304

Agenda Item #1. Trini started the meeting, asked that all turn off their cell phones and then asked for a moment of silence. He then had Greg go over the open items in the July minutes. INFO.

Agenda Item #2. Secretary’s Report: The July minutes were in the newsletter. Keith made a motion to accept. Seconded. Passed. INFO.

Agenda Item #3. Treasurer’s Report: Art reported the amount in our checking account. Greg used AI on the Robert’s Rules of Order. A motion is not necessary after our Treasurer’s report. INFO.

Agenda Item #4. Supply Officer’s Report: Still need a Supply Officer. Art brought a select of ABPA-SA attire. No inventory was bought in 2023. One goal is to minimize carrying around and inventory. There would be further evaluation after Jeff’s analysis of the 2023 inventory. OPEN.

Agenda Item #5. Audit Committee: Art e-mailed Bill, Jeff Hoffman, and Greg the 2024 profit and loss statement. Goal is to be sure that Art has answers to all the profit and loss statement. This is strictly an administrative issue. OPEN.

Agenda Item #6. Meeting Sponsor: American Backflow sponsored the meeting. INFO.

Agenda Item #7. Meal: American Backflow sponsored Schlotzsky’s box meals of turkey, beef, or ham subs with potato chips, pickle spear, and a cookie. Art Trejo provided the water and sodas for the meeting. INFO.

Agenda Item #8. Raffle: American Backflow provided a new Wilkins tool to remove seats on Wilkins assemblies. INFO.

Agenda Item #9. Webmaster: No report. Bruce said that Matt needs to talk to Jeff and Ashland. Jeff knows how to build a new website, compatible with the hosting site. OPEN.

Agenda Item #10. National ABPA: Troy reported that California is requiring ISO standard by 2027. ABPA to obtain ISO certification to continue operating in California. Upcoming meeting in Las Vegas in August, certification committee to work on ISO, program updates, etc. ASDWA conference coming up beginning of October in St Louis. The ABPA will have booth set up with National attending. House bills proposed in North Carolina and Colorado. ABPA asked for EPA regulatory language support, aid in North Carolina. Videos in Texas being edited, with goal to help train proctors. Approximately 15-20 scenarios that will cover assembly troubleshooting. INFO.

Agenda Item #11. SAWS: Dan Crowley, Director of Governmental Relation and Regional and Federal Affairs, said that high hazard backflow testing was 60% as of June 30th. He thanked the chapter members for responding to the required testing.

Customers with high Hazzard backflow assemblies who did not have their annual T&M report submitted to SAWS by June 30th will be receiving notification letters letting them know that the late fees have been added to their bill. SAWS sent letters as a courtesy to these customers in January and May reminding them that they need to get their backflow assemblies tested by June 30th. He hopes that this will motivate them to call you to schedule a test.

SAWS Backflow Department increased its Administrative Staff with two temporary employees in anticipation of the increase call and e-mail volume that is anticipated related to the late fee. Dan asked that you please be patient with the SAWS Backflow admin team as the next few months will be busy for them.

The SAWS Backflow department is working to transition the administrative function to BSI before the end of the year. As part of this transition SAWS staff will be working to change the annual June 30th due date to a rolling 12-month, singular to what other major cities are doing. It is anticipated that this action will go to the SAWS Board and the San Antonio City Council October for their consideration. The projected ordinance will change the annual due date to a rolling 12 months and clarification of the responsible party for backflow assemblies. INFO.

Agenda Item #12. San Antonio Irrigation Association (SAIA): SAIA is sponsoring the annual Missions baseball game on August 31st. There are still 30 tickets available. SAIA members and guests are \$15 each. SAIA is sponsoring a Vendor Fair and Competition on October 19th at the SAWS Eastside Operations Center, 403 S WW White Rd, San Antonio, TX 78219. There will be CEU classes. It will be from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM. There is no entry fee.

There will be over 20 booths with vendors such as SAWS, Hunter, SiteOne, CPS, KRain, Bobcat, Dig, Eco Centro and Longhorn, showing their latest products and answering any questions! Plus, some free giveaways.

CEUs: Presenter: Charles Swanson, LI0016931, Extension Program Specialist II– Landscape Irrigation, Texas AgriLife Extension 8:00 AM – 10:00 AM. Subject: Hydraulics.

Presenter: Jeffrey Knight, LI0005270, BPAT 4603, CIC, CLIA, CID, WETS (Water Educational Training Services) 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM. Subject: Electrical Troubleshooting

Member Cost – For 1 two-hour CEU Class - \$35.00 or for both \$60.00

Non-Member – For 1 two-hour CEU class - \$125.00 or for both \$200.00 INFO.

Agenda Item #13. City of San Antonio (COSA) Plumbing Inspection: No report. INFO.

Agenda Item #14. Membership: Bill sent a report that stated the chapter has 86 members. We lost 1 in May and one in June. He described the chapter member benefits. INFO.

Agenda Item #15. Gauge Testing: Carl reported that 6 gauges were tested with one failure that he will take home for Bill to repair. Testing at SAWS on meeting days starts at 5:00 PM and ends at 5:30 PM so testers can attend the meeting. After 5:30 PM will require a “realistic” excuse. INFO.

Agenda Item #16. Bac-Flo Unlimited Hands-On Testing: Scheduled for September 11, 2024 for the 8 hours hands-on for those who qualify at Bac-Flo Unlimited in Boerne. The hands on will be from 8 AM to 5 PM. Lunch will be served. Testers need 5-chapter meetings per year and 16 CEU meeting hours. Check your hours on the TCEQ website. Google: TCEQ License Search and then select: Individual Search. INFO.

Agenda Item #17. Fishing Trip: Cast N Stay suffered no Hurricane Beryl damage. The fishing trip is from October 11th to 13th. The 17” minimum put a damper on the keepers for the last two years. This led to buying fish at the local Kingsville HEB to supplement the catch. Fish will be bought in San Antonio this year. INFO.

Agenda Item #18. Training: Jennifer Segler said this is a Jeopardy type game but not like their previous game. Players needed smart phones and camera for QR code that is on the screen. Players can

also go to www.kahoot.it or with the Kahoot! App! Players showed up on screen as they were able to access the game. There were 23 player that were able to access the game. There would be 30 trivia, true/false, or multiple-choice questions.

The first question appeared on the screen. There was a 20 second countdown time to enter one of 4 possible answers while ominous music played. Each had its unique color: red, blue, green, and caramel. There was also an up counter that showed how many players had made a choice. A histogram then appeared with the block, proportional to the number who choose that answer, and number chosen below each choice. Then the top five players, with their player moniker, show the cumulative point accrued. More points were given to those who more quickly selected the correct answer.

There were questions on naming very difficult assemblies, what caused a backflow problem, private labels of similar assemblies, not the usual trouble shooting procedures, backflow history, etc. Feedback at the end was that there were too many backflow questions. :)

Jennifer put all this together. It was better logistically, moved along faster, really pitted the individual knowledge. This was not a team event as before, but set up for individuals.

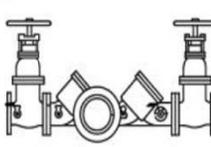
Adjournment. Adjourn the meeting at 7:45 PM for the raffle.



Greg Shean - Secretary ABPA San Antonio Chapter



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28
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Cont. from Page 1

In Houston, as an example, there was no requirement to test their irrigation Pressure Vacuum Breaker backflow protection assemblies installed on residential irrigation systems when Hurricane Harvey hit. Many had been installed for over 25 years without testing, and the majority would not prevent backflow and operate as designed.

Hurricane Harvey – Houston floods- many of these backflow preventers were under several feet of contaminated water. Water pressure lost – these failed backflow prevention assemblies would allow the flood waters to be drained right through the pressure vacuum breakers into the public drinking water system.

Most States classify all irrigation systems a “high hazard cross connection” as detailed in plumbing codes, AWWA, ASSE, etc. Currently in Texas – the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has classified the simple residential irrigation systems as a “low hazard”. This determination comes from what irrigation systems were 60 years ago when the systems weren’t thoroughly understood. Additionally, there was no chemical injection, drip irrigation involving toxic root killer, aux. water sources, etc., as we are seeing in today’s world.

TCEQ regulations apply to annual testing of high hazard (health hazard) cross connection Backflow Preventers only, with no annual testing requirement on low hazard cross connection assemblies. Some cities are not requiring annual testing on the simple irrigation systems and are citing the plumbing codes and TCEQ regulations as reasoning for not requiring monitoring, to assure assemblies are actually tested annually.

Issue - If the irrigation systems were moved to a high hazard classification, the impact would be on home owners having irrigation systems and water purveyors that will be required to track the periodic testing. This would present a cost to both water purveyors and home owners. However, many cities have realized the hazard and are requiring annual testing. There are some requiring periodic testing of simple lawn irrigation systems, e.g., at a minimum tested every 2-3 years.

The public – We have yet to explain to the average citizen how their irrigation operates and all the hazards we see today, that they understand and demand their city enforce the backflow protection as detailed in plumbing codes and national organizations as mentioned above.

Back to the original question – High hazard or low hazard? Test annually - or periodic - or just forget about the irrigation backflow protection all together? Shouldn't it be, that if you want water for a special use, you should be required to protect the potable water supply? Or maybe we just rely upon the dilution factor? Is the solution to Cross Connection Control in general – Dilution? NO!

Ask This Question - Why Test Backflow Prevention Assemblies?

1. Ensure assembly is still installed.
2. Ensure Backflow Protection hasn't been by-passed.
3. Ensure hazard hasn't changed with chemical injection, aux. water sources, etc.
4. Ensure the checks have not been removed.
5. Ensure checks haven't been knocked out due to water hammer
6. Ensure assembly working as designed
7. Testing and Maintenance required in all plumbing codes.

Irrigation Study Request: What could be considered is a detailed study on lawn irrigation systems like was done on fire lines with the effect of stagnant water on the public drinking water systems. This detailed the results of pressure fluctuations and loss of water pressure, thereby, draining stagnant water into the potable water system. If such a study were to be conducted on lawn irrigation systems that indicated irrigation systems are not a hazard – then we need to stop requiring testable backflow protection on the simple irrigation systems and go back to the dual checks from 70 years ago or just require no backflow protection. This is basically what we have now if the backflow protection is not tested and maintained. Nothing!!!

Numerous Cities and States Struggle with Lawn Irrigation Backflow Preventer Requirements, which includes periodic testing! What's Wrong with Our Water Industry That This Issue Has Not Been Addressed Through Public Education? What are Your Thoughts on Irrigation systems and Protecting Your Drinking Water?

Commentary by Fred Baird - He has been in the backflow industry for over 50 years and was involved initially in the development and enforcement of San Antonio Water System's backflow prevention program for 30 years. Additionally, he served on the AWWA M-14 Cross Connection Control Manual – 3rd Ed. –Ad-hoc committee, which re-classified all lawn irrigation systems as a high hazard (health hazard) cross connection.



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Quote of the Day

“Backflow World - What we have learned and know about this field - is that - the more we know the more we realize we don't know!”

After over 50 years in the Backflow World - I came to realize this. Are there really - any experts in this field?

Fred Baird

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How to join the ABPA-SA Chapter

There are two ways to join the San Antonio Chapter of the American Backflow Prevention Association.

The easiest way is to click on the QR Code and follow the instructions to set up your account and be presented with an invoice that you can pay with a credit card on-line or check the box to pay with a check. If you don't use QR Codes, click on this address. <https://www.abpa.org/page/Join> **IMPORTANT** Be sure to select the chapter/s (San Antonio Chapter) you want to join before selecting the payment method. If you elect to pay with a check, you will be able to print the invoice so you can send it with your check to the address on the invoice. If you pay with a credit card on-line, you will be able to print a receipt.

Click QR Code to Join



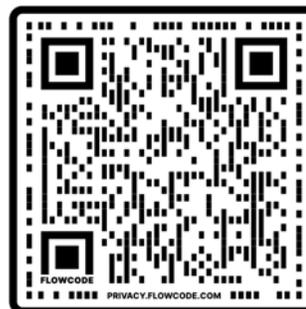
The other way is to print the Membership Application on the next page and send it to the address at the bottom of the page with your check.

How to renew your ABPA-SA Chapter Membership

There are two ways to renew your San Antonio Chapter membership of the American Backflow Prevention Association.

The easiest way is to click on the QR Code and follow the instructions to renew your membership and sign into your account and follow the instructions. If you don't use QR Codes, click on this address. <https://www.abpa.org/page/RenewNow> The program will present you with an invoice that you can pay with a credit card on-line or check the box to pay with a check. **IMPORTANT** Be sure the chapter/s (San Antonio Chapter) is/are selected that you want to renew before selecting the payment method. If you elect to pay with a check, you will be able to print the invoice so you can send it with your check to the address on the invoice. If you pay with a credit card on-line, you will be able to print a receipt.

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Thank You for Your Membership



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

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- International Membership \$79
 - Sustaining Membership \$300.00
 - New Member
- Renewal - Member # _____

To join the American Backflow Prevention Association, simply fill out the membership application form and mail it with your check to the address listed below, or if paying by credit card you may fax the completed form to 979.846.7607. Local chapters have additional fees. Below is a listing of chapters by region. To find out if there is a local chapter in your area, please review the chapter information on our website at abpa.org or call the National Office at 979.846.7606. **Membership in the Association constitutes paying National dues.**

Sustaining Member:

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- A Sustaining Member must submit a letter that designates their Voting Representative.

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Name as it appears on card _____ Signature _____

Additional Information

How would you like to receive your Membership Renewal Invoice Notification? Email US Mail (Not available for International Membership)

Local Chapter Dues Listed by Region

REGION 1 New England \$12.00 Rhode Island 18.00	REGION 5 Colorado \$15.00 Utah 12.00	REGION 9 (USD)
REGION 2 Virginia \$25.00	REGION 6 Arizona \$20.00 Central Coast 10.00 Central Valley California 10.00 Hawaii 23.00 Silver State 23.00 Southern California 15.00	REGION 10
REGION 3 Carolinas \$10.00 Florida Suncoast 12.00 Peach State "1788" 30.00 Tennessee 20.00	REGION 7 Oregon \$20.00 SRC4 20.00	REGION 11 Indiana BPA \$25.00 Michigan 40.00 Northern Illinois 23.00
REGION 4 Arkansas \$10.00 Central Texas 20.00 Corpus Christi 23.00 Lower Rio Grande Valley 25.00 North Texas 23.00 San Antonio 60.00	REGION 8 (USD)	REGION 12 Eastern Nebraska \$10.00

Please make checks payable to: ABPA
6672 S 1570 W, West Jordan, UT
(801) 436-7238
Email: membership@abpa.org