

Meeting with Utilities Inc. about Backflow connector requirements in Greater Groves.

August 7, 2019

Meeting presented by Chris Snow, Director of External Affairs, Cathy Sullivan, and Mike Overton who is the cross connection control technician. Also present was a certified plumber to answer questions, Tim Sack at 3690 Maidencairn St., Clermont FL 34714 tmsmech@sbcglobal.net.

The department of environmental protection has required Utilities Inc. to file an annual report beginning in 2016 to ensure anyone with in-ground irrigation or a private well has the backflow connection. This stops any contaminated water from flowing back into the potable water lines. In 2016 they began by addressing commercial sites to make sure they were in compliance. Now that the commercial sites are done they are beginning with all the residential communities in this area, Greater Groves was just the first.

Mr. Overton actually walked the streets of Greater Groves to see who had irrigation and who did not. He also made note of any backflow connectors already installed. Many in our community had older models in the ground (the new ones are above ground). If you have an inground one and have it tested and certified it will be grandfathered as long as it can pass certification every 2 years. If at any time it does not pass inspection it has to be replaced with the above ground style, it cannot be repaired. If you got a letter and do not have irrigation you just need to contact Mr. Overton at 407-260-5065 option 3, or at fbackflow@uiwater.com.

The question of why now?

The understanding of the need for backflow devices started in 1974 and has been implemented in different states at different times, with most states enforcing in the 90's. Many areas in Florida are still not on board, but Utilities Inc. is implementing as quickly as they can to safeguard our water supply.

If you go to myutility.us/myuiflorida/ you will be at the Utilities Inc. webpage, click on cross connection and you can find a list of plumbers that are certified to do the inspections. Also on nextdoor, many people have commented on plumbers they have used and the costs. Neither Utilities Inc. or Greater Groves HOA can recommend a particular plumber. The prices seem to vary quite a bit so you will want to shop around.

If you have in-ground irrigation or a well and don't want it any longer you can cap it off and Mr. Overton will come out and verify that the irrigation cannot be used and you will not have to install the backflow device. I don't know how difficult this is as I am sure it depends on where the irrigation hooks up to the water. So what it boils down to is that the DEP requires this, Utility Inc. enforces it, the homeowners is required to implement with an appropriate certified plumber. Not all licensed plumbers are certified in backflow testing. The costs are strictly the homeowners responsibility.

If you have questions specific to your address I would suggest contacting Mr. Overton at the above listed phone number as there are many individual differences in properties. I apologize for not getting more specifics but it was a large crowd and a little bit of cross talk and missed a lot on the tape. You can call me if you other questions, the office number 352-708-6090.

