



Famous Incident

1933 - World's Fair

At the Chicago World's Fair thousands of visitors became ill from a backflow incident. Two hotels that shared a water system was the source of a dysentery outbreak. Over 1400 people contracted the disease, ending with over 50 deaths.

Hose Connection Incident

A Utah doctor reported two gold fish flowing into his bath tub. Earlier in the day he had been filling his goldfish pool with a garden hose, allowing it to be submerged in the water. A backflow condition occurred causing water and the goldfish to be sucked back through the hose and into his home where they were found in the bathtub.



South Jordan City
Water Division

(801) 253-5230
www.sjc.utah.gov/backflow.asp

10996 S Redwood Road
South Jordan, UT 84095

Backflow Incidents



Local Backflow Incidents



What is a backflow incident?

Every year in South Jordan multiple backflow incidents occur. The clean drinking water gets connected to something that will contaminate or pollute it, making the water unsafe to drink.

These same backflow incidents occur throughout Utah, and other states, but we rarely hear about them. This pamphlet describes multiple incidents that have happened in our city and other places.

By learning about these backflow incidents we can learn how to protect against them. We can protect our water and keep it safe to drink.

For more information on what backflow is, and how it occurs, please visit our website at www.sjc.utah.gov/backflow.asp.

The water division also provides free inspections to check for cross-connections and backflow compliance. You can schedule or contact the water division at (801)253-5230.



South Jordan Incidents

Sprinkler System Incident - When: April, 2009

A resident contacted the city after they found dirt and other material in the drinking water when they were filling up their bathtub. The city discovered that the sprinkler system did not have the required backflow preventer. While the resident was in the home using water, her husband was in the yard turning on their sprinkler system.

The water was pulled from the sprinkler system back into their drinking water in their home. They installed a backflow preventer and have not had a problem since that time. This type of incident has been documented by other cities in Utah, including our neighbor West Jordan.

Secondary Water Incident - When: August, 2009

New renters contacted the city because they had not received a water bill for over a month. The city went out to check the water, and found the drinking water shut off, but that there was still water inside the home. The investigation showed that the secondary water was directly connected to the drinking water through the sprinkler system and was able to go back into the home.

Risks of drinking secondary water, which is untreated, include giardia and cryptosporidium and can be very dangerous to the young and old whose immune systems may be weaker. Luckily no one got sick and the contaminated water did not spread to the neighbors. With a properly installed backflow preventer and swing joint connection this type of incident could not occur.

LAYTON, UT - Over 40 homes were affected by this same type of incident in 2009. Numerous people in the area became sick with giardiasis.

SARATOGA SPRINGS, UT - A similar incident caused hundreds of people to become sick with Campylobacteriosis in Spring of 2010. A notice was sent to the entire city to not drink the water.

High Water Bill Incident - When: Summer 2009

A resident received their monthly water bill and found they were charged for over 200,000 gallons of water, which is enough for a family of five to live on for over two years. The water department inspected the system and they found that the secondary water was directly connected to the drinking water through the sprinkler system without the needed backflow prevention. Because the drinking water was higher pressure it pushed through the sprinkler system and filled the city's secondary water system and the canal with drinking water.

Because the sprinkler system was not correctly protected with backflow prevention the resident had to pay for the water that was used. This type of incident is the most common in South Jordan and happens to at least 10 residents every year.