



**South Tahoe
Public Utility District**

*Protecting Public Health Through
Backflow Prevention and Hazard Control*

Construction Standard Update

Stop & Drain Valve Above-Ground Installation Requirement

Cross-Connection Control & Backflow Prevention Program | April 2026

A Common Practice in Our Service Area



A Cross-Connection is any actual or potential link between the District's drinking water supply and a source of contamination.

Burying stop & drain valves is very common in the South Lake Tahoe area — and for good reason. It's an effective way to drain a home's plumbing before winter.

Why It's Used

- Drains the water service line to prevent freeze damage in winter
- Simple, inexpensive installation during new construction
- Allows full drainage of the home before seasonal shutdown
- Has been standard practice in cold-climate areas for decades

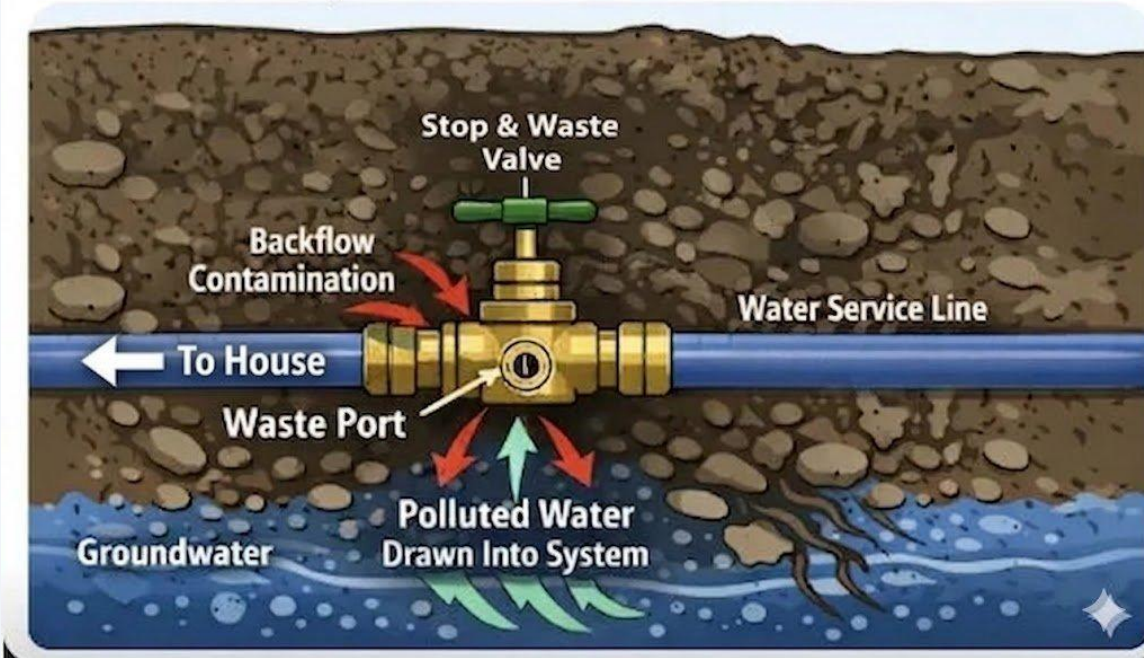
Why It's Not Safe

- Buried valves can become submerged in contaminated soil or groundwater
- The waste port opens directly to the surrounding soil during drainage
- During a backflow event, contaminants can be drawn directly into the drinking water system
- Creates a cross-connection — a violation of state drinking water regulations

Why Buried Valves Are a Cross-Connection Hazard



Buried Stop & Waste Valve Contamination Risk



What the diagram shows:

- 1 The waste port opens to surrounding soil when the valve drains
- 2 Groundwater and soil contaminants surround the buried valve
- 3 During a backflow event, polluted water is drawn directly into the service line and into the drinking water system

This risk exists regardless of whether a backflow event has occurred — the potential for contamination is present any time the valve is buried.

Cross-Connection Control & Backflow Prevention Program



About the Program

STPUD developed and maintains a comprehensive Cross-Connection Control & Backflow Prevention Program to protect the District's drinking water supply from contamination.

The program is administered by Ross Cole, Inspection Supervisor — registered with the State Water Resources Control Board as the District's Cross-Connection Control Coordinator — supported by a 4 person AWWA certified team.

Currently tracking ~1,800 active backflow prevention assemblies across the service area, each tested annually.

State Requirement

The State Water Resources Control Board required all water agencies to submit Cross-Connection Control Plans by July 1, 2025.

STPUD's Response

STPUD developed and submitted its plan on time. Today's update is one proactive step already being taken under that program.

What's Next:

The plan is currently awaiting full SWRCB approval. Once approved, staff will return to the board to present the plan in depth and move toward formal adoption — continuing our commitment to keeping District water clean and safe.

The Construction Standard Change



CURRENT PRACTICE

- Stop & drain valves buried underground at time of installation
- No above-grade requirement on new construction
- Cross-connection risk present and unmitigated
- Existing installations remain in place



NEW STANDARD

- Stop & drain valves on new construction must be installed above ground
- Stop & drain valves are still permitted — just not buried
- Aligns with UPC Section 605 and SWRCB cross-connection policy.
- Aligns with Tahoe City PUD & North Tahoe PUD's Cross Connection Program.
- If burial is desired, an appropriate backflow device must be installed upstream of the valve to protect STPUD water system.



Next Steps

As part of STPUD's ongoing effort to keep District water clean and safe from contaminants:

1

Press Release —

Public notification of the updated construction standard going out to the community.

2

Contractor Workshop —

Staff will host a contractor and plumber education workshop in the boardroom — end of April.

3

Full Plan Presentation —

Once SWRCB approval is received, staff will return to present to the board, the Cross-Connection Control Plan in depth and move toward adoption.

Questions?