

AVOIDING CROSS-CONNECTIONS and CONTAMINATION OF DRINKING WATER

A cross-connection is a point in private plumbing systems where the public drinking water might come in contact with and be contaminated by hazardous materials — whether solid, liquid or gas.

If you leave a garden hose submerged in non-potable water (not fit for consumption) such as soapy water, pool water, water containing herbicide/pesticide, etc. you could contaminate your drinking water. For example, if the pressure in the public drinking water supply water main feeding your property drops while your hose is submerged in non-potable water, the non-potable water could backflow, or back siphon, into your private plumbing system and Southern Utilities Company's (Southern) public drinking water distribution system.

The Safe Water Drinking Act requires that backflow prevention assembly devices be installed at all potential cross-connections on your private plumbing system to protect you and all Southern customers from the backflow of contaminated drinking water.

Here are some plumbing tips to help prevent the backflow of contaminated drinking water from your private plumbing system:

- Install backflow prevention assembly devices on threaded faucets at your residence, or facility receiving water, especially outdoor hose bibbs or faucets. Inexpensive backflow prevention assembly, referred to as hose bibb vacuum breakers, can be purchased at most local plumbing supply stores.
- Keep the ends of garden hoses, pipes, faucets, valves, etc. from exposure of all contaminants. Never allow a garden hose, pipe, faucet, valve, etc. to be submerged in a sink, bucket, drain or tub. Additionally, maintain water levels in such items well below the inlet of all garden hoses, pipes, faucets and valves at all times.
- Do not use spray devices which contain chemicals, such as herbicides or pesticides, where the spray device is directly connected to any point on the private plumbing system without an appropriate backflow prevention assembly device installed and tested.