



# CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

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## **Backflow Prevention Reimbursement Pilot Program**

### **Background**

On 12/9/19 the City Council approved a Backflow Prevention Reimbursement Pilot Program. During periods of extreme rainfall and flooding, certain property owners in the City have experienced sanitary sewer backflows in their basements. Such backflows into homes from the public sanitary sewer constitute a public health hazard that should be mitigated to the best extent possible. A permanent solution to such backflows is to identify and correct all sources of groundwater or surface water, known as Inflow and Infiltration “I&I” from getting into the sanitary sewer system. Another solution is to install backflow preventers in homes so that when I&I does enter the sanitary sewer system, it does not back up into human living space. The City seeks to mitigate the public health danger resulting from sanitary sewer backflows by assisting homeowners that have experienced sanitary backflows in their basements during flood events to prevent recurrences, through a pilot program in which the City helps pay the cost for installation of a backflow preventer.

### **Program Requirements & Eligibility**

Persons are eligible for this Program when:

- The applicant is a property owner with a verified connection to the City of Falls Church sanitary sewer system.
- Property for which application is being made has documented sanitary sewer backflow issues that occurred prior to application for the program, as determined by reports of such issues to the City, documentation by a licensed plumber, or receipts from a licensed sanitary cleaning company.
- Backflow Prevention (“BFP”) device must be installed by a licensed plumber.
- Applicants must obtain a BFP installation permit and an approved final inspection by the City Building Official, or their designee.
- Owner/applicant and installer must submit paid-in-full certification.
- BFP device installed after July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

### **Installation & Application to the Pilot Program**

The following requirements must be met during participation in the program:

- The installation of the BFP shall be based upon a plumbing permit from the City’s Permit Office and inspected / approved by the City’s Plumbing Inspector.
- The BFP device must be installed by a licensed plumber.
- Owner/applicant’s plumber must ensure and certify to the Building Official that any illicit (unpermitted and/or non-compliant) connections (roof downspouts, sump pumps and exterior floor drains) are disconnected from the sanitary lateral. These are prohibited by City Code and could also continue to

flood the basement if the backwater valve is activated. A single sump pump can contribute the equivalent of the average daily flow from 26 homes to the City sanitary sewage system.

- A completed reimbursement application form (included to this package) with all necessary eligibility supporting documentation must be submitted to the City of Falls Church Department of Public Works.
- Upon receipt of application in good order (complete and all supporting documents received), a thirty (30) business-day **review period** is initiated within which the application is reviewed for compliance with the program standards.
- Department of Public Works engineering staff shall inspect the exterior of the eligible property and verify roof downspouts are disconnected from the sanitary lateral **as part of the review process**. The downspouts / sump pump drains shall be “day lighted” and if placed underground, must terminate in a visible outfall or pop-up emitter. The outfalls shall be within the lot, not within the City right-of-way, and with concentrated flows not directed onto adjoining lots. Piping through the curb has been prohibited since 2016.
- Upon final approval of the application for reimbursement as meeting all program standards, a check shall be made payable to the owner/applicant for the verified (reimbursable) amount and mailed to the owner/applicant’s property address of record.

### **Program Benefits**

- The Backflow Prevention Pilot Program provides reimbursement to property owners for up to 50 percent of the actual cost of installing a back flow prevention (“BFP”) device by a licensed plumbing contractor, but in no event more than \$2,000.00.

### **Terms, Conditions & Limitations**

- The City offers assistance only to those customers meeting the eligibility criteria who have submitted an application and have been approved for reimbursement.
- The Pilot Program is subject to the limitations of City funding for this purpose.
- City staff shall be granted access to the property to verify installation of the BFP device.
- Owner/applicant shall accept responsibility and release City from any maintenance responsibility for the “BFP” device.
- Owner/applicant shall allow the City, upon request, access to the property to conduct plumbing inspections to confirm the eligible property is not contributing storm water inflow/infiltration, via any illicit connection, sump pump, exterior area drain or cracked laterals, to the sanitary sewer system. If such problems exist, Owner/applicant agrees to assume full responsibility for the elimination of **ALL** inflow/infiltration sources prior to receiving reimbursement for a BFP device.
- Selection of device manufacturer, type, and the location of the device (basement or in the sewer lateral in the yard) shall be determined by Owner/applicant.
- DPW staff assumes no responsibility for existing laterals between the house and the City’s main, and shall have no obligation with respect thereto. The property owner owns the lateral up to the main and is responsible for its maintenance.