



Who is Your Cross-Connection Control Specialist?

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What does a Cross-Connection Control Specialist (CCS) do?

To better protect public health, drinking water rules require public water systems to utilize a Cross-Connection Control Specialist (CCS) to develop and implement CCC programs. WAC 246-292 (Operator Certification Rule) is consistent with WAC 246-290-490 (Cross-Connection Control) in requiring PWS's to designate a CCS to be in responsible charge of a public water system's CCC program

Washington state has a long history of developing strong, collaborative drinking water programs to protect public health. The Cross-Connection Control (CCC) program is an excellent example of this collaboration. The CCC program helps ensure that Public Water Systems (PWS) deliver high quality water to their customers. Public Water Systems (PWS) must designate a certified CCS at their water system.

Who is the CCS?

The key to a successful CCC program is your certified CCS.

The CCS helps ensure that contaminants do not enter the distribution system from cross-connections by keeping the potable water distribution system a physical barrier from drinking water contamination. A cross-connection is a point where the potable water supply is, or could be, connected to a non-potable source. Contaminants can enter the distribution system through uncontrolled cross-connections when backflow occurs.

WAC 246-292-033 lists the duties required by the CCS. These tasks include:

- ◆ Develop, implement, and maintain a CCC program,
- ◆ Assess the degree of hazard posed by the consumer's water system,
- ◆ Determine the appropriate backflow protection for each customer,
- ◆ Inspect backflow assembly and air gap installations,
- ◆ Develop and maintain CCC records, and
- ◆ Take corrective actions in the event of a backflow incident.

Why is CCC important?

The Center for Disease Control data indicates CCC deficiencies account for approximately 50 percent of all distribution-related waterborne disease outbreaks. Washington state drinking water rules require PWS to report backflow incidents and we aren't receiving all of them. With new metering and Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) technologies, it is likely the perceived occurrence of backflow incidents will increase. The Revised Total Coliform Rule

also requires operators to investigate and report the cause of coliform failures. This may increase the number of reported backflow incidents.

Backflow incidents potentially cost the PWS in:

- ◆ The health of PWS customers.
- ◆ Investigations and clean-up.
- ◆ Litigation, if someone suffers a loss.

When do I need a CCS?

Although the CCS requirement has existed since the 1970s, we clarified the requirement in the 2014 revision of the OpCert Rule (WAC 246-292). We plan to implement the CCS requirement over the next two years to minimize the impact on smaller water systems.

Our implementation plan includes the following.

- ◆ Making PWS aware of the importance of the CCS.
- ◆ Informing PWS of our intention of tracking their designated CCS.
- ◆ Giving PWS some options to meet this requirement, such as:
 - Contract with a CCS.
 - Work with a neighboring PWS or a Satellite Management Agency (SMA).
 - Have an existing operator for the PWS become CCS-certified.

Most small PWS need a CCS for only a few hours a month after the initial CCC program development. The advantage of working with a contract CCS, neighboring PWS, or SMA is that the CCS will have more experience than an on-staff person and be able to perform the necessary duties more quickly. However, the disadvantage of a non-staff CCS is that they may not be as readily available as an on-staff person and will require a robust service contract. Some advantages of having an on-staff CCS are, 1) the current system operator is eligible to take the CCS certification exam; 2) CCS certification meets the professional growth requirement for other operator certifications; and 3) there is no need to search for the “right” person for your system because they are available full time.

PWS that haven’t reported a designated CCS by January 1, 2019, will enter the compliance process used for other mandatory operator positions and will be subject to potential formal enforcement.

For More Information

Find more resources on our [Publications and Forms webpage](#).

Contact our nearest regional office from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. If you have an after-hours emergency, call 877-481-4901.

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