

August Vol. 53 Issue 8

BE AWARE OF COUNTERFEIT ASSEMBLIES

ABPA headquarters shared some important information below regarding counterfeit backflow prevention assemblies/repair parts being sold on Amazon and other online marketplaces.

While we have seen counterfeit repair parts for some time, we are now seeing ***complete counterfeit assemblies*** being offered for sale.

Two specific examples have been identified:

1. Counterfeit “975XL” Assembly

A knockoff version of the Zurn Wilkins 975XL Reduced Pressure Principle Assembly was purchased from Amazon. Upon inspection, the assembly had:

- **No manufacturer name cast or labeled on the body**
- **No model number**
- **No serial number**
- **No listing or approval markings**

A genuine Wilkins 975XL / 975XL2 is ASSE listed, and Approved by the Foundation for Cross-Connection Control and Hydraulic Research at USC, which is required for approval in many areas of the US.

2. Suspect Watts 009M3-QT Assembly

An assembly listed as a 009M3-QT sold on Amazon also does not appear to list Watts as the manufacturer anywhere on the product or packaging, calling into question its authenticity and approval status.

Why This Matters:

Many jurisdictions (states, counties, cities, water systems, etc.) require 3rd party listings or approval of backflow prevention assemblies. Check with your local water system manager or inspector for the exact approvals needed in your area.

Common approval agencies are:

1. Foundation for Cross-Connection Control and Hydraulic Research at University of Southern California (USC FCCCHR)
2. American Society of Sanitary Engineering (ASSE)
3. International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO)
4. Canadian Standards Association (CSA)

In addition to these equipment-evaluation organizations, your specific installation must be approved by governing bodies and water purveyors. Ultimately, the local water utility serving your area has the final authority on which specific devices are allowed on their distribution network.

Any assembly must be approved from one end shut-off valve to the other. Use of aftermarket or counterfeit parts voids that approval. These counterfeit assemblies are NOT USC FCCCHR approved, NOT State approved, and will NOT be accepted for installation, testing, or compliance in our system.

Required Action:

1. Do not install any backflow assembly purchased from Amazon, eBay, or other unverified online sellers unless you can verify the manufacturer, model, serial number, and 3rd party approval.
2. Verify before you buy: Purchase assemblies only through authorized distributors / manufacturer representatives.
3. Inspect existing inventory: Check your trucks and shelves for any assemblies without proper manufacturer markings, data plates, and approval markings or online lists for approval (USC FCCCHR).
4. Field verification: Testers – if you encounter an assembly in the field with no manufacturer, no model/serial number, or questionable casting/labeling, please document with photos and contact the public water system providing the water service immediately. It will be considered a non-approved assembly and must be replaced.
5. Report: If you have purchased or seen one of these assemblies, please notify your local water purveyor or your state drinking water regulator's office.

The protection of our drinking water depends on properly approved and functioning assemblies. Counterfeit products put public health at risk and expose property owners to costly re-installation.

Thank you for your continued diligence and for the great work you do every day protecting the nation's drinking water. Please share this alert with your staff and fellow contractors.

ABPA National Headquarters

August Meeting Details

Meetings of the San Antonio Chapter of ABPA are held the second Thursday of every month except December. Dinner and refreshments are served beginning at 5:30 with the meeting starting at 6:00pm.

Date: Thursday August 13, 2026

Time: 6:00 PM (pre-registration required to receive a meal)

Place: SAWS Bldg. 2 Conference Room
2800 US Hwy 281 North

Meeting Training: TBA

No Alcoholic Beverages Allowed

Next meeting date: September 10th, 2026

**The Chapter thanks
last month's speaker
Troy Baird with Bac-Flo
Unlimited, Inc. for his
presentation on
"Backflow Prevention
Assembly Installations
- Things to Watch For".**



August Agenda

- 5:00 pm General discussion / quorum confirmation - Call Meeting to Order
- 5:02 pm Secretary's Report. Read and approve the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 5:05 pm Treasurer's Report. Discussion and approval of the treasurer's report.
- 5:10 pm Vice President's, Directors', and any other reports for the good of the chapter. Comments, new business, any discussion.
- 5:15 pm Training Report. Training & Meal Sponsors
- 5:20 pm Webmaster Report
- 5:25 pm President's Report. New & old business
- 5:30 pm Meal served.
- 6:00 pm General Membership Meeting & Training
 - 1. Report from the Directors Meeting, President.
 - 2. City, Regional, and National Reports. Reports from any City personnel present.
 - 3. Training program for the evening.
 - 4. Raffle prize drawing.

Nightmare of Year Award:

Members: submit your (true) 2026 backflow testing nightmare story to: info@speackbackflow.com.

The entry judged the best will be awarded a \$200 cash prize at this year's November meeting!

"Direct Talk" by the President

The September meeting will be held in the SAWS conference room, Tower II building at 2800 U.S. Hwy 281. The Director's meeting will start at approximately 5:00 PM with the meal served at 5:30 and meeting at 6:00 PM.

Jeff Stricker

**Update your license information and check your license status here:
https://www2.tceq.texas.gov/lic_dpa/index.cfm?fuseaction=licall.searchindiv

MEETING MINUTES

ABPA - SAN ANTONIO CHAPTER GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING Thursday, July 9, 2026

Jeff Stricker, President, presided over the meeting. The ABPA San Antonio Chapter meeting started at 5:53 PM in the Tower 2 Conference Room at SAWS HQ.

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS – PRESENT	EXECUTIVE OFFICERS CONT. – ABSENT
Jeff Stricker - President	Greg Shean - Secretary
Timothy Sales - Vice President	Trinidad Chairez – Past President/Program Director
Art Trejo - Treasurer/Membership	
OFFICERS SPECIAL TO THE CHAPTER – PRESENT	OFFICERS SPECIAL TO THE CHAPTER - ABSENT
Webmaster - Open; Troy Baird - Newsletter	Supply Officer - Vacant
Jeff Meeks - Sgt. At Arms	
Mark Schnur - Liaison to SAWS	
Carl Michaud – Gauge Testing/Certification	

DIRECTORS AT LARGE – PRESENT	DIRECTORS AT LARGE – ABSENT
Robert Stricker - 2 years	Bruce Rathburn - 2 years
Keith Waldrep - 2 years	Fred Baird - 1 year
	Bob Clark - 1 year
GUESTS PRESENT: None	

Agenda Item #1. Jeff started meeting at 5:53 pm. Jeff spoke on members not getting the e-mails. He sent a document around the room so everyone could verify the email information. He then spoke on individuals who had an expired membership and how that was set up by Bill Hamrick. INFO.

Agenda Item #2. Secretary's Report: The June meeting minutes were in the July newsletter. Keith Waldrep made a motion to approve. Robert was busy taking the minutes so he missed the opportunity of making motions. Seconded. Approved. INFO.

Agenda Item #3. Treasurer's Report: Jeff reported the Chapter checking account balance being \$11,656.00. Savings account information provided in annual report. INFO.

Agenda Item #4. Meeting Sponsor: ABPA-SA. The meeting meal was a selection of pepperoni, meat lovers, and supreme pizzas with a lettuce with veggies/croutons salad and a choice of two dressings. Art provided the sodas and water. INFO.

Agenda Item #5. Supply: There are few selections of the remaining chapter attire. The only reorder will be caps. Still need to decide what to do with the unsold inventory. OPEN.

Agenda Item #6. Raffle: \$50 cash prize for July meeting. INFO.

Agenda Item #7. Newsletter: Troy printed and brought to meeting 30 newsletter hard copies for those who had not read it on-line. They were set in front of the room at 5pm. Newsletter goes to about 290 people and organizations across the country. INFO.

Agenda Item #8. Membership: Jeff reviewed ABPA membership dues are \$60 for national and \$65 for SA chapter. Both must be paid to receive national and chapter benefits. There are two new members. We have about 105 members of paid up national and chapter annual dues. INFO.

Agenda Item #9. Hands-On: The Hands-on training sign up sheet is in front of meeting room for those expiring before October 2027. Check your CEU status on the TCEQ website. Must have 16 meeting hours and have attended 5 meeting per year minimum. INFO.

Agenda Item #10. Gauge Certification Testing: Carl reminded everyone when getting gauge certified to keep the white copy of the certification since it makes clearer scans or copies. INFO.

Agenda Item #11. ABPA National: The Troy spoke on the changes to the National ABPA 42nd ABPA International Conference and Trade Show. Due to some the hotels not being able to handle the size of the ABPA conference and other hotels in the area being too expensive, the conference was moved to San Marcos, Texas at the Embassy Suites Conference Center May 3-5, 2027. This is a large facility that will accommodate all of ABPA's needs. Local chapters should be thinking how they can ABPA-SA contribute. Save the Date of May 3-5, 2027. INFO.

Agenda Item #12. Webmaster: Jeff asked if there were any questions on the chapter website. He will be working on it. INFO.

Agenda Item #13. BSI On-line. Member input at meetings continues to help testers in the field. INFO.

Agenda Item #14. Attend monthly meetings for the latest input from SAWS and details of the backflow program. INFO.

Agenda Item #15. Training: Troy presented various Backflow Prevention Assembly Installations pointing out installation problems and testing challenges. First was a Febco where the ball valves have been rotated, but still maintained Approval. And the new Conbraco DC4AY – a Y configuration went through approval process with test cocks pointing up. Next was an exploded view of Wilkins 975 XL3 RPA showing the check #1 and #2 piggy backed together in one cartridge, coming out together. Beware of buying repair parts online, parts should be factory OEM produced by the manufacturer. They might look the same, but often cheaper. Installing non-factory parts void assembly approval. Now whole assemblies are being produced as fakes, or imitations. Be aware of no manufacturer name or serial number anywhere on assembly body. These assemblies are Not approved - a tester should not test, and enforcement should not accept a report submitted on such an assembly. He showed 5 manufacturers' lubricants. A different looking grease packet could indicate non-factory parts. Troy showed a confined space and asked what is considered a confined space. Only one way in one out, not designed for permanent human occupancy, and big enough to get into is a basic definition. A tester cannot tell if there is sufficient oxygen without appropriate means of detection. A three-person team required to enter a permitted, confined space without other means of safety. It has been known Limestone rock can generate carbon monoxide with the acidity of soil. OSHA is more concerned these days about possible submersion, piping coming apart trapping occupant.

Troy presented two softball questions. Who can REPLACE a Backflow Prevention Assembly? Who can Test & Repair a Backflow Prevention Assembly? Replacing/installing whole assembly dependent on one's license by trade. Test and Repair: Only backflow prevention assembly testers who have been licensed by TCEQ are authorized to test and repair assemblies on any domestic, commercial, industrial, or irrigation service in Texas. Per TCEQ RG-206.

An air gap must be at least 2 times the outlet diameter and not less than 1 inch according to ASME 112.1.2. He reviewed an engineered air gap (e-gap) according to ASME 112.1.3. An example of an approved E-Gap fitting – residential water softener drain line.

He briefly reviewed fire lines as a special license is required by the tester. Fire line assemblies are fed by potable water, and a standard potable water standard test kit should be used. TCEQ put out a notice indicating such.

Reduced pressure assemblies (RP) account for 85-90% of assemblies across the country – but if not needed simpler assembly is often better. Troy showed a beautiful installation of an RPA with a bypass. One issue, make sure bypass assembly flows before a repair or maintenance. Equal protection shall be installed on bypass. There have been “better ideas” – but nothing on market to replace reliable testable, testable assemblies as we know them.

Troy presented a cut away Pressure Vacuum Breaker Assembly view. He described how it must be installed and why it is often the best assembly for the average irrigation system. He did the same Spill-Resistant Vacuum Breaker Assembly and why best for indoor installations.

Two challenging situations were discussed - janitorial closets and soda machines. Janitorial closets has a detergent dispenser using the faucet for a water source. Look for approval statement on chemical dispenser, backflow protection may be built in. One issue where it's connected. For example, off mop sink faucet with an AVB which is incorrect. Faucets are now made with an SVB. Appropriate protection is required to ensure concentrated solution is not siphoned/back-pressured into the water supply. A spill-resistant vacuum breaker assembly is high hazard, and can be installed under constant pressure.

Post mix soda machines should have a backflow preventer on incoming water line. An RP is the right assembly though a stainless-steel assembly is not needed, studies have been done. Stainless steel assemblies are expensive for customers and brass RP's are fine as long as all piping past assembly cannot be affected by gas. The Co2 gas is under high pressure and could back-pressure into copper/brass piping creating carbonic acid without the right assembly. Even if all pex piping in building, gas could back-pressure into water main and enter other buildings. Troy listed 11 ABPA Position Statements on a national level. These help enforcement across the country. One for carbonation equipment has been developed and was approved by the ABPA Board of Directors. If there are other ideas for position statements, please share.

A backflow assembly is considered “Readily Accessible” if it is no higher than 5 feet. Installations elevated that exceed 5 feet above the floor or grade shall be provided with a permanent platform capable of supporting a tester and helper. Do not put yourself in a precarious situation as could be dangerous. The intent of the rule is safety. It is up to the tester to determine if it is safe to get to if the installation does not meet code. Incorrect installations should be noted and reported to enforcement so they can be followed up on.

Correct assembly freeze protection is a code requirement. Picture of spray foam showed, created issue with assemblies. Must have access to test cocks and all components for any required

maintenance. Paint with an “r-rating” has been found on assemblies – bad idea. One city had to reverse its rule and ban it from being used.

The 2021 freeze caused codes to be undated to be more stringent in some cities in TX. Some changes: insulate now to 20 degrees, was 30. All water supply pipes insulated, not just hot. No piping in attics or exterior walls without extra protection. From 3/4 to 1" insulation, another change.

Troy provided the website CPTED.NET (crime prevention through environmental design) to help prevent thief. Cities compare stories. Documentation is now required and reviewed at the scrap yard. Theft is now being taken very seriously with collateral damage taken into consideration. Some manufacturers have attached epoxy paint on assembly as a deterrent.

The final slide was a 3” RPA with all gauge hoses incorrectly connected. If a tester has a bad day and all assemblies are failing – disconnect hoses off test kit and start over. It has been seen hoses get reversed and/or debris from hose filters gets flushed into gauge creating issue.

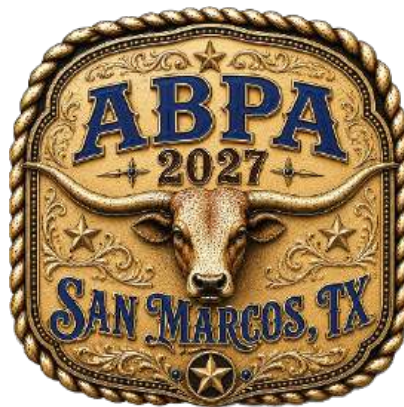
Adjournment. Adjourn the meeting at 7:28 PM for the raffle.



Greg Shean - Secretary ABPA San Antonio Chapter

SAVE THE DATE:

**The ABPA National Conference is coming to the
San Marcos Embassy Suites Conference Center
May 3-5, 2027!**



"I had a blast meeting everyone and definitely learned a ton!" *Quote from 2026 Conference in Las Vegas, NV.*

*** ABPA-SA MEMBER HANDS-ON TRAINING: SEPTEMBER 9, 2026 ***

Members who have attended at least 5 meetings per year and have accumulated a minimum of 16 meeting hours are eligible to attend the free hands-on training course sponsored by Bac-Flo Unlimited. Attendee is required to provide print out of their TCEQ license record the morning of the course which can be found at '**TCEQ License Search**' on Bac-Flo Unlimited's homepage.

Quote of the Month:

If there's another way to skin a cat, I don't want to know about it.

Steve Kravitz

QUIZ - True or False

T F 1. Butterfly valves don't usually work well on plumbing and irrigation systems because they tend to create turbulence in the water flow.

T F 2. There are no RP's approved in a vertical position that are sized 2 1/2" or larger.

T F 3. An assembly manufacturer has the option to change internal rubber parts from black to the orange silicone type and not affect assembly approval.

T F 4. When testing a DC, the water level of the test cock downstream of the check being tested must be above the check valve body for accurate test results.

T F 5. When testing a DC, the high hose of the field test kit must be wrapped up and kept with the same elevation as the gauge to achieve accurate test results.

Answers on next page. Discussions on these or other questions will be at August ABPA-SA meeting.

ABPA-SA Board of Directors 2026

- 1) President – Jeff Stricker
- 2) Vice President – Timothy Sales
- 3) Treasurer – Arthur Trejo
- 4) Secretary – Greg Shean
- 5) Immediate Past President – Trinidad Chairez

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- 6) SGT-AT-ARMS – Jeff Meeks
- 7) Liaison to SAWS – Mark Schnur
- 8) Program Director – Trinidad Chairez
- 9) Gauge Testing and Certification – Carl Michaud
- 10) Membership - Art Trejo
- 11) Webmaster – Matthew Wilgen
- 12) Newsletter - Troy Baird

Directors at Large

Two-year term

1. Jeff Hoffman
2. Bruce Rathburn
3. Robert Stricker

One-year term

4. Fred Baird
5. Robert (Bob) Clark

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Quiz answers 1. True 2. True 3.False 4.True 5.False



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**JUNE
1**

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Deadline: June 30, 2026

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**JUNE
11**

Plumbing Apprenticeship
Program Graduation

8 AM - 11 AM

Location: Magnolia Halle, 10319 Huebner Rd, SATX 78240
(Invite Only)

**JULY
9**

Monthly Membership
Meeting (Limited Seats)

11 AM - 1 PM

Location: SAWS Main Office, 2800 US Hwy 281 N, San Antonio, TX 78212
Guest Speakers: SAWS - Conservation & FOG Teams

**AUG
5-7**

PHCC-TX R.E.A.C.H.
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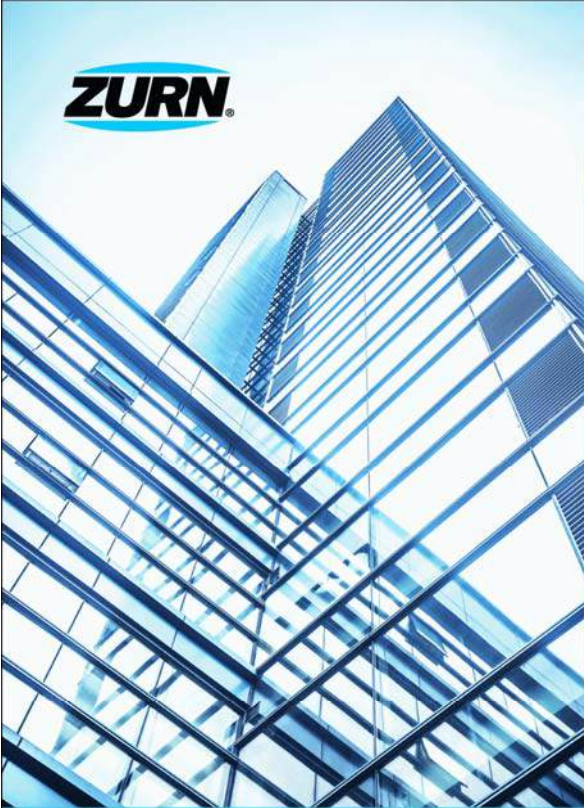
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Published by the ABPA-SA Chapter

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Bruce Rathburn – past ABPA President
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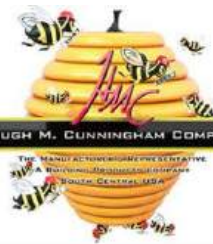
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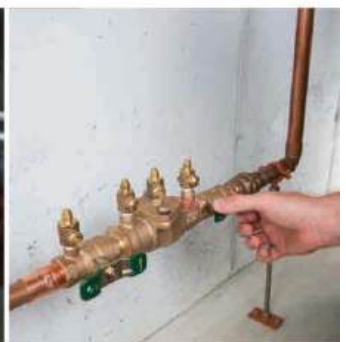
LF009 Reduced Pressure
Zone Assembly



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How to join the ABPA-SA Chapter

There are two ways to join the San Antonio Chapter of the American Backflow Prevention Association.

The easiest way is to click on the QR Code and follow the instructions to set up your account and be presented with an invoice that you can pay with a credit card on-line or check the box to pay with a check. If you don't use QR Codes, click on this address. <https://www.abpa.org/page/Join> **IMPORTANT** Be sure to select the chapter/s (San Antonio Chapter) you want to join before selecting the payment method. If you elect to pay with a check, you will be able to print the invoice so you can send it with your check to the address on the invoice. If you pay with a credit card on-line, you will be able to print a receipt.

Click QR Code to Join



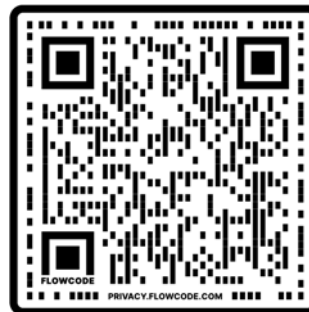
The other way is to print the Membership Application on the next page and send it to the address at the bottom of the page with your check.

How to renew your ABPA-SA Chapter Membership

There are two ways to renew your San Antonio Chapter membership of the American Backflow Prevention Association.

The easiest way is to click on the QR Code and follow the instructions to renew your membership and sign into your account and follow the instructions. If you don't use QR Codes, click on this address. <https://www.abpa.org/page/RenewNow> The program will present you with an invoice that you can pay with a credit card on-line or check the box to pay with a check. **IMPORTANT** Be sure the chapter/s (San Antonio Chapter) is/are selected that you want to renew before selecting the payment method. If you elect to pay with a check, you will be able to print the invoice so you can send it with your check to the address on the invoice. If you pay with a credit card on-line, you will be able to print a receipt.

Click QR Code to Renew



The other way is to print the Membership Application on the next page and send it to the address at the bottom of the page with your check.

Thank You for Your Membership



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

To join the American Backflow Prevention Association, simply fill out the membership application form and mail it with your check to the address listed below, or if paying by credit card you may fax the completed form to 979.846.7607. Local chapters have additional fees. Below is a listing of chapters by region. To find out if there is a local chapter in your area, please review the chapter information on our website at abpa.org or call the National Office at 979.846.7606. **Membership in the Association constitutes paying National dues.**

- ☒ US Membership \$65
☐ International Membership \$79
 ☐ Sustaining Membership \$300.00
 ☐ New Member
☐ Renewal - Member # _____

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- Must be a company or organization
- Assign only one person as the member of ABPA
- A Sustaining Member must submit a letter that designates their Voting Representative.

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Additional Information

How would you like to receive your Membership Renewal Invoice Notification? ☐ Email ☐ US Mail (Not available for International Membership)

Local Chapter Dues Listed by Region

REGION 1 New England \$12.00 Rhode Island 18.00	REGION 5 Colorado \$15.00 Utah 12.00	REGION 9 (USD)
REGION 2 Virginia \$25.00	REGION 6 Arizona \$20.00 Central Coast 10.00 Central Valley California 10.00 Hawaii 23.00 Silver State 23.00 Southern California 15.00	REGION 10
REGION 3 Carolinas \$10.00 Florida Suncoast 12.00 Peach State "1788" 30.00 Tennessee 20.00	REGION 7 Oregon \$20.00 SRC4 20.00	REGION 11 Indiana BPA \$25.00 Michigan 40.00 Northern Illinois 23.00
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