

The Direct Connection



A newsletter dedicated to Cross Connection Control and Backflow Prevention www.abpa-sa.org

March Vol. 48 Issue 3

“Containment Backflow Protection Requirements and Plan Review Necessities”

Cross Connection Control Programs are usually enforced by Water Purveyors and/or Plumbing Inspection Departments. There are procedures that can be established to assist with the enforcement process, that would benefit the faculties being required to install Containment (Premises Isolation) backflow prevention assemblies on the incoming water service and the agency requiring the backflow protection. Below are listed a couple of processes that could be developed. Obviously, modifications and inter-action with individual departments would have to be established. Most viable backflow prevention programs already have criteria established.

New Construction Permits: Facilities submitting construction plans to a City’s Plan Review Department for construction permits, need to be notified of possible containment backflow preventer requirements that are being required or may be required by the local water purveyor. These requirements are generally placed by water purveyors. There are a couple of notification possibilities that could be followed with this notification process.

One is to basically have the Building and Zoning Department - Plan Review Section, stamp the back of all commercial plans submitted: “Contact the Local Water Purveyor for possible Containment Backflow Preventer Requirements”. This puts the permit applicant on notice that a backflow preventer might be required on the facility and to contact the water purveyor for information. Another method is to have all commercial plans reviewed by the local water purveyor and requirements placed prior to plan approval. The facility applicant would then be notified both on the plans and through a letter, with the details of the requirement and inspection process by the local enforcement agency.

Without prior notification by the local enforcement agency, and placing the containment requirement after plan approval and construction has begun, turns into a “change order” and an additional expense for the facility. This creates a headache for the facility and the local enforcement agency!

Existing facilities applying for a Certificate of Occupancy (C of O): Part of the Cross Connection Control Program should be the review of existing faculties that are applying for the C of O. Some of these are lease spaces while others are buildings that have been purchased. The Plan Review Section can be requested, by the local water purveyor, to provide weekly reports of “Certificate of Occupancy (C of O)” applications to the local water purveyor for review. High hazard faculties could be notified of backflow prevention requirements at this time. This process prevents the facility being hit with containment requirements after the plans have been approved.

This is just a couple processes that could benefit both the facility and the enforcement process. The processes would obviously vary from one city to another and the inter-actions with each other.

Bac-Flo Unlimited, Inc. Fred Baird, f.baird@att.net (San Antonio Water System – Retired)

March Meeting Details

Meetings of the San Antonio Chapter ABPA are held the second Thursday of every month except December. Dinner and refreshments are served at 6:00 p.m. sharp with the meeting starting at 6:15. This meeting is:

Date: Thursday March 12, 2026

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

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

**March Meeting Sponsor and Training:
HUGH CUNNINGHAM**

Presentation Title: TBA

**No alcoholic
beverages allowed**

Next meeting date: April 9th, 2026

Last meeting Thanks to:

Troy Baird with Bac-Flo Unlimited, Inc. for his presentation on Backflow Assembly Repair: the Do's and Don'ts.



March Agenda

- 5:00 pm General discussion / quorum confirmation - Call Meeting to Order
- 5:01 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 p.m. Webmaster Report
- 5:25 pm President's Report. New & old business
- 5:30 p.m. Meal is 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.

Coming Soon:

Scholarship Fund Opportunity in Honor of William (Bill) Hamrick...

"Direct Talk" by the President

The April meeting will be held in the SAWS conference room in the Tower II building located at 2800 U.S. Hwy. 281. The Director's meeting will start at 5:15 PM with the meal beginning at 6:00 PM and meeting starting at 6:15 PM.

Jeff Stricker

Check/update your license information here: <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/licensing/forms/contactupdate>.

MINUTES

ABPA - SAN ANTONIO CHAPTER GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING Thursday, February 12, 2026

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

DIRECTORS AT LARGE – PRESENT	DIRECTORS AT LARGE – ABSENT
Robert Stricker - 2 years	Jeff Hoffman - 2 years
Bruce Rathburn - 2 years	
Bob Clark - 1 year	
Fred Baird - 1 year	
GUESTS PRESENT: None - sorry, but thank you Fred and Troy	

Agenda Item #1. Jeff started the meeting by asking that everyone turn off their cell phones. He then asked for a moment of silence. Jeff said that, "If your name is not on the sign-up sheet to put your entire name, BPAT, and e-mail address. Otherwise, you might not get CEU credit." INFO.

Agenda Item #2. Secretary's Report: The January minutes were in the newsletter. Keith made a motion to accept. Robert came in second. Passed. INFO.

Agenda Item #3. Treasurer's Report: Art passed out 2025 Profit/Loss financial statements. For the first time in many years the chapter sustained a 10% loss. Board to explore current and other income sources. OPEN.

Agenda Item #4. Meeting Sponsor: Bac-Flo Unlimited, Inc. sponsored the February meeting meal. INFO.

Agenda Item #5. Meal: Art had e-mailed that the San Antonio Irrigation Association (SAIA) ordered their meal from Raising Canes Chicken Fingers which went over very well. The meal was in a clam container with four fingers, slaw, fries, and thick piece of toasted bread. Cookies were from HEB. The chapter provided sodas/water. INFO.

Agenda Item #6. Supply: No report. INFO.

Agenda Item 7. Raffle: Bac-Flo Unlimited provided a \$50 gift card to Home Depot for the raffle prize. INFO.

Agenda Item #8. Newsletter: There were no questions about the newsletter. Troy, Editor in Chief, distributed several printed copies. Robert said that the Bac-Flo Unlimited's five questions were very good. INFO.

Agenda Item #9. Training: Backflow Assembly Repair Do's and Don'ts. INFO.

Agenda Item #10. SAWS: Residential Irrigation. SAWS/BSI deactivated residential irrigation assemblies around the time that BSI began managing T&M forms in the January 2025 time frame. Unintended consequence was that high hazard backflow assemblies were included in this deactivation. This resulted in tests of those assemblies not being accepted by BSI, and some testers adding those assemblies in duplicate to BSI. BSI is presently reactivating all residential irrigation backflow assemblies, low and high hazard. This process should be complete by the first week of March 2026. BSI is doing this in a deliberate manner to ensure that only assemblies that should be active, are returned to an active status. Testers should continue testing residential irrigation assemblies and submit T&M forms to BSI. If an assembly is tested that is not yet active, BSI will reject the test, activate the assembly in the background, and send a message to the tester to please resubmit the T&M form. INFO.

Agenda Item #11. Gauge Testing: Carl told members to tell BAVCO that you are with the ABPA-SA so you will not receive a \$95 invoice payable before you get your gauge back. Take the white copy as Carl will pick up the other two to check membership. Call BAVCO ahead if you need immediate gauge certification. You are allowed one potable and one non potable certification in one calendar year. Several members were asking about Joe Young. Joe is the BAVCO office manager and former Program Director. "He had the contacts." Wish him a speedy recovery. INFO.

Agenda Item #12. ABPA National. Troy reported that the National ABPA has their cross-connection control manual published. About \$2,000 worth has already been sold. It was many years in the making and contains the abbreviated USC test procedures. Order it at abpa.org. He showed his copy. Unlike many other manuals, there is a repair section included. The national conference will be from May 4 to 6 at the Orleans in Las Vegas. INFO.

Agenda Item #13. Webmaster: Jeff Stricker reviewed the new Brevo e-mail program that is now used to tally meeting meals, acknowledging requestor. Use only the e-meal address that is in Brevo e-mail. Do not address it to Art. Please e-mail Jeff before 5 PM on Monday, you will get an acknowledgement. Order by 5pm Monday before meeting, or you will only get a meal if there is a no show. INFO.

Agenda Item #14. Training: Troy discussed the most common assemblies and particular things to look for on each assembly during repair. Ranging from 1980 to current, older assemblies ductile iron with epoxy coating common. If replacing a larger one, go with stainless steel - for most part better. Some have reported more susceptible to freezing with more brittle body. Everyone should have a repair manual, included are lay lengths of each model and size. Factory oem repair parts are important for maintaining approval. All components must remain factory, including test cocks.

The Watts 909 was discussed as one of the longest in production over the years. If tag is missing tester must determine exact model to get the right parts, shape of plug under relief valve should be observed. In the 1990's the Watts 990 was introduced as a possible replacement to the 909 but production was stopped around 1997. Ample time should be relayed before turning the water off. The relief valve can be unpredictable, many order a rubber kit before testing if hadn't been tested for many years and on critical service. RV on larger 909 is approved on both sides. Only assembly with five test cocks, on top of RV bleed off only. A common issue is not being able to push RV stem all the way down when reinstalling. Many of

us don't practice this, if we can't push it down against seat there's no way water pressure can push it down. Look for pinholes in diaphragm against bright light. Some diaphragms must be installed certain way. Check sensing line - easy to over look. #1 check - o-ring internal, could be issue. Would have to remove spring to replace. A broken #1 spring - a low apparent reading under flow would be an indication. Generally springs last lifetime of assembly, unless unusual, extreme, or manufacturer defect conditions exist. Check seats for nicks. Use all-thread rod on check valve(s) to be safe, as internal parts can corrode/come apart. In older days some check valves were not contained at all. Properly lube all o-rings, 360 degrees. Commons issues: o-rings/debris. For 009, when reinstalling RV stem make sure aligns with hole in seat. For the vent hole in cap = non-hydraulically balance RV, hole must be clear. If leaking - issue is o-ring, or cap pitted inside.

Ames 4000, early 80's. Orange with two caps on top. Need the special tools to repair. Without tools one check can be like a bear trap, other a grenade. Testers have lost a finger not using tools. A lot were installed on fire lines back in the day. Was replaced by the Ames 4000ss.

Ames 4000ss - stainless steel 300, mid-80's. An issue - body got oblonged during installation. If tester notices check valves hard to unscrew or won't come out, could be what happened, body got twisted. One of first assemblies with grooved coupling on top. Follow process when reinstalling a grooved coupling - put grease inside of couplings, spin to make sure in groove before tightening. RV has rolling diaphragm, should be no wrinkles. RV sprays out to side, defector cup may be important if indoors. Same RV for 2.5-10" assemblies. Look for things inserted, shouldn't be there. Check valve one comes out first, all-thread on side of body for opening checks. Follow instructions when reinstalling checks, overtightening is biggest issue.

Watts 957/Ames C400 - Originally under the name Hunter Innovations in the 1990's, Hunter had patent pending on sleeve that slides back. Watts purchased the company in the late 90's. By the time it got usc approval around 2002 Watts owned the company so we've always known it as a Watts. Be aware of anything that could affect the sleeve from easily sliding back. Once sleeve slides back with check separator removed, tie sleeve to second shut off. If it slides back first o-ring under sleeve will likely be damaged. Assembly still made of 300SS. Follow instructions for check disassembly, testers have had spring dislodge. If this occurs send back to factory for re-assembly. #3 test cock keeps sleeve in place, a special test cock.

Wilkins 375/375AST - AST receiving usc approval around 2010. Assemblies have different size checks, both sizes coming in rubber kit. #1 check clip had indentions after usc cycle test, was reshaped. Order clips before attempting a repair. #2 check clips, testers have seen wire rust, understand now made of SS. Inside thickness of epoxy coating in 375 sometimes a little thicker, resulting in more force to reinstall checks. AST assembly made of 304 SS. Wilkins maintains patent of spool piece to make up distance of older assemblies. In TX - assembly assembled when bringing onsite. Hole in RV cap, if leaking - O-ring, or cap pitted is issue. Showed picture of 6" 375 RP first check, follow instructions, spring stays intact.

Apollo Defender / RP40SS - Defender was being usc tested for RP 12". Had issues in field test. The Apollo SS now approved in a 12" RP. Main manufacturers have gone to larger SS versions, have many advantages such as light weight, no rust, less cost. Apollo plant in Matthews, NC. Newer RP40 has SS clips with extra support backing. When reinstalling clips, install bottom of clip first in bottom groove, helps line up. Only 12" RP usc approved. Instead of grooved coupling on top, Apollo uses SS clamp with bolt to secure, on top cap and RV. White test cock handle designate new lead free spec - though not required by EPA. For lead free and other criteria look up model and size at usclist.com. Tri-force Check valves have 4th spring visible upon disassembly, helps open check resulting in lower pressure loss.

Backflow Direct / Watts - Deringer/Magnum has special lid called bowflex. Check one comes out first, as with all other assemblies these days. Picture shown with butterfly valves, work great for firelines, but can create turbulence in other systems. Spring stays intact when disassembling check valves. Checks open up in water way - would probably meet old bowling ball test popular 50 years ago. SS bolts are inserted from outside body to hold checks. Make sure o-ring is on bolt, all o-rings hand tight 8-12 % load. Top lid has angled washers, important to criss cross very lightly, not to remove threads. Assembly has relatively flat flow curve. Out in 2015ish time frame.

Adjournment. Adjourn the meeting at 7:30 PM for the raffle.



Greg Shean - Secretary ABPA-SA

BPAT ETHICS

"I CERTIFY, UNDER PENALTY OF LAW, INCLUDING POSSIBLE LOSS OF LICENSE, FINES AND PENALTIES, THAT I HAVE TESTED THE BFPA LISTED ABOVE AT THE TIME AND DATE LISTED AND ALL INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS ACCURATE AND I HAVE PERSONALLY COMPLETED THIS FORM IN FULL".

This statement was developed by Bill Hamrick and Katrina Hamrick, Atty at Law, and was a result of numerous meetings between Troy Baird, Bruce Rathburn, Bill Hamrick and Fred Baird. There were many suggested enforcement modifications for water purveyors and plumbing inspection departments to control ethics and backflow testing.

Quote of the Month:

There is nothing more exhilarating than to be shot at without result.

Winston Churchill (1874-1965)

QUIZ - True or False

T F 1. When an assembly test indicates below acceptable gauge values, this always indicates the assembly will not prevent backflow and the shut off valves should always be left in the Off position.

T F 2. Hose bib vacuum breakers are required on all hose bibs commercial and residential, with the exception of washing machine connections and water heater drains.

T F 3. A low apparent pressure drop (lower than 5 psid) across #1 check of an RP under a flow condition, would be an indication of a first check broken or weak spring.

T F 4. When TCEQ revised the irrigation rules around the year 2020, SVB's were written out for acceptable use on irrigation systems in Texas.

T F 5. Carbon Dioxide gas as it relates to soda carbonation equipment and coming in contact with copper or brass piping is considered a Health hazard, even if there is no brass or copper piping anywhere in the relevant building.

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

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- 9) Gauge Testing and Certification – Carl Michaud
- 10) Membership - Art Trejo
- 11) Webmaster – Matthew Wilgen
- 12) Newsletter - Troy Baird

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2. Bruce Rathburn
3. Robert Stricker

One-year term

4. Fred Baird
5. Robert (Bob) Clark

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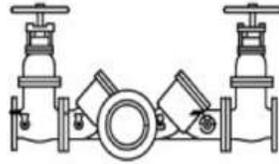
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YEAR**
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Quiz answers 1. False 2. True 3. True 4. False 5. True

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PHCC-SAN ANTONIO CALENDAR

5
JAN

DEADLINE FOR PLUMBING PRE-APPRENTICE COURSE

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8
JAN

MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Location: **Barn Door**
Guest Speaker: Jason Nelson, CPA, ADKF
Topic: The One Big Beautiful Bill



16
JAN

EARLY BIRD DEADLINE FOR SPORTING CLAY TOURNAMENT

11:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Location: National Shooting Complex

10
FEB

JOINT MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING W/ASPE

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Location: **Barn Door**
Guest Speaker: American Society of Plumbing Engineers
Topic: Plumbing Engineers Update



26
FEB

SPORTING CLAY TOURNAMENT

11:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Location: National Shooting Complex

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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.

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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.

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APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

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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.**

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REGION 2		REGION 6		REGION 11
Virginia	\$25.00	Arizona	\$20.00	Indiana BPA
REGION 3		Central Coast	10.00	Michigan
Carolinas	\$10.00	Central Valley California	10.00	Northern Illinois
Florida Suncoast	12.00	Hawaii	23.00	
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Tennessee	20.00	Southern California	15.00	Eastern Nebraska
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