

REAL ESTATE WEEKLY

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DEP begins backflow enforcement campaign

New York City's Department of Environmental Protection is on a mission to protect our drinking water.

The campaign to enforce the State requirements for backflow prevention devices may have costly consequences for many of the city's property owners.

DEP inspectors are making the rounds and handing out notices requiring the installation of these devices on all water service lines to a long list of properties throughout the city, from high-rises to hospitals.

"Backflow preventers stop potentially contaminated water or chemicals from flowing back into the public drinking water supply system," says Bob Bellini, President of the Master Plumbers Council of the City of New York and President of Varsity Plumbing.

"Most properties in New York City require these devices, because they fall into



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one of the categories on the city's list."

These include all buildings with the following: boilers that use chemical treatment; water-cooled equipment or chillers; commercial or public kitchens; laundries or dry cleaners; medical or dental offices; and many other types of commercial and residential properties.

Buildings that receive a

compliance letter from NYC DEP will have 30 days to initiate the process of installation, which requires the services of a licensed engineer or architect. Failure to comply can lead to fines of up to \$2,000 and, if ignored, the City can shut off the water supply to the building.

According to the DEP, the cost of installation ranges from \$3,000 for a one-story building to around \$35,000 for high-rises.

Building owners, boards and managers that initiate the process on their own will have more time to resolve a potentially expensive and complex problem.

Some full service plumbing companies can provide a licensed team that includes an engineer and master plumber to do the analysis, file the plans, install and test the required devices and complete the follow-up paperwork, ensuring that all City codes and regulations

are met.

"At Varsity we provide a one-call solution to this issue, from engineering to installation to testing compliance, simplifying a very complex process for building owners," says Bellini.

The best way to determine whether backflow prevention devices are required in your building is to hire a Licensed Master Plumber (LMP), Professional Engineer (PE) or Registered Architect (RA) or to request a property inspection from the DEP.

More information is available on the DEP website at <http://home2.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/home/home.shtml> or by dialing 311.

For more information on hiring licensed professionals to be sure your building is in compliance, or for a free building analysis, contact Bob Bellini, President of Varsity Plumbing, at (718) 358-5400.