



## **BACKFLOW PREVENTION IN CERTIFIED FACILITIES**

‘Backflow’ is any unwanted flow of used or non-potable water, or other substances, into the drinking (potable) water distribution system.

### **What are the requirements for backflow prevention?**

The Gene Technology Regulator has made a policy decision that requires that:

- backflow prevention **must be installed** for **PC3** and **PC4** facilities.
- a risk assessment of the genetically modified organisms (GMOs) involved in dealings must be undertaken for all **PC2** facilities to determine whether backflow prevention is necessary and, if necessary, backflow prevention measures taken. The backflow prevention risk assessment must be available on request to authorised OGTR staff and must be reviewed before different GMOs are used in the facility.

These requirements are consistent with and complement other existing standards. For example, the Australian New Zealand Standard (AS/NZS) 2243.3.2002 *Safety in laboratories - Part 3: Microbiological aspects and containment facilities*, states for PC2 facilities that water supplied to the laboratory shall be provided with back flow prevention in accordance with the requirements of AS/NZS 3500. AS/NZS 3500:2003 (the *National Plumbing Code*) states “the backflow protection required shall be determined by identifying the individual hazard(s) within the premises.”

### **Who needs to do a risk assessment ?**

A risk assessment is required for all PC2 facilities. If your risk assessment has found that you require backflow prevention, it may have been installed during construction. In many cases a risk assessment would have been done before construction of the building (as required by the *National Plumbing Code* and the *Building Code of Australia*). If that risk assessment is still accurate for the GMOs used in the facility, the risk assessment does *not* have to be repeated. You should locate a copy of the existing risk assessment and have it available for inspection.

### **Implementation**

The requirements for backflow prevention will be progressively implemented as and when respective guidelines are reviewed and re-issued.

### **Want more information?**

Contact the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator on telephone 1800 181 030 or by email to [ogtr@health.gov.au](mailto:ogtr@health.gov.au).