

PLUMBING AND MECHANICAL  
INTERPRETATION MANUAL



CODE: 2003 IRC

DATE:

CODE REF: P2902.4.3

11/10/2003

SUBJECT: Backflow Preventer for Irrigation Systems

**Question:** What is the required backflow preventer for an irrigation system?

**Answer:** Section P2902.4.3 of the IRC states the following:

**P2902.4.3** Lawn irrigation systems. The potable water supply to lawn irrigation systems shall be protected against backflow by an atmospheric-type vacuum breaker, a pressure-type vacuum breaker or a reduced pressure principle backflow preventer. A valve shall not be installed downstream from an atmospheric vacuum breaker. All devices shall be installed in accordance with manufacturer's installation instructions.

The IRC states that an atmospheric-type vacuum breaker, a pressure-type vacuum breaker or a reduced pressure principle backflow preventer should be used for a lawn irrigation system. However, in the process of adoption of the IRC this section should have been modified to omit the requirement for a reduced pressure principle backflow preventer, and require a double check backflow preventer. The double check has and will continue to be the approved backflow prevention device for this application.

In the process of adoption of the IRC, the Senior Inspectors and my self did not pick up on the need for this change. At a future date we will amend IRC to reflect this change.

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