

Rural Route 4 Porch

There is a picture in my mind of Pa Burgess sitting in an old green chair on his front porch with a fly swatter in his hand. He's chewing a plug of *Cannon Ball* tobacco. From there, you can see the dirt road leading to his white clapboard house. In the distance, an occasional car can be seen on the paved road about a half mile away. And across the way, the heat dances like a mirage over the cotton patch.



Phillip Burgess

A swing to the left of the front door makes creaking sounds as we swing in it. And so does the screen door when it's opened. We are taking turns jumping over the shrubs on each side of the doorsteps. They are growing in old tires that have been painted a dull white. Pa Burgess sat there for hours swatting flies, chewing his tobacco, and sharing tall tales from his past.

I can also see Pa and Mama B sitting on his porch, with two large buckets on each side of them. The purple hull peas have been picked and Pa and Mama B are busy shelling them. Another bucket is about full of the hulls and will be tossed into the nearby pasture.

That was a long time ago when things were different. Sitting on the porch and doing nothing is a rarity these days. Heck, few houses today even have an old-fashioned front porch. The modern world we live in has all but erased leisure time on the porch. Life is just too fast paced these days. Too hectic. There's always something else to do. Somewhere to go. Too little time. And that's a shame.

I long for those days of my childhood when I could sit on Pa's front porch or at our house on Rural Route 4, less than a mile away. No cell phones or cable television to interrupt or challenge you for your time. Only an occasional fly or dirt dauber to interfere with your thoughts.

On those afternoons when a shower peppered the ground with large raindrops, the porch was also the perfect place to lazily watch the rain. Yes, the porch was a special place.

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Cross Connection and Backflow Prevention

What is a cross connection?

A cross connection is any actual or potential connection between the drinking water supply and any source of non-potable water, or water of questionable quality that could result in contamination of the potable water system.

Common examples of cross connections include a garden hose submerged in a pesticide, potable feed water to an industrial process, or a submerged outlet of an irrigation system.

For the drinking water supply to become contaminated, three situations must occur.

1. The potable water supply piping must be unprotected (or improperly protected) from a cross connection;
2. A physical cross connection must be made between the potable water supply piping and a contaminant source; and
3. Backflow conditions must occur.

Though all three situations do not commonly occur at the same time, it is not unusual for conditions to exist that support backflow conditions.

Contact TUA for a cross connection survey. TUA personnel will come to your home or business and check for cross connections. If you have questions, visit us online at tub.net or contact TUA Cross Connection Specialist Jeff Austin at 571-7171.

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Watts Happening

What is Backflow?

Backflow is the undesirable reversal of flow of water or other substance through a cross connection into the public water supply or a customer's plumbing system due to a difference in pressure.

Backflow may be caused by either *backsiphonage* or *backpressure*.

Backsiphonage occurs when reduced pressure exists in the water supply piping allowing the normal direction of flow of water to reverse. If cross connections exist, contaminants can be siphoned into the distribution system.

Backpressure occurs when the pressure in a customer's plumbing or piping system is higher than the pressure in the distribution system. Unlike backsiphonage, it is not necessary to have a drop in distribution system pressure for backpressure to occur. Whenever the pressure at the point of the cross connection exceeds the pressure of the distribution system, the direction of flow will reverse and there is a high risk that unpotable water will be forced into the potable water system.

What are Backflow Preventers?

An air gap is the most basic means to eliminate a cross connection. A simple example is the space between the outlet of a faucet and the sink rim. Water can easily flow from the faucet into the sink, but there is no way water can flow into the faucet without modifying the system.

The most commonly used mechanism, or device, is a backflow preventer which provides a physical barrier to backflow. The two types of devices that are commonly used are reduced pressure assemblies and double check detector assemblies.

Reduced pressure assemblies are used at commercial, institutional and industrial facilities, and on irrigation systems. Double check detector assemblies are used on fire suppression sprinkler systems.

A hose bibb vacuum breaker can be installed on outdoor faucets at your home or business.

What Can You Do?

- Do not put a water hose into buckets, tanks or swimming pools.
- Install a hose bibb vacuum breaker on your outdoor faucets.
- Do not connect any type of pump to your plumbing.
- If you have a well, it cannot be connected to plumbing served by the public drinking water supply.
- If you own a backflow prevention device, maintain it.
- Complete and return any water-use survey from TUA.

For more, visit us online at tub.net/water

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Country singer Tracy Lawrence released a song in 1995 whose lyrics pays tribute to front porches. His words are perfect:

"If the world had a front porch like we did back then / We'd still have our problems, but we'd all be friends

"Treating your neighbor like he's your next of kin / Wouldn't be gone with the wind / If the world had a front porch, like we did back then.

"Purple hulls and pintos, I've shelled more than my share / As lightning bugs and crickets danced in the evening air

And like a beacon that old yellow bulb, it always led me home / Somehow Mama always knew just when to leave it on.

It was where my mama sat on that old swing with her crochet / It was where granddaddy taught me how to cuss and how to pray

It was where we made our own ice cream, those sultry summer nights / Where the bulldog had her puppies, and us brothers had our fights."

That about sums it up. Amen, Tracy. Amen.

Philip Burgess' book, "Rural Route 4, The Good 'Ol Days Were Never Better," is available on Amazon .

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