



# The Repair Guys



Mark Inman



Doug Taylor

In our line of work, we field questions from contractors and technicians concerning repairs, installations, and general backflow prevention practices.

We'd like to share some questions that we receive as well as our answers. Everyone has different opinions on these subjects and we would like to hear yours.

Contact us with questions and ideas via email at: [imark@backflowparts.com](mailto:imark@backflowparts.com) or mail us at American Backflow Products Co., PO Box 37025, Tallahassee, Florida 32315.

## Customer Service 101

Most backflow technicians are well versed with testing, troubleshooting, and repairing backflow assemblies. But what happens when we have to deal with the most important part of the whole process...the customer? In this article we will discuss some ideas about how to improve customer service.

### MARK

Absolutely! Some people call it customer service. Actually, it is nothing more than educating the customer. Have you ever wondered why some people are happy to pay \$85 for a tune-up on their automobile, but go ballistic if they are charged \$50 to test their backflow assembly? Do you find yourself ready to defend yourself from a customer if for some reason the assembly fails and needs repair? If the answer is yes, then you are not alone. Sometimes dealing with a customer who has no knowledge about backflow prevention is the hardest part of being a backflow technician. So, how do we make it easier? Simply - you must educate and explain to the customer what is happening.

### DOUG

Let's take a minute to look at it from a customer's standpoint. First, they were informed by their city agency that they must have a backflow assembly installed on their property to protect the water system. On top of that, they must have it tested every year to make sure it is working properly and if it fails, they then must have it repaired. Now, we all know what this person is thinking, "I've been here 65 years and have never seen or heard of backflow", "The assembly was working great until you tested it", or "This is just another way for the government to tax me." If they get mad enough and have plenty of time to spend, they are probably going to start calling their mayor, county commissioner and any other legislator that they can, to complain about backflow prevention. You will probably get an ear-full as well.



**MARK**

The key to making your job easier is to educate the customer. Take a few extra minutes to explain what needs to be done and why it needs to be done. The technician out in the field may be the only source of information this customer has about backflow. If you help them have a better understanding then you are less likely to be abused for doing your job. It may also keep them off the phone to their legislator. Remember, you will probably never find a person that waves a "Go Backflow" banner when you come to test or repair an assembly. What we need to do is make sure that they do not wave an "Anti Backflow" banner. By spending a little extra time educating the customer, we help to promote the backflow prevention industry.

**DOUG**

It is also important to help the customer understand the benefit they get for their money. When the customer spends their money on a tune-up, the end result is that their car runs better. That is a benefit they can see and understand. When the customer spends money

on his backflow preventer their only benefit is that they are not sick or dead. This sounds like a pretty good deal, but it can be hard to convince the customer of that fact. Even with a good understanding of backflow, the customer probably will not jump up and down with joy, but if they realize the overall benefit they may not keep that bad taste they have about the backflow industry.

**MARK**

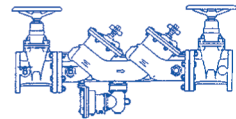
When the tables are turned and we are the customer, we depend on the technician working on our car, computer, or washing machine to be able to troubleshoot the problem correctly so it does not cost us an arm and a leg. We also want that person to be a professional and able to communicate with us and explain what needs to be done. As a backflow tester or technician, we need to have the same ability, because your customer and the industry are depending on you as well. to save time and money and will lead to more satisfied customers. Hopefully, we have raised awareness about troubleshooting and why it should be an important part of the repair process.

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