

the Repair Guys



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 we receive and our answers. Everyone has different opinions on these subjects and we would like to hear yours. Contact us with your questions and ideas via email at: imark@backflowparts.com or mail us at American Backflow Products Co., Post Office Box 37025, Tallahassee, FL 32315.

— Mark Inman and Jason Gregg

QUESTION

I am a licensed plumbing contractor and have recently been certified to test backflow preventers. I want to stock all of the repair kits and special tools that I will need to make any type of repair in the field. Can you tell me what I will need?

Mark-

You will need a large warehouse and probably a friendly loan officer at your bank. Really, you need to start off with a good game plan. The game plan should help you stock the parts you will use most often, this way you do not have parts sitting around collecting dust.

First, I would do a little research of the area you will be testing in. Try to get a good idea of what size, type, and manufacturer of assemblies you will see the most. There are some areas around the country that will have a wide variety of assemblies, made from many different manufacturers, and there are some areas that are dominated by maybe one or two manufacturers.

The same thing applies to the type of assemblies in the area. Look to see if you will be testing mainly reduced pressure principle assemblies (RPs), double check valve assemblies (DCVAs), or pressure type vacuum breakers (PVBs.)

Another important thing to consider is what model assemblies you may see. Some manufacturers can have as many as three or four different models of the same type of assembly.

- Jason

With all the different assemblies that have been produced and are currently being produced, you can understand why stocking parts for each one can be a major job and a major investment. Once you have a general idea of the assemblies in your area, you come to the next question. What parts will I need for a particular model? I would start off with the basic rubber repair kits only. These are usually inexpensive and contain the more common replacement parts you will need to repair that model and size of assembly.

Mark-

Most manufacturers will try to combine sizes $\frac{3}{4}$ - 1 inch into a basic repair kit and sizes $1\frac{1}{4}$ - 2 inch into another. This makes stocking the kits for smaller sizes easier. Always be aware that some units may require a separate kit for each size.

When you get into larger assemblies you will normally have a different kit for each size $2\frac{1}{2}$ - 10 inch. If you are just getting started, I would not advise trying to stock every check valve assembly or relief valve assembly because of the expense. I would build your inventory as the need arises. Now, of course, it is always a good idea to be prepared for any situation, but with a little planning you can be prepared without going overboard.

- Jason

The same concept applies when stocking special tools. More current assemblies, for the most part, have been designed to be repaired without the use of special tools. Some older models may require a special tool for a certain type of repair, but I would suggest getting the tools at the time you are making preparations for that repair and build your stock that way. Most manufacturers offer the tools or they may give directions on how to build your own out of easy to find materials.



When ordering parts for an older assembly, I would always ask if special tools are needed to make the repair. There is nothing worse than having the correct parts for a job just to find out you can not install them because you do not have the correct tool.

Update

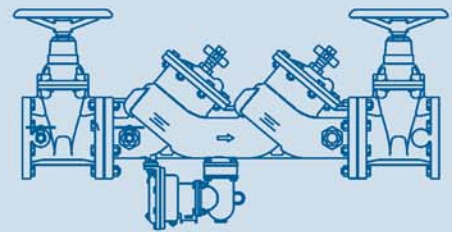


Foundation members have been advised that several Hersey products have been removed from the *List of Approved Backflow Prevention Assemblies*. Hersey notified the Foundation that repair parts for these assemblies would no longer be produced. The removal is in accordance with Section 10.2.1.5 of the Foundation's *Manual of Cross-Connection Control*.

Several manufacturers have produced backflow preventers during the last 30 years. These are just a few, including Buckner Mueller, Orion, and more. dw&bp



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