

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 have a few failures from time to time due to worn check valve discs. I know this is common, but instead of failing the device only to have to come back later with new a new rubber kit, I flip the disc over and move on to the next unit. I feel that this will save the customer money, as well as, another service call. How much life should I expect to get from a check valve disc? Is this a common practice?


Mark:

Well first, I think you should be applauded for looking out for the customers' best interests, especially when it comes to their wallet. I believe that is our responsibility as backflow technicians to make repairs as cost effective as possible. It is also the responsibility of the technician to repair an assembly back to the original manufacturers specifications. Sometimes there is a fine line between being cost effective and repairing an assembly correctly. This basically means it is up to the technician to make that decision as he sees fit for each situation. Flipping a check valve disc over and reusing it permanently is one of those things that you should look at carefully as you make this type

of repair. The best thing to do in this situation is refer to the manufacturers specifications or maintenance manual for that assembly.

Jason:

Most manufacturers consider flipping or inverting a check valve disc only as a temporary fix not as a repair. The condition of the check valve disc is very important. If the disc is in relatively good condition it can be inverted with no problem. If the disc has a deep indentation on one side and looks fine on the other side, it will need to be replaced. A lot of times flipping a disc will get you out of a tight spot in the field, but you should return as soon as possible to replace with a new parts. Now, you will have a few cases where a new device has some trash lodged in the check valve, and after cleaning the device some chose to invert the new disc out of good practice to ensure



that we're beginning again with a new surface. However this should only be done when you're dealing with a new device or the check valve disc is in relatively in good condition.

Mark:

The thing that can be deceiving is that the check valve disc can be distorted or damaged on one side and looks so nice and smooth on the other. One thing to remember is that check valve discs are designed as a whole, not by each side. If one side is damaged then the disc may not have the size or durometer that it originally was designed to have. This can change surface of the disc and how it sets down on the seat. Even the nice smooth side of a damaged check valve disc will eventually weaken and affect how the check valve holds.

Jason:

The life expectancy for a check valve disc is hard to judge. How a disc wears is dependent on many different factors. The type of water running through the unit can have an affect, as well as, the amount of water running through the unit. Water that is relatively free of debris will obviously increase the life of the check valve disc. The amount of back pressure the assembly is subject to can affect the check valve disc also. Sometimes

you may find a second check valve disc wears more than the first in a particular assembly. This is due to excessive back pressure against the second check valve. Under the best conditions a check valve disc can give many years of good service. In the real world we know that the best conditions are rarely available, so try to be ready for anything. [dw&bp](#)

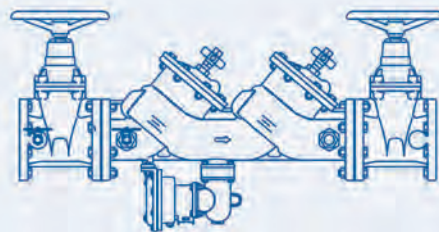


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