

The Repair Guys



Mark Inman



Doug Taylor

Question

One of the most common situations I run into while testing is worn or indented check valve rubbers. I have been told that you should not “flip” the check discs but I have found that this method seems to work. Is flipping the disc a common practice and what are the pros and cons of doing this?

Doug

Flipping check valve discs is a common practice and is done in the field quite frequently. It is quick and easy and sometimes it seems to fix the problem, at least temporarily. The real question we have to ask ourselves is did we really repair the assembly? One of our main responsibilities as backflow technicians is to make sure that when we leave a unit we have repaired the assembly as close to the original manufacturers specifications as possible. By flipping the disc you may be able to get the unit to pass but the original problem has not been corrected.

Mark

As technicians, another responsibility we have is to make repairs as cost effective as possible for the customer. We are hired for our expertise and ability to repair their assembly correctly. Anything less would just be a “band aid” or patch work. Most manufacturers consider flipping a check valve disc only a temporary fix, not a repair. Sometimes, if new parts are not on site, you may want to flip the disc in order to get the customer back in service until the replacement parts are ordered and installed.

Doug

We have all flipped check valve discs before and gotten the assembly to pass, so why should we put in parts that we may not

need? To answer this question we need to look at how the rubber parts are designed. Although only one side of a check valve disc seals against the seat, the disc is designed and engineered as a whole. Each valve is designed to seal based on the thickness of the check disc. Over time the check disc will wear or deteriorate on one side, which will change the thickness of the disc. If you flip a deteriorated check disc, you may get a good reading right then, but within a few days your original problem may return.



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

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Mark

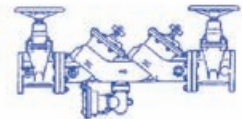
The decision to flip or replace a disc is ultimately a call the backflow technician must make at the time of the repair. If you are dealing with a disc that is badly deteriorated on one side, do not let the opposite shiny side fool you. It may be clean, shiny, and smooth, but you have a bad disc and it must be replaced. On the other hand, there are situations when the disc is in fairly new condition, that you can flip it as a precaution and leave it permanently.

Doug

It is always a good idea to have at least rubber replacement parts on hand before you open up an assembly. These rubber repair parts will wear out and need to be replaced on a more frequent basis than other hardware parts inside the assembly. With a general rubber repair kit on hand you may be able to complete the repair without an additional service call.



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