

# Water utility targets plumbing cross-connections

By [Randy Hanson](#) on Oct 2, 2015 at 10:27 a.m.

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The Hudson Water Utility is out to eliminate plumbing connections that have the potential to contaminate the community's water supply.

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The Public Utility Commission on Sept. 16 decided to send disconnection notices to customers who have been warned of problems and have failed fix them.

“It wasn’t an easy decision for them,” reported Jim Frye, the utility’s chief operator.

The commission didn’t have any other choice, given requirements by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the utility implement an effective program to end cross-connections.

According to a public notice that will be published in the Oct. 8 Star-Observer, the DNR performed "a detailed inspection and evaluation" of Hudson's drinking water system on June 5 and found that a portion of the cross-connection deficiencies identified in a 2014 inspection hadn't been corrected.

The public notice states: "As our customers, you have a right to know what happened and what we are doing to correct this situation. As required by EPA's ground water rule, we worked with the state to develop a plan to correct this situation. However, we were unsuccessful in implementing this plan before the established deadline and have therefore violated a requirement of the ground water rule."

The notice says the cross-connections have the potential to result in "lack of proper treatment and oversight of the water system," but there is no immediate risk to customers. If there was an immediate risk, customers would have been notified immediately, according to the notice.

The notice says an aggressive cross-connection program has been implemented to correct the identified deficiencies.

Anyone with questions regarding Hudson's water system is encouraged to contact Utility Director Kip Peters, who started work as the head of Hudson and North Hudson's water and sewer utilities on Sept. 19. The utilities were without a director between then and March, when former water utility director Tim Caruso and wastewater director Jim Schreiber retired.

A cross-connection is any part of the water supply system that is a potential source of contamination.

It could be a garden hose left connected to a canister containing fertilizer or herbicide. It could be the drain hose from a water softener stuck into a sewer drain. It could be a soda fountain without a without a backflow preventer.

Dishwashers, laundry tubs, toilets, pressure washers, boilers, pools and lawn irrigation systems are other things that can potentially have cross-connections.

Frye said commercial and public buildings in Hudson and North Hudson have been inspected and notices were sent to the owners of buildings with cross-connections.

Disconnection notices will be sent to 70 building owners who haven’t complied with orders to fix cross-connections.

“Some of these are going on a couple of years, so they’ve had ample time,” Frye said.

He said inspections of residences for cross-connections is the next step for the utility.

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Randy Hanson has reported for the Star-Observer since 1997. He came to Hudson after 11 years with the Inter-County Leader at Frederic, and eight years of teaching social studies. He's a graduate of UW-Eau Claire.

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