

Philadelphia Water Department Guide for Urban Gardens & Farms: Getting Water Access



The Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) is pleased to present this guide in support of Philadelphia's robust urban gardening and farming community. Urban gardens and farms provide many wonderful benefits to residents by:

- Preserving open and green space
- Providing a sense of community
- Making healthy foods accessible
- Fostering natural beauty
- Reducing stormwater runoff by soaking up rain

Our goal is to ensure that urban gardens and farms have access to the water they need to flourish. This guide provides a number of options to obtain water, either year-round or seasonally. PWD recommends urban gardens and farms establish a permanent water service when growers have the capacity and permission to do so. A permanent water service better protects the city's drinking water supply and is a more reliable and practical source of water. Interested gardens and farms should work with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) or the Neighborhood Gardens Trust (NGT) when setting up a permanent water service as participants in PWD's Urban Garden Program.

Gardeners in Philadelphia have four options for accessing water for plants:

1. Private, existing water sources
2. New, dedicated water lines
3. Rain collection
4. Fire hydrant permits



Example of a sub-meter installed on a water service adjacent to the garden.

1. Private Water Sources

Private water sources (such as your hose or a neighbors) are a low-cost way to water plants. Sub-meters can be installed for those interested in sharing the cost of a garden's water bill. However, some gardens, especially those on vacant land, are not near available private water sources.

2. New Water Sources

New water lines that go directly to a garden vary in cost, depending on factors such as location. The cost of installing a new water line begins at \$3,000, but can sometimes cost more than \$10,000, depending upon the distance between the water main and the garden. To install a new water line connecting to PWD infrastructure, a Utility Plan must be submitted to PWD. Requirements for submitting the Utility Plan can be found online at pwdplanreview.org/water-and-sewer-connections.

Urban gardeners are responsible for having a water service installed by a registered plumber with an underground or above ground enclosure that meets the PWD's specifications (see **Appendix A**) for the protection of drinking water quality. Above ground enclosures need to be protected against the cold, and some locations may require having the meter removed during the winter. Maintenance and repair of the water service line and the meter box enclosure is the responsibility of garden members.

PWD Guide for Urban Gardens & Farms: Getting Water Access (continued)

Important:

- Once the water service line, meter box and backflow preventer are installed, garden representatives are required to make an appointment with **PWD's Meter Shop** (*Jason Pezzetti, Metering Unit & Permit Supervisor (215) 410-9904 or jason.pezzetti@phila.gov*) for the installation of a water meter.
- Urban gardens are required to have their water service line's backflow prevention assembly inspected on a yearly basis by a Backflow Registered Master Plumber (BRMP.)
- Urban gardens are responsible for paying bills covering a six-month water usage period as well as the water service charge. This bill may be eligible for the charitable discount of 25%. The water service charge for the remaining six months of the year will be waived by the Water Department.
- Gardens and farms can be equipped with automatic-read meters so that the meter can be read remotely on a monthly basis.

Assistance for Urban Gardens and Farms

HELP for Urban Gardens and Farms

The Urban Garden and Urban Farm Loan is an interest-free, installment payment loan administered by the City of Philadelphia Water Department for the installation of water service lines to urban gardens and urban farms. Approved applicants will enter into an Urban Garden and Urban Farm Loan Agreement with PWD committing to repay the total cost of the work to the City of Philadelphia. Use of the loan proceeds is restricted to the cost to install a water service line, backflow preventer, meter and meter box with an underground or aboveground enclosure that meets the Department's specifications. All work shall be performed by a licensed plumber assigned by the Department, and comply with all Department specifications. For more information on obtaining a HELP loan, please call 215-685-4901 or visit www.phila.gov/water/helploan.

Discounts for Urban Gardens and Farms

PWD offers a 25% discount on water bills for eligible urban gardens and farms that install a new water line.

For more information on our discounts visit: water.phila.gov/financial-assistance/#gardens.

3. Rain Collection

PWD provides free rain barrels to Philadelphia residents through the Rain Check program. This is a great way to collect water for your garden, provided access to a downspout is available and the water collected is safe for use. To receive a free barrel, you must attend a Rain Check workshop. RSVP at www.pwdraincheck.org or call 215-685-6213.

- * **Note:** Runoff from a roofs can contain contaminants and pathogens. Test rain barrel water quality through a certified lab and follow best practices, especially when growing food. If you can't guarantee safe water, only use rain barrels for nonedible crops.

4. Hydrant Permits

Fire hydrants are for fighting fires. They are designed to provide a large flow of water. Their design makes them inappropriate for almost all other uses. Open fire hydrants provide a near-direct connection to City water mains and can place extreme stress on the water supply system. Contaminants that are introduced into a fire hydrant can be spread quickly through a wide area. Unauthorized use has caused neighborhood water pressure and City-wide emergencies. Operation of fire hydrants by persons other than trained fire fighters and Water Department personnel can also cause damage that leaves these life-saving devices disabled and unavailable for fighting fires.

In an effort to control unauthorized use and its consequences, the Water Department has an ongoing program of installing Center Compression Locks (CCL) on hydrants. These locks require the use of a unique key not readily available to the general public. The long-term goal of the Water Department is to lock all public hydrants. However, when no other water source is available, PWD recognizes that, with proper instruction, certain hydrant uses provide a sufficient public benefit. Certain uses of fire hydrants are expressly prohibited, including, but not limited to, cleaning streets, recreational activities and potable use.

Fire hydrant permits can be obtained through the Department of Licenses and Inspection. The permit office is located in the Concourse level of the Municipal Services Building at 15th and Arch streets. The applicant can obtain a permit in one visit to the office and it takes approximately 15 minutes. Use the steps on the following page to obtain a fire hydrant permit.

PWD Guide for Urban Gardens & Farms: Getting Water Access (continued)

Obtaining a Hydrant Permit

Step by Step Guide

1. Read and review the entire Urban Garden information packet issued by PWD.
2. Note the location of the hydrant closest to your garden and any surrounding hydrants, as the closest hydrant to your garden may not be available for a number of reasons. If the hydrant is on an intersection, it is necessary to provide the corner location. Example: "Southeast corner of Thompson and Mascher." Hydrants in the center of a block should be denoted by direction and a rough estimate from another reference street. **Example:** "The hydrant is on the east side of the 300 block of Broad Street, 75 feet from Chestnut and/or in front of 325 S. Broad Street." Note: Delaware River is to the east, and the Schuylkill River is to the west.
3. Submit an Urban Garden Application Form (see **Appendix B**). All fields in the Urban Garden Application form must be filled in as completely as possible. Applications are to be submitted by email to joseph.yeager@phila.gov or standard mail to:

Joseph Yeager
 Engineering Specialist, Load Control
 29th & Cambria
 Philadelphia, PA 19132
4. Once the application for an urban garden is approved, it is the responsibility of the approved applicant to purchase a backflow preventer to protect the community's drinking water supply from contamination. An approved list of assemblies can be found at water.phila.gov/backflow/.
5. Once approved, you will be notified when the permit is available at the Municipal Services Building Permitting Section, found on the concourse level. When picking up your permit, include a copy of the receipt or physical proof for your backflow preventer. **A permit will not be issued without proof of the necessary backflow preventer, e.g., a cellphone photo of the assembly.**
6. Once the permit is issued for an Urban Garden, if the hydrant has a Center Compression Lock (CCL), the cap will be replaced by a standard non-locking cap. If the cap is not replaced in a timely fashion, please contact Joe Yeager at 215-685-9655.

Stormwater Fee

In June 2016, Mayor James Kenney signed an ordinance passed by Council allowing community gardens a special discounted rate for stormwater management services for qualifying community gardens, effective January 1, 2017. Community gardens that meet the following criteria may be eligible to have their stormwater charge discounted up to 100%:

- The property's principal use is for growing crops and for related issues
- A community group operates the garden for public benefit, and
- The property has an effective pervious area of at least 80%.

A copy of the Discount Application and Property Owner Letter of Consent can be found in Appendix D or at water.phila.gov/stormwater/billing/green-spaces/.

Appendix A

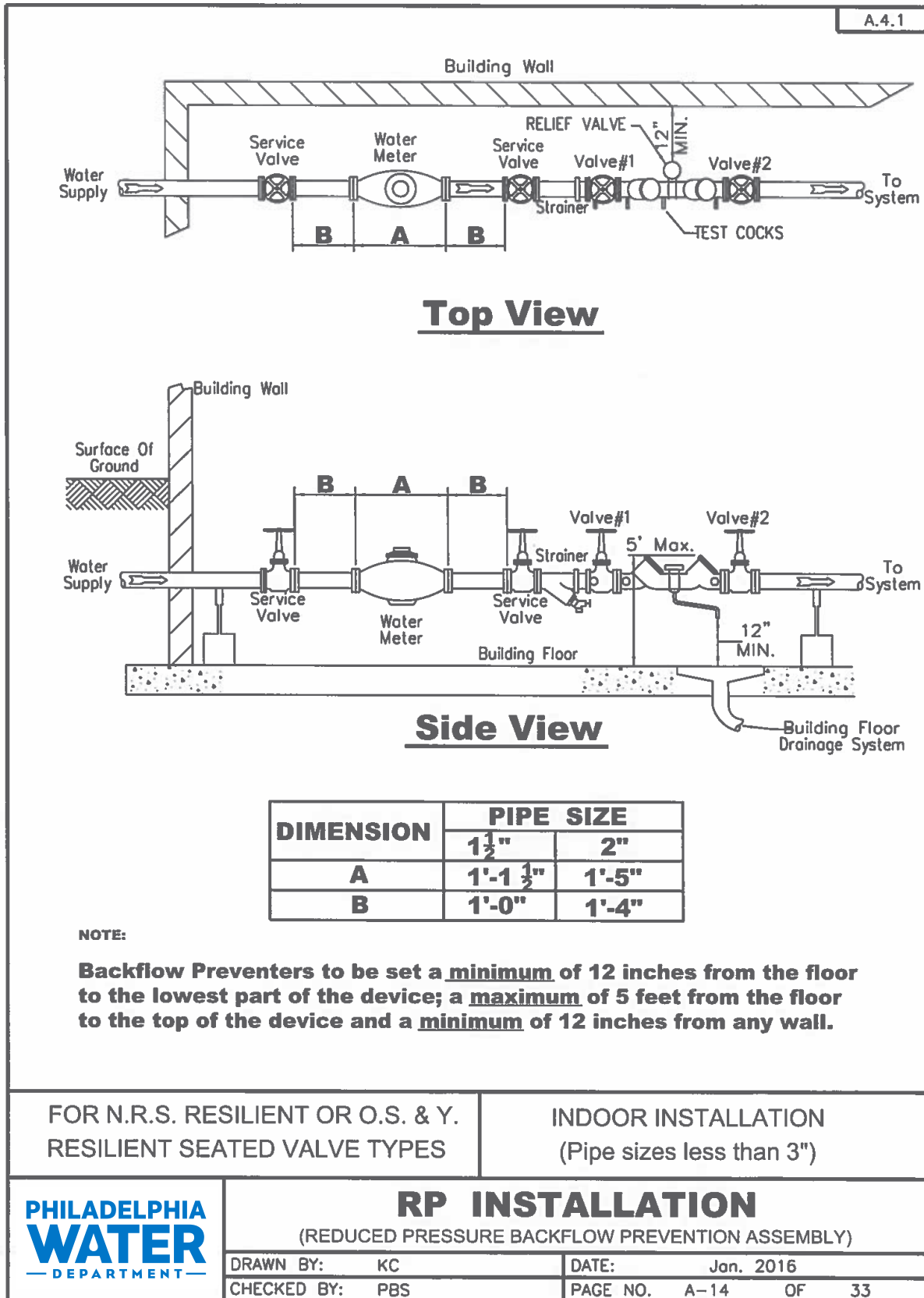
Water Line Safety Procedures

In order to avoid dangerous cross connections please do the following:

- Store hoses in hose rack and do not allow hoses to sit on the ground. When hoses are left laying out, they can create puddles where bacteria and chemicals can pool. These contaminants can work their way up your garden hose and into your hose bib.
- Don't submerge garden hoses. If you are filling a bucket or rain barrel, keep the end of the garden hose out of the bucket as this provides an air gap. If you leave the hose submerged and backflow occurs, anything in the container can get back into your drinking water.
- Disconnect hose after use.
- We strongly recommend following the organic gardening practices outlined in the annual Neighborhood Gardens Trust (NGT) Garden Agreement; the prohibition of the following substances reduces the risk of cross-contamination: non-organic pesticides and weed-killing sprays, powders and other substances, non-organic fertilizers and hazardous substances.
- If using drip irrigation, ensure your system has a check valve. Check valves or pressure vacuum breakers can prevent bacteria from entering your water line.
- Backflow preventers must be tested annually by a City Certified Backflow Technician. A list of technicians is available at water.phila.gov/backflow/. You may choose any technician from the list.

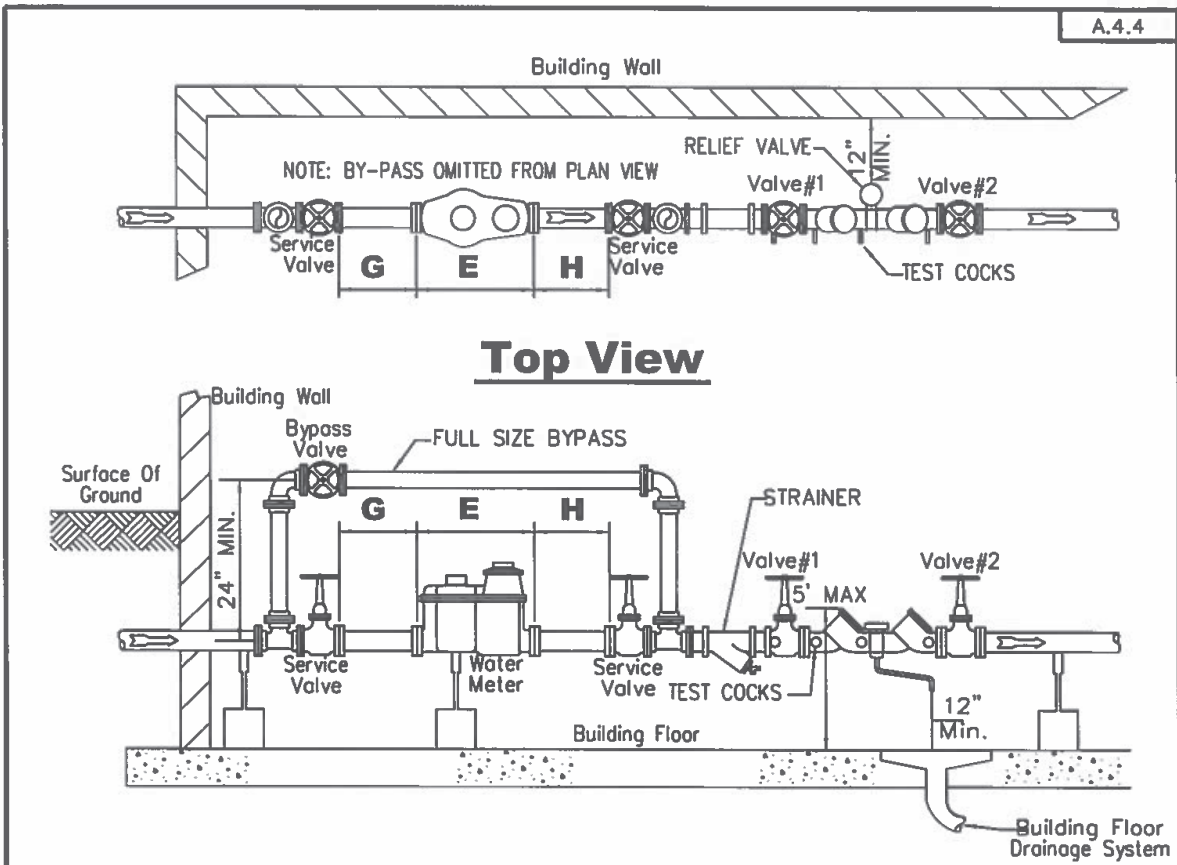
Appendix A

Show this diagram to the registered plumber you hire to install the water line and meter pit.
 Note: Some details on these diagrams may have changed. Please confirm with the Cross Connection Control team before proceeding.



Appendix A

Show this diagram to the registered plumber you hire to install the water line and meter pit.
 Note: Some details on these diagrams may have changed. Please confirm with the Cross Connection Control team before proceeding.



Side View

DIMENSION	PIPE SIZE				
	3"	4"	6"	8"	10"
E	2'-0"	2'-5"	3'-1"	4'-5"	5'-8"
G	1'-6"	2'-0"	2'-6"	3'-6"	2'-6"
H	1'-0"	1'-6"	1'-6"	2'-0"	2'-6"

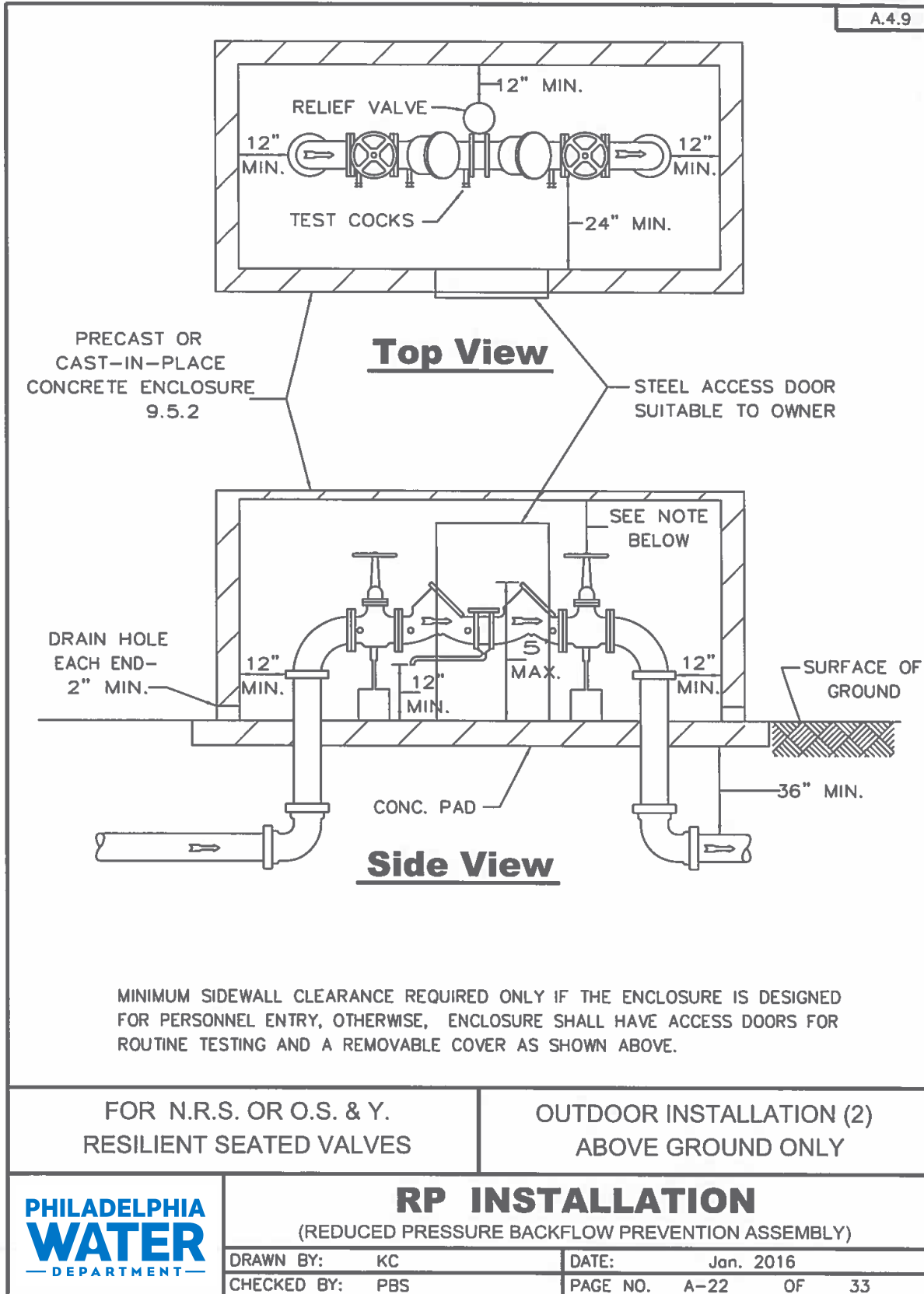
NOTE:
 Backflow Preventers to be set a minimum of 12 inches from the floor to the lowest part of the device; a maximum of 5 feet from the floor to the top of the device and a minimum of 12 inches from any wall.

FOR N.R.S. RESILIENT OR O.S. & Y. RESILIENT SEATED VALVE TYPES	INDOOR INSTALLATION (Pipe sizes 3" or greater)
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	RP INSTALLATION (REDUCED PRESSURE BACKFLOW PREVENTION ASSEMBLY)	
	DRAWN BY: KC	DATE: Jan. 2016
	CHECKED BY: PBS	PAGE NO. A-17 OF 33

Appendix A

Show this diagram to the registered plumber you hire to install the water line and meter pit.
 Note: Some details on these diagrams may have changed. Please confirm with the Cross Connection Control team before proceeding.



Appendix B

Worksheet

PART 1: Evaluate Site

Name (Gardener)

Garden Address:

Zip Code

Are hydrant & garden on the same side of the street?

 No Yes

Distance from hydrant to garden

 feet
Estimated water usage
(educated guesses are okay!)
 gallons **or** sq. feet & minutes per day of water usage

Are there visible hydrant problems or defects?

 No Yes *If Yes, please call 215.685.9641 as soon as possible to report defects.*

What type of locking device is on the top of the hydrant?

 3-sided nut Round nut

PART 2: Contact PWD

Call Joe Yeager at 215.685.9655

- Explain that you are a gardener seeking access to a hydrant, and ask if any hydrant boxes are available.
- Share information from Part 1 about your garden and the hydrant.
- Obtain an up-to-date equipment list.

PART 3: Obtain Equipment

- 3/4" back flow preventer (must be on PWD-approved list)
- Hydrant adapter 3/4" X 4"
- 3/4" shut off valve
- 3/4" garden hose
- Standard Hydrant wrench
- Few 3/4" X 4" nipples
- Pipe tape

PART 4: Obtain Your Permit

Go to the **L & I Plumbing Unit office** to get your permit. Bring with you:

- A time-stamped digital photograph of backflow prevention
- Photo ID
- This Worksheet (or garden information and notes)

Appendix B

Application

PART 1: Applicant Information

Name (as stated in deed) of Owner of Property

Address of Responsible Party

State

Zip Code

Phone number(s) of Responsible Party

Email address of Responsible Party

What is the Responsible Party's position regarding ownership of the lot?

PART 2: Garden Information

Name of Garden

Garden Address:

Zip Code

Does the location have a metered water service?

No Yes

If no, will you agree to the use of a hydrant lockbox if available (lockbox has a meter and backflow preventer)?

No Yes

Approximate Square Footage of the area to be gardened?

Briefly summary of how the proposed garden will be a benefit to the surrounding community:

Is the parcel used for any other purposes? No Yes *If yes, please explain*

I hereby certify that the statements contained herein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that if I knowingly make any false statements herein. I am subject to such penalties as may be prescribed by law or ordinance.

Applicant Signature >

Date (mm/dd/yy)

Applicant Title >

Authorized Philadelphia Water Department signature

Approved Disapproved Renewal

Appendix C

New Application Renewal to Existing Application

 **Please fill out one application per garden.**

PART 1: **Community Garden Information** Please print clearly.

Garden Name:

Garden Address:

Is the garden metered?

No Yes *If no, will you agree to put in a meter in compliance with reg. no. 58?* No Yes

Is the property current on water bill, if applicable?

No Yes

PART 2: **Applicant Information** Please print clearly. All correspondence pertaining to this application should be communicated to:

Name:

Organization:

Relationship to Garden:

Mailing Address:

City

State

Zip Code

Email Address

Phone Number

Appendix C

PART 3: Community Garden Usage

1. Select charitable purposes for which parcel(s) are used:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening activities conducted by members of the previously stated community garden organizations | <input type="checkbox"/> Operated for public/community benefit |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriately maintained so as not to cause blight/nuisance |

2. Does your organization donate or render gratuitously a substantial portion of its services?

- No Yes *If yes, please explain*

.....

3a. Is your garden open to the public during daylight hours?

- No Yes *If no, please explain*

.....

3b. Does your organization have an open admission policy? (Ex. Garden plots are available on a first-come, first-served basis)

- No Yes *If no, please explain*

.....

4. Does your organization relieve the government of some of its burden?

- No Yes *If yes, please explain*

.....

5. Does your organization operate entirely free from profit motive?

- No Yes *If yes, please explain*

.....

6. Is the parcel used for any other purposes?

- No Yes *If yes, please explain*

.....

Appendix C

I hereby certify that the statements contained herein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that if I knowingly make any false statements herein. I am subject to such penalties as may be prescribed by law or ordinance.

PWD REGULATIONS 5.5 Suspension of Charity Rates and Charges (Groups I and III)

- (a) Organizations that have been approved for Charity Rates and Charges must make timely payments on accounts in order to remain eligible for these discounted rates and charges.
- (b) An organization that fails to make on-time payments for two (2) consecutive billing cycles shall be suspended from the Charity Rates and Charges, and shall be required to pay the same rate(s) as the General Customer rates and charges for all services. The suspension period shall remain in effect for a minimum of one (1) year.
- (c) Reinstatement of the Charity Rates and Charges will not occur until a full year of on-time payments has been made. Suspended organizations must then submit an application as described in Section 5.3. Charity Rates and Charges will not be retroactive for the period of suspension.
- (d) Customers shall be informed by first class mail of the suspension of the Charity Rates and Charges.

Applicant Signature >

Date (mm/dd/yy)

Applicant Title >

/ /

NOTE: It will be necessary for our inspector to read the water meter. Please fill in the name, address, and phone number of a person in the immediate vicinity of the parcel involved in this application who is authorized to admit inspector.

PART 4: PWD Inspector Access

Name:

Phone Number

Mailing Address:

Authorized Philadelphia Water Department signature

 Approved
 Disapproved
 Renewal

Please send completed applications to:

Philadelphia Water Department
Customer Field Services Unit
2901 N. 29th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19132
Attn: Charitable Rating Program

or

CFS.Charity@phila.gov

Appendix D

Community Gardens Discount Application Instructions and Help

Philadelphia City Council has determined that community gardens should be afforded a discounted stormwater charge if they meet certain criteria. Section 203 of the Philadelphia Water Department Regulations and Chapter 19-1600 of The Philadelphia Code provide details concerning the eligibility criteria of the discount. By providing all of the documentation referenced below and in the application, as well as meeting all of the eligibility criteria, a community garden may be considered for the discount.

Step 1: Determine the parcels that make up the Community Garden by looking online at PWD's Stormwater Parcel Viewer (stormwater.phila.gov). These parcels must be listed in Section 3 of the application.

Step 2: Make sure you have documents to support the organizational requirement. Any of the following would be accepted by PWD but minimally one of these must be submitted with the application:

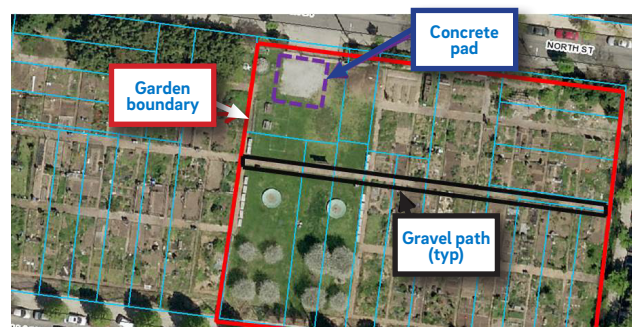
- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Articles of incorporation <input type="checkbox"/> Community garden rules or bylaws <input type="checkbox"/> List of active gardeners identifying at least one proud leader | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Letter attesting to the applicant's organization from an associated affiliate such as a civic association, faith-based organization, community development corporation, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, or Neighborhood Gardens Trust |
|--|--|

Step 3: Make sure you have documents to support the right to use requirement. Any of the following would be accepted by PWD but minimally one of these must be submitted with the application:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deed in the name of the organization or applicant • Lease or license between property owner and organization or applicant • PWD Form G-1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter from affiliated civic association, faith-based organization, community development corporation, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, or Neighborhood Gardens Trust demonstrating the applicant's right to possess the parcel and use it as a community garden |
|--|---|

Step 4: Find a recent photograph of the garden or take one to be submitted with the application.

Step 5: Create a map of the garden either by printing out an aerial photograph or by drawing the cross streets and areas where the community garden exists. Aerial photographs can be found using PWD's Stormwater Parcel Viewer or an online mapping application like Google Maps or Bing Maps. Hatch or outline areas to show the different land cover types and make sure to show the garden boundaries.



Questions? Please call the PWD Stormwater Appeals Team at 215.685.6244 or email them at pwdstormwaterappeals@phila.gov

Appendix D

FOR CITY USE ONLY

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Case No. Date Received Call Key

! Please fill out one application per garden.

PART 1: Community Garden Information Please print clearly.

Garden Name:

Garden Address:

! Registered parcel addresses to be listed on the following page.

PART 2: Applicant Information Please print clearly. All correspondence pertaining to this application should be communicated to:

Name:

Organization:

Relationship to Garden:

Mailing Address:

City

State

Zip Code

Email Address

Phone Number

Secondary Contact Information: Future correspondence pertaining to a renewal application may be communicated to:

Name:

Mailing Address:

City

State

Zip Code

Email Address

Phone Number

Urban Gardens: Charitable Discount Application - Service Charge Discount Application

Appendix D

PART 3: Registered Parcels

Please list each parcel that makes up the Community Garden, by address and OPA account number below.

Attach an additional sheet if more space is needed. Parcel information can be found at stormwater.phila.gov

Parcel Street Address	OPA Account (optional)	PWD Parcel ID FOR CITY USE ONLY

PART 4: Required Documentation *Please provide each of the following documents with submission of application.*

1) Organizational Requirement:

Please provide at least one of the following:

- i) Articles of incorporation,
- ii) List of active gardeners identifying at least one proud leader
- iii) Letter from civic association, faith-based organization, community development corporation, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, or Neighborhood Gardens Trust, demonstrating the applicant's right to possess the parcel and use it as a community garden,
- iii) Letter from civic association, faith-based organization, community development corporation, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, or Neighborhood Gardens Trust, demonstrating the applicant's right to possess the parcel and use it as a community garden,
- iv) PWD Form G-1.

2) Right to use land as Community Garden:

Please provide at least one of the following:

- i) Deed in the name of the organization/applicant
- ii) Lease, license, or other similar agreement

3) Photograph of the Garden: *A recent photograph (not more than 30 days old) of the garden must be submitted along with Form G.*

4) Map of the Garden: *Please provide a map of the Garden labeling streets and land cover types (soil, grass, pavement, roof, etc.)*

Appendix D

PART 5: Acknowledgments

By checking the following boxes, I acknowledge that:

- The garden is operated for public benefit and is appropriately maintained so as not to cause blight or nuisance.
- Gardening activities are conducted primarily by members of the organization or group of individuals described in PWD Regulation Section 203.2(d).
- Crops are harvested for personal consumption, donation, or sale.
- The parcel's principal use is devoted to regularly-planted crop beds and such other related uses as are reasonable and necessary to growing such crops and maintaining the garden.

PART 6: Applicant Certification and Right-Of-Entry

I certify that the information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, correct and represents a complete and accurate statement. I further understand that the Community Garden Discount will be based on the information provided, and the City may revoke the discount if it later determines the information provided is inaccurate, or eligibility requirements for individual parcels change. I hereby grant permission to the City, its authorized agents and employees, to enter the Property upon providing 48 hours written notice and, in any case, at reasonable times and without unreasonable disruption to inspect the Property to ensure that the provided information accurately represents the current Property conditions.

Applicant Signature >

Date (mm/dd/yy)

Applicant Name (Printed) >

Send the completed form and supporting documentation to:

**Stormwater Billing Program
Philadelphia Water Department
1101 Market Street
4th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107**

For inquiries, please call **215.685.6244** or email PWD.StormwaterAppeals@phila.gov

Appendix D

Stormwater Management Service Charge Community Garden Discount Application **Letter of Consent**

I _____, do hereby attest that _____
Parcel Owner *Community Garden Organization*

has my consent to use the property _____ as a community garden.
Parcel Address

I attest that the parcel, in whole or part, is:

- *Appropriately maintained so as not to cause blight or nuisance*
- *Used for gardening activities conducted by members of the above stated community garden organization*
- *Principally devoted to regularly-planted crop beds and such other related uses as are reasonable and necessary to growing such crops and maintaining the garden*
- *Crops from said parcel(s) are harvested for personal consumption, donation, or sale*
- *Operated for public benefit*

I acknowledge that the Philadelphia Water Department retains the right to approve or deny this parcel's inclusion as part of the above mentioned community garden and may revoke the associated stormwater management service charge discount at any time, and that I am still responsible for any and all other service and usage charges for this property throughout the duration of the stormwater management service charge discount period.

Applicant Signature >

Date (mm/dd/yy)

Applicant Name (Printed) >

Send the completed form and supporting documentation to:

**Stormwater Billing Program
Philadelphia Water Department
1101 Market Street
4th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107**

For inquiries, please call **215.685.6244** or email PWD.StormwaterAppeals@phila.gov