

Backflow Incident from Irrigation System (Idaho, USA, May 2012):

DEQ: Six tests on water in West Boise neighborhood confirm water now free of contaminants

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Water samples taken Monday at five houses and a fire hydrant in the Hobble Creek neighborhood in West Boise tested negative for bacteria, Department of Environmental Quality and United Water officials said Tuesday.

Officials say this is confirmation that the water in the neighborhood is safe to drink, but they urge residents to flush out their water heaters, ice cube makers and water softeners to be sure any irrigation water that might have entered the system is removed.

Dozens of people in Hobble Creek became ill last week. DEQ and United Water officials investigated and determined that a faulty backflow prevention device at a vacant home likely caused contamination of the drinking water in the neighborhood. The faulty device was discovered May 25, and it was repaired on the next business day, May 29.

A DEQ official said Tuesday that a total of four residents in the 380-home neighborhood were confirmed to have *Campylobacter* — a bacteria that causes illness for two to five days and can be life-threatening for people with compromised immune systems.