What is a cross-connection?
A physical connection between potable water and an actual or potential contamination hazard that could make the water unsafe to drink. Wherever there is a cross-connection, there is a potential threat to public health from contaminants.

What is backflow?
Water flowing in the opposite of its intended direction, either from a loss of pressure in the supply lines or an increase in pressure on the customer’s side. When the water backflows it can carry contaminants with it into the water lines.

Common cross-connections:
- Garden hose: Backflow can occur at your home if you leave a garden hose turned on and submerged in a swimming pool, insert it into your car’s radiator to flush out the antifreeze, or attach it to an insecticide sprayer. That material could siphon back into your potable water.
- Private well: Backflow can also occur from an untreated water supply, such as a private well, if the well plumbing is connected to the potable-water-supply plumbing. The untreated water could be pumped into the potable-water supply serving your home and into the public water system.
- Lawn sprinkler system: TCEQ regulations require that all lawn sprinkler systems be connected through a backflow-prevention assembly—without which, the stagnant water, and anything in it, from the sprinkler system could be drawn into the potable-water supply for your home.