

Pressure Problems?

Your Pressure Reducing Valve Could Be The Cause...
Common Questions and Answers for PRV's

**HURST
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Municipal
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What is a PRV and what does it do?

The first question most asked is, "What is a PRV?" PRV stands for Pressure Reducing Valve and its function is very simple, it reduces and maintains the system pressure provided by the water district to an acceptable range for household use. High water pressure in the home



can lead to leaky toilets and fixtures, and can also cause appliances to fail. The normal water pressure range for a household is between 50 and 60 psi (pounds per square inch). Most water systems, including Hurst Creek MUD, have system pressures well above this. Whenever the system pressure is greater than 80 psi then a PRV must be installed.



How does a PRV work?

A PRV is a valve that utilizes a compression spring and diaphragm to balance the outlet pressure with the desired psi setpoint. The psi setpoint is set with the adjusting screw and locked in place with the lock nut. Once the valve is set, it will hold the desired pressure until the valve is completely open. Even if the supply pressure fluctuates, the PRV will maintain a constant pressure. As long as the PRV is functioning correctly, the valve operation is automatic.

Who is responsible for the PRV?

The PRV is owned by the customer and was most likely installed by the home builder. However, it is possible that it was installed at a later time by the homeowner. All maintenance and repairs are the responsibility of the homeowner and you can work on your own PRV but a licensed plumber is recommended.

How do I know if the PRV is working properly?

The best way to check the PRV is with a pressure gauge, usually attached to an outside faucet. With no water running the pressure should be between 40-60 psi. If it is extremely low or high then the PRV may not be functioning correctly. You may also notice some other signs like extreme pressure fluctuations, clanging and or banging noises coming from the pipes.

What is the lifespan of a PRV?

The average lifespan of a PRV in The Hills is 8—10 years. This is dependent on many factors including quantity of water use, manufacturer of PRV, and installation. Some PRV's have lasted only half of that time. A PRV can be rebuilt but unless you perform the work yourself then the cost is usually at or even more than just replacing the unit with a new one.

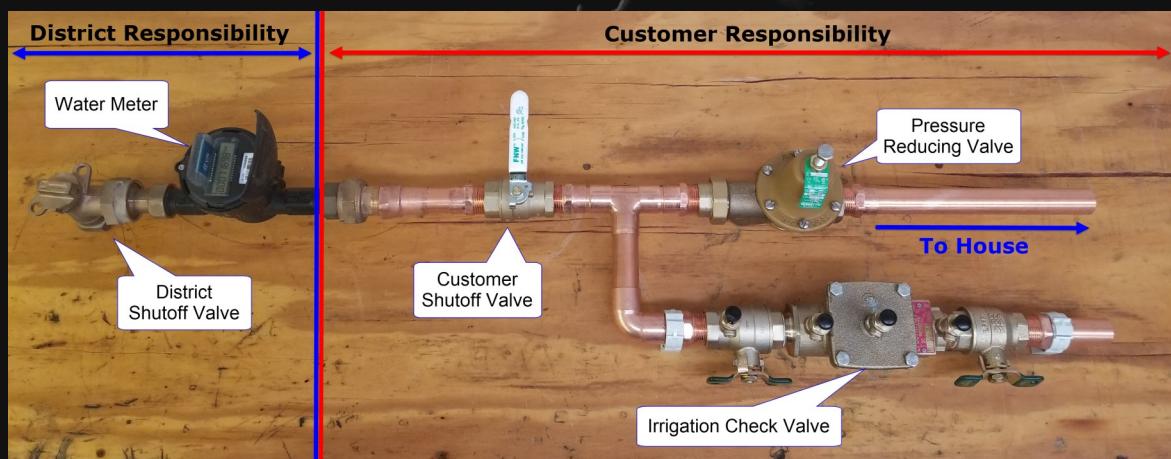
Another Common Low Pressure Cause

One of the most common causes of low pressure is actually located right at the faucet. If you notice a lower than normal flow rate when the faucet is all the way open, then it could be caused by a clogged screen. This can be verified by going to another faucet and checking the flow rate there. If it is normal, then the low pressure issue is isolated to the effected faucet. Most customers will clean these screens themselves rather than call a plumber. Please refer to your faucet manufacturer for more details.

Where is my PRV located?

The PRV is typically installed after the customer shutoff valve immediately following the Tee running to the irrigation system. In some cases, if the district service line pressure is high, the PRV will be located before the Tee so that both the irrigation system and the house pressure is reduced.

If there is no installed irrigation system then the PRV will be located after the customer shutoff valve (please see photo). The water meter should be located near the street usually to one side of the property, but in some cases it can be located anywhere along the front of the property. Once you have located the meter, the customer shutoff valve is normally located either in the meter box or just outside of it. The irrigation check valve will be near by, usually located in a box with a green lid. Familiarizing yourself with your own individual setup ahead of time is highly recommended as it will make it easier if there is a water emergency, like a leak inside the house. After locating the meter and the associated valves, it is important to make sure they are in good working order, particularly the customer shutoff valve.



Does the PRV affect my irrigation system?

As described earlier, the irrigation system may or may not be located after the PRV. When an irrigation system is installed, the licensed irrigator will check the service line pressure and flow. They will determine at that time whether the irrigation system will need the pressure reduced or not. Typically the irrigation can handle more pressure than is recommended for the house but there is a limit. Too much pressure can cause the sprinkler heads to mist and cause it to be less efficient. In extreme cases the higher pressure can even damage the irrigation system. Having a licensed irrigator perform an evaluation of your system can catch these and many other irrigation issues.

Conclusion

Pressure reducing valves are an important part of your system and play a vital role. However a worn or broken PRV can be a nuisance at the least, or can even cause bigger, more expensive problems in the future. If you suspect issues with your PRV, address it quickly by testing it or calling a plumber. If you have questions please feel free to call our offices at 512-261-6281 or visit our website at www.hurstcreekmud.org

Water Softener and House Filters

Another common cause for low pressure is water softeners and house filters. If you have one or both of these, be sure and maintain them according to the manufacturers specifications. Often times this equipment will need to be changed or replaced to ensure proper operation. A plugged filter can dramatically reduce pressure and flow. Aside from PRV's and faucet aerators, this is the next most common water pressure related problem.