



**Community Development
Building Permits and Inspection
General Information: (916) 875-5296
www.building.saccounty.net**

Full Service Center 827 7 th Street, Room 102 Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 875-5296 M-F 8:30am-4:30pm	East Area Service Center 5229 Hazel Ave, Ste. B Fair Oaks, 95628 (916) 875-2367 M&T 9am-4pm
Bradshaw Campus 9700 Goethe Road, Ste. A Sacramento, CA 95827 (916) 875-5296 M-F 8:30am-4:30pm	North Area Service Center 3331 Peacekeeper Way McClellan, CA 95652 (916) 874-2424 W&Th 9am-4pm

Why am I Required to Install an Expansion Tank?

An expansion tank is installed on the water supply pipe to the water heater. Its purpose is to deal with thermal expansion of water as it heats up in the water heater. If water pressure gets high enough it can damage valves in plumbing fixtures, joints in supply pipes and even the water heater.

Thermal expansion always occurs in water heaters. Like most substances, water expands as it is heated. Since water is non-compressible, it will increase in pressure and needs room to expand. In the past, the expanding water in water heaters would push some water back out of the house into the public water main, which could absorb the pressure. The problem is that this could contaminate the public water main. Now most water districts use check valves to protect the supply from contamination. A check valve is a one-way valve that prevents back flow of water, keeping it from flowing in the wrong direction. Check valves are installed on most connections to the public water supply now.

California Plumbing Code Section 608.3 requires an expansion tank to be installed on the water heater when it is a closed system. A closed system is one that has a check valve, or backflow prevention device. Since most of the Water districts in Sacramento County use a double check valve or a backflow prevention device we require an expansion tank to be installed when the water heater is replaced. There are some Water Districts that may not install a check valve or backflow prevention device in every situation. We will not require the expansion tank if the applicant or contractor can provide a written statement from their Water District that states that their water service does not have a check valve or backflow prevention device installed.