

# PLUMBING

## MAINTENANCE TIPS

There are many different features of your home that fall under the broad heading of “plumbing.” The following are some general and some specific suggestions on how to handle plumbing maintenance and repair issues.

You should familiarize yourself with the location and operation for the main inlet water valve to your home.

- **Faucets:** Faucets vary considerably in their style and operation, so please consult your owner’s manuals for information on the kitchen and bath faucets specific to your home.
  - Washer-type faucets consist of moveable parts, which will require periodic maintenance. Leaking faucets of this type generally can be repaired by replacing the worn faucet washers. The cartridge-type faucets found in single-lever water controls have no washers, and require no lubrication. These cartridges must still be changed, although with less frequency than washer-type faucets.
  - Before attempting to repair a faucet, be certain to turn off the water source below the faucet in the cabinet, or at the main service valve in the garage. Faucet aerators are small, round, screened attachments found at the openings of your kitchen and bath faucets. These attachments add air to the water as it leaves the faucet.
  - Cleaning the aerators is a task common to all faucets. The attachment adds air to the water as it leaves the faucet, reducing splashing and water use. Aerators also trap small mineral deposits found in the water; the volume will vary, depending on the water in your community. To clean the aerator, follow the directions in your manual to unscrew it from the faucet, remove any debris and rinse the screen, then replace the equipment on the faucet.
  
- **Care of Faucets:**
  - Wipe as needed with a soft, damp cloth.
  - Use only warm water to remove dry water marks.
  - Do not use cleaners which contain abrasives or harsh chemicals. Use of abrasives or chemical cleaners will damage the finish and void the warranty.
  
- **Showerheads:** Showerheads may need occasional cleaning, again due to hard water buildup. To do so, carefully unscrew the showerhead and flush debris out by running water backwards through the showerhead.

- **Drains:** Each plumbing fixture in your home has a drain trap, a J-shaped piece designed to provide a water barrier between your home and the danger of sewage gas. The trap holds water, which prevents the airborne bacteria and sewer odor from entering the house. If any fixture is left unused for an extended period, the water barrier may evaporate and allow the unwanted gas into the home. For this reason, we recommend running water through all drains at regular intervals, including the clothes washer drain.
- Do not use drain-cleaning chemicals such as Liquid Draino. These products may damage the plastic pipes of your home's plumbing system. If you have a clogged drain that you cannot free yourself after a few minutes, we recommend calling a licensed plumber.



## HOME CARE TIP

### Drains

The following procedure will help keep your drains clear of blockage:

1. Run hot water through the drain for one minute.
2. Place three tablespoons of ordinary washing soda (baking soda) in the drain.
3. Flush just enough hot water to wash soda down the drain.
4. Let stand for 15 minutes.
5. Rinse with hot water.

- **Toilets:** City codes require all new homes to install low-flow toilets due to water conservation efforts. If this is your first experience with this type of toilet, you may find that they are not as efficient at completely flushing, and may require extra flushes.
- Drop-in bowl cleaners and deodorizers can damage the internal parts of your toilet and should not be used.
- **Disposal:** Always use cold water when using your garbage disposal. Many homeowners wrongly conclude that because their disposal can grind up most of their garbage it can eliminate grease and other substances that they would not otherwise pour down a drain. You should never pour grease into a disposal. When grinding greasy substances, use plenty of cold water. Cold water will hinder grease coagulation and assist in moving it through the drain.
- Should your drain clog, do not pour chemicals into the disposal. Most disposals have a reset button that works much in the same way as a circuit

breaker. Should your disposal become overloaded with a substance and it cannot grind, it will turn itself off.

- In the event a utensil or other item is accidentally dropped into the garbage disposal, it can be easily removed as follows:
  - Unplug the disposal
  - Remove the rubber flange that is located in the sink directly above the disposal
  - Remove the object
  - Replace the flange
  - Plug the disposal back in
  
- If the disposal does not work, the first step is to press the reset button, usually found on the top or bottom of the disposal motor. If this does not work, check the GFCI outlet to make sure it has not tripped and reset, if needed.

#### Soft Water Loop (option)

- Special water lines are provided for use with a soft water package. The softener loop is designed to bypass the ice maker, the cold side of the kitchen sink, exterior hose bibs and the landscape system.

#### Emergency Shutdown Instructions for the Water Heater

##### To Avoid Damage When Leakage Occurs:

1. **TURN THE GAS OFF** – Twist the dial on top of the thermostat from the ON to the OFF position.
  
2. **TURN THE WATER SUPPLY OFF** – Twist the handle on the water valve above the water heater clockwise until it stops. (If water does not stop, turn of the main water valve located in the garage).
  
3. **DRAIN WATER HEATER IF NECESSARY TO AVOID WATER DAMAGE** – Attach a garden hose to the drain faucet connection at the bottom of the water heater. Run the other end of the hose to a lower location where hot or rusty water won't cause damage. Open a hot water faucet in the house to allow air to enter the water heater, as the water drains.
  
4. **ALLOW AIR TO ENTER HEATER** – Pull the handle up on the relief valve to allow air to enter the tank.