



Maintenance Troubleshooting Tips

RESIDENT TROUBLESHOOTING

Resident will complete the following troubleshooting tips as applicable prior to submitting a maintenance service request. If assistance is needed after doing these troubleshooting tips, then please enter a work order through your Tenant Portal; including emergencies. If a repair is requested that could have been handled through these troubleshooting tips, you may be charged back for the service call.

HOW TO SHUT OFF WATER TO YOUR PROPERTY

Look for a valve inside the property, if it is a house, this is typically in the basement. Turn the valve to shut off all water to the house.

If you cannot locate the valve inside the house, then you will need to do it outside, this is normally in the parking strip. The shut off valve is in a concrete box just below ground level. Lift up the grate and underneath you will see a water meter and a valve. Once you locate the valve handle, turn it clockwise until it stops. If it is frozen in position, put a few drops of lubricating oil around the valve stem and wear a work glove to turn the handle or, if necessary, turn it with the help of a pipe wrench.

LOSS OF WATER

If the home suddenly has a complete loss of water or you notice the water has become brownish in color, please check with your water provider or look on their website, to see if the utility company is doing work on the water main in your area. If the water is discolored after water main work, it's still safe for use, and all faucets just need to be run for 15-20 minutes to clear the cloudiness/color. Mineral buildup is the cause of the discoloration and will eventually bleed out. If that's not the case, please report to your water provider immediately, to come out and check your quality of water.

LOW WATER PRESSURE

Low water pressure at sinks is typically caused by mineral buildup in the faucet aerator. It is easy to unscrew the aerator screen, rinse out any debris and reattach. If the showerhead has low water pressure, remove the showerhead aerator, rinse thoroughly and check to see that all showerhead holes are free of debris.

HOT WATER HEATER LEAK

Shut off water then turn off breaker corresponding to the hot water tank.

Rotate valve clockwise, shut off water using shut-off located on cold water pipe above tank or turn of main water shut-off to house.

GARBAGE DISPOSAL TIPS

A garbage disposal is not a trash can; it's for small amounts of food scraps only. Non-food items can damage both blades and the motor. When in doubt, throw it in the trash can. If garbage disposal is not working, attempt the following:

1. check the inside for any foreign material
2. check for power
3. reset breaker

If it is plugged in, then press the Reset button found on the bottom of the unit., under the sink. If it has reset, the button will be popped out. If that does not work, check to see if the circuit breaker has tripped and turned off in the electrical service panel.

- Turn off the circuit breaker at the service panel which powers the disposal.
- Turn power back on at the service panel and check the disposal for operation.

A clogged garbage disposal can often be the result of overuse. Following some steps to rectify a clog can also help you to maintain your garbage disposal to ensure that the drain remains clear.

Safety

Electrical and water supply must be removed before any work takes place. Ensure that any water supply to the garbage disposal unit is run dry before beginning work.

A clogged garbage disposal can be caused by goods being ground up in the mechanism without the aid of sufficient water to flush it down and carry it through the drainage system. Try to clear a clog by running the garbage disposal while running the faucet at full flow, continuing it let water run down the drain for several long seconds after the clog has disappeared.

Garbage Disposal Dos:

- Do keep your garbage disposal clean. Pour a little dish soap inside and let the garbage disposal run for a minute or so with some cold water after washing dishes.
- Do run your garbage disposal regularly. Frequent use prevents rust and corrosion, assures that all parts stay moving and prevents obstructions from accumulating.
- Do grind food waste with a strong flow of cold water. Why cold water? It will cause any grease or oils that may get into the unit to solidify, so that they can be chopped up before reaching the trap.

Garbage Disposal Don'ts:

The most important rule of thumb: ***Don't Put Anything in The Garbage Disposal That Is Not Biodegradable Food.***

- Don't grind glass, plastic, metal or even paper.
- Don't grind anything combustible.
- Don't grind cigarette butts
- Don't pour grease, oil or fat into your garbage disposal or drain. Grease will slowly accumulate and impede your garbage disposal's grinding ability as well as clog drains.
- Don't use hot water when grinding food waste. Hot water will cause grease to liquefy and accumulate, causing drains to clog.
- Don't grind extremely fibrous material like corn husks, celery stalks, onion skins, and artichokes. Fibers from these can tangle and jam the garbage disposal motor and block drains.
- Don't turn off the motor or water until grinding is completed. When grinding is complete, turn off the garbage disposal first. Let water continue to run for at least 15 seconds, flushing out any remaining particles. Then turn off water.
- Don't put potato or banana peels down the garbage disposal. The starches in the potatoes will turn into a thick paste and may cause blades to stick. Do not put coffee grounds or eggshells in the disposal.
- Don't put expandable foods into your garbage disposal. Foods like pasta and rice expand when you add water in a pot; they do the same thing once inside your pipes or garbage disposal and are the cause of many jams and clogs.
- Don't grind large animal bones (beef, pork etc.).
- Don't use harsh chemicals like bleach or drain cleaners. They can damage blades and pipes.

Keeping Your Garbage Disposal Running Problem-Free

Ice is an extremely effective and inexpensive method for cleaning your garbage disposal, sharpening the blades and breaking up any grease build-up which has accumulated. Just toss a few ice cubes into the garbage disposal and turn on.

To Remove or Prevent Nasty Garbage Disposal Smells

Here are some natural methods to clean your garbage disposal that are good for the environment and very inexpensive.

- Periodically, take a portion of a lemon or orange including the rind and put it into the disposal, while running the water. The oils and juice from the fruits and peels naturally clean the walls inside the garbage disposal and create a fresh, long-lasting scent.
- Put ice cubes in the disposal, with the water running. This will keep your blades sharp while safely killing odor-causing bacteria.
- For stubborn odors pour baking soda into the drain and let it set for several hours before running the water and garbage disposal.

Tips for Removing Fallen Objects

If you must use your hand to remove objects and debris from the garbage disposal, make sure it is turned off, unplug the unit or turn off the appropriate circuit breaker. Always wear safety gloves to protect your hand from the garbage disposal's sharp blades.

There are safer steps in retrieving the fallen objects. First, use a flashlight to locate the object. Use a pair of extra-long needle nose pliers or an automotive finger gripper (available at most hardware stores) to extract the object from the garbage disposal.

CLOGGED DRAINS

The most common reason for a clogged shower drain is a simple accumulation of hair and soap scum. This is easy to resolve on your own with the tips below.

Step 1: Remove Hair and Soap Scum

Start by removing the drain screen or stopper. Unscrew it from the drain hole so you can see inside, if your shower has a pop-up drain, raise the lever to open the drain and pull the stopper out of the drain hole.

Once the drain opening is clear, stick a bent wire down the hole and wiggle it around to help hair and other gunk latch on. Pull as much of the clog out of the drain as possible.

When the drain is as clear as you can get it, run the tub to see if the clog is gone. If so, rinse any residue off the stopper and replace it in the drain opening. If not, move on to step 2.

Step 2: Use the Baking Soda and Vinegar Technique

The second method for unclogging a shower drain involves making your own drain cleaner. This is a safe, nontoxic alternative to using a chemical drain cleaner, making it a preferable method.

Pour 1/4 cup of baking soda into the drain followed by 1 cup of white vinegar. Leave the foaming, bubbling chemical reaction to work for 15 to 20 minutes.

While you wait, boil a large pot of water. When enough time has elapsed, pour the water directly into the drain to wash away the baking soda and vinegar - and hopefully all the gunk clogging your shower drain, too. Turn on the bathtub faucet and see if the drain is clear. If not, move on to step 3.

Step 3: Plunge the Drain

Plunge a clogged toilet, sink or shower. This is the final step you should take if the previous two methods aren't enough to clear the drain.

Fill the sink or tub with an inch or two of water. Force air into the drain with several sharp plunging movements. Let the water drain and test if the clog has been removed. Complete a series of three or four attempts. Then run the faucet to see if it drains normally.

TOILET ISSUES

Try a plunger to unclog the toilet. If the toilet is running, turn off the water valve. If the toilet is overflowing, immediately turn off the water valve; bail the water from the tank and the toilet bowl. Nothing should be flushed other than toilet paper and organic waste.

SEWER BACK UP

If the toilets, sinks, or tubs start backing up with brown sewage water, immediately stop all use of any water.

LOSS OF POWER

Check the electrical panel for any tripped breakers and reset all GFCI outlets.

Tripped Circuit Breaker

The first step is to go the electrical service panel which is usually located in the basement or garage or in the room with your furnace and hot water heater. The next step is to identify the tripped circuit breaker.

- The tripped breaker will not be fully in the "On" position but rather in the "Off" position or somewhere in between.
- To make visual identification easier, some breakers show red by the handle when tripped.

Resetting the breaker:

- To reset the breaker, just push the lever all the way to the "Off" position and then back fully to the "On" position.
- You will hear it click as it snaps into the "On" position.

If resetting the breaker is not successful, contact your local utility company to find out if there is a loss of power in your neighborhood.

Appliance Doesn't Work:

First, check to make sure the appliance is plugged in properly, then check the breaker panel, as the breaker controlling the outlet may have tripped. If so, reset it by turning it all the way off, then on again. Turn the breaker to the off position, unplug the appliance, and wait 30 minutes, plug back in, and reset the breaker. If it is a gas appliance, and it's plugged into a 120-volt GFCI, the outlet itself could have tripped. Reset it by pressing the reset button on the front of the plug. If the appliance is on a circuit shared by other GFCI outlets, and one of them trips, that also could cut power to the appliance. Press the reset button on the GFCI outlet.

Should the refrigerator lose power, plug it into a different outlet; using an extension cord as needed.

Leaking dishwashers are often caused by overloading the machine. Make sure the sprayer arms are free to turn and aren't blocked by dishes. Check to see if there is debris in the sprayer arms which can clog the holes. Check the drain screen for obstructions.

Dryers will stop working at times if the lint filter or dryer vent hose are clogged with lint. Make sure you are cleaning the lint filter regularly.

Front loading washers should have the door ajar, when not in use to avoid any mildew growth. Wipe down the affected area with a diluted bleach water solution, when needed. Be mindful of not overloading the washer, so that the agitator stays balanced and doesn't cause damage to the machine. If unbalanced, the washer will stop working mid-cycle and won't drain.

If your range burners stop working, check to make sure the electric coil burners are plugged in all the way for a good electrical connection. With gas ranges, check that the burner top is sitting flat on the igniter area. Gas burners may also stop working if there is a buildup of grease and food debris around the igniter. Clean with a toothbrush and poke the igniter hole with a small needle, to clear any remaining clogs in the igniter.

If entering a work order for an appliance repair, please include the brand, model and serial numbers, for faster service.

LOSS OF HEAT

If the furnace is electric, check for a tripped circuit breaker in the electrical panel. If gas, make sure the pilot light is on. If it is not on, call your utility service provider, they will come out to the property at no charge for assistance.

Check to make sure you have changed the furnace filter in the last 90 days, check the furnace reset button and change the battery in the thermostat, if applicable.

GAS FIREPLACE ISN'T WORKING

Check to see if the pilot light is on and if not, call your gas service provider, they will come out at no charge for assistance.

BEEPING SMOKE OR CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTOR

Smoke Detector or Carbon Monoxide Detector Problems with Batteries

The most common reason for a chirping smoke detector is a low battery. Batteries can be used as the main power source for some detector designs and are very often used as a backup. Some smoke alarms must be removed from the wall or base plate to access the battery from the back. Replace the battery.

Please note that some detectors are a combination smoke and carbon monoxide in one detector.

Electrical Problems

Electrical wiring connects all the hard-wired fire alarms in the house together on the same circuit. This type of interconnected fire system allows any single detector to trigger all the others in case of a fire.

A tripped circuit breaker will often cause a 110-volt hardwired smoke detector to start beeping. It will continue to beep, running on its backup battery, until AC power is restored.

If you suspect this is the problem, check all the breakers in the panel box. If you find one tripped, reset it. If the chirping stops, you've likely solved the problem.

A loose connection to a wired smoke detector will cause a trouble condition. This will cause the units to emit chirps until the problem is corrected.

Security Alarm

If security alarm is beeping, attempt to turn it off by disabling at the breaker. If unsuccessful, contact your security system provider.

GARAGE DOOR NOT OPENING/CLOSING

Check to see if the door sensors were bumped/moved and are not aligned at the bottom of the garage door. Check for any needed battery changes in your remotes.

KEYLESS KEYPADS AND DOOR LOCKS

Make sure your battery is changed regularly and you have a key available, as the keypad will not work, if the battery is dead. If your key is sticking in the door lock, try spraying it with lubricant to loosen the fit.

LIGHTS AND NON-WORKING OUTLETS

Check and change the fixture light bulbs before reporting any lighting issues. If unsure how to change the bulb, or what kind of bulb is needed, it's easy to research on-line. If outlets stop working, reset all GFCI outlet buttons, which are typically located in the bathroom and kitchen. If no overhead lights in the room, there may be a wall switch that needs to be turned on to activate the lamp.

MILDEW AND MOLD

As the northwest is very damp, there are several varieties of mold and mildew that can grow in the home if the moisture isn't managed properly and regularly. Make sure to use the bathroom fan for at least 20-30 minutes after each shower use, leaving the door ajar, for moisture to escape. If no fan, make sure the bathroom window is cracked during use of the shower. If mold/mildew does start to grow, wipe down the affected area with a diluted bleach water to clean the area. In some cases, this can indicate a leak from above, so please report if the problem persists. You can also purchase a dehumidifier that will also help you manage excessive moisture. Use your stove vent fan during cooking or crack a window to let out the cooking moisture.

WATER ON THE BATHROOM FLOOR

If the tub doesn't have a shower door, make sure while showering you have the shower curtain tucked in and it's long enough. If you have a curtain that isn't plastic, get a plastic liner to avoid water intrusion.