



Spring Plumbing Maintenance Tips

Warmer weather is on the way! Now is the perfect time to do some “Spring Cleaning” for your home’s plumbing. Read on for some quick tips to help find any small issues that may have been missed during winter and to protect your home against plumbing issues:

1. Check faucets for drips or leaks. Make repairs to save water.
2. Exercise water supply valves under sinks and toilets to prevent them from sticking.
3. Check exposed pipes under sinks and in the basement for signs of leaks.
4. Clean your shower heads of mineral deposits by unscrewing them and soaking them in vinegar overnight. After they have soaked, scrub them gently with an old toothbrush to get them totally clean, rinse, and reattach to improve water pressure.
5. Check toilets for hidden leaks. Add a few drops of food coloring to the toilet tank. If the toilet is leaking, color will appear in the bowl within 30 minutes. While you’re doing this, check for cracks or leaks in the tank and bowl. Make sure toilets flush properly. If the handle must be held down for a thorough flush or jiggled to stop the water from running you may need to replace worn tank parts. Not only will the toilet be easier to operate, it will save you money on the water bill!
6. Ensure that all drains have strainers to prevent hair, soap, and debris from clogging the drains. This is especially important in the shower where long hair is often a drain clogging culprit!
7. Pour a gallon of water into infrequently used drains (including floor drains) to fill the trap and prevent odors from entering the house. Slow floor drains should be snaked to ensure they will carry away water quickly in the event of a flood.
8. Check the temperature setting on the water heater. If you have a tank type water heater, it should be set no higher than 120°F to prevent scalding and reduce energy use. If your water heater is electric, make sure the electric is turned off before making adjustments.
9. Carefully drain several gallons from the water heater tank from the valve at the bottom of the tank (attach a hose to assist with this) to flush out corrosion causing sediment, which reduces heating efficiency and shortens the life of the heater. If your water heater is electric, make sure the electric is turned off first.
10. Tankless water heaters should be flushed with scale remover or food grade vinegar to remove mineral deposits. Always check the operating manual for specific instructions regarding maintenance of your specific make and model.

11. Ensure there are no flammable materials stored near your water heater or heating system.
12. Consider replacing a water heater more than 10-15 years old. (The first four numbers of the serial number often represent the month and year it was made, and most manufacturers have a guide to help you check the age of your water heater on their website.)
13. Check the supply hoses to your dishwasher, washing machine and icemaker and make sure they don't have any bulges or leaks. If any of the supply hoses are showing signs of weakness, or if they are more than 10 years old, have them replaced. *(Heidler, Inc. recommends installation of stainless steel braided supplies for washing machines, because burst rubber washing machine hoses are one of the leading causes of water damage in homes)*
14. If your home has a sump pump, make sure it operates properly by pouring approximately 5 gallons of water into the sump pit. Pour slowly until the pump turns on and begins to pump out water. Do not pour in more water than the pit will hold. You can expect the pump to turn on when the water level reaches approximately 8-12" below the surface of the basement floor. The pump should quickly turn on, discharge the water then shut off without any problems.
15. Make sure area way drains, gutters and downspouts are cleaned out, open, and free of debris.
16. Check faucets and hose bibs to make sure water flows freely. If an outdoor faucet drips or if there is a leak inside your home when you turn the hose on, you may have had a frozen pipe that cracked and needs to be repaired or replaced.

REQUIRES A PROFESSIONAL:

1. Have an irrigation or fire suppression system? You may have a backflow preventer that needs to be certified annually by a professional backflow tester to meet City of Annapolis / Anne Arundel County code requirements. Be sure to schedule this to be done when you schedule your irrigation system to be turned on.
2. Do you live in an area where sewers sometimes back up into homes? A backwater valve may be right for your home. This device will prevent future backups into your home.

Following these Spring Plumbing Tips, your home will be ready for the warmer temperatures ahead. Should you have any questions, or need professional assistance:

Call Heidler, Inc. at **410-268-7191** today!