

# Plumbing Tips Made Simple

*From your friends at Heidler, Inc.*

There are many things about plumbing that are best left to the professionals for reasons of both safety (ex: leaks in gas piping) and comfort (ex: *really* dirty jobs). As a homeowner, however, you can take a number of steps to help maintain your plumbing and keep it operating efficiently.

## Learn How to Shut Off the Water.

This is a fundamental for homeowners. Despite the quality of your equipment and your attention to maintenance, plumbing emergencies do occur. When that happens, the first thing you'll want to do is shut off the source of the water. (The second thing to do is call us!)



Be prepared by knowing ahead of time where your main shut-off valve is located. This is the valve that shuts off the entire water supply to the house, and you'll usually find it at the street. Additionally, individual fixtures (toilets and sinks, etc.) also have a stop valve. If the problem is localized at a fixture, use the stop valve to turn off the water supply to the fixture.

## Take Note of Problems as They Occur.



You know how it is... a drip could be dripping for quite some time before you notice what's happening. In the meantime, gallons of extra water would have gone down the drain. That's why it's a good idea to periodically give your plumbing systems a routine inspection.

- Test the faucets in your household. Check for drips, then turn them on and off to see if any water comes out of the handles and valves while the water is running.
- Test the toilets. First, try a light push to see if they are secure or if they move around. Flush the toilet to make sure that it flushes and refills properly. Take note if the water continues to run after the toilet should have refilled, and check to see if there is water on the floor around the toilet.
- Inspect your washing machine hoses. Look for cracks, leaks and signs of wear and tear. A burst washing machine hose can flood a house very quickly.
- Check the drainage speed in tubs, showers and sinks. Slow drainage could be the sign that a clog is forming.
- Check the caulking around tubs, showers, sinks and faucets to see if it's cracked or if gaps are starting to appear.

## Look and Listen for Leaks.

Sometimes you'll see a leak – like with a dripping faucet. Other times you can hear it – like with a dripping faucet! Let your eyes and ears be the judge as you determine where you may be wasting water.



**Listen** – Do you hear a toilet that keeps running long after you've left the bathroom or an endless dripping from the faucet that keeps you up at night? Do you hear the sound of water running when everything is in the off position?

**Look** – Check for moisture around fixtures – such as inside cabinets or on the floor. Signs of a leak could also include stains on a ceiling or wall. That doesn't mean that the leak is in that location, however. The water could be running from another location down a beam into the spot where the stain is created.

**Inside Out** – After your indoor inspection, if you have an outdoor sprinkler system, that should be checked as well before you start using it again. You can lose large amounts of water (and send a water bill sky high) with a sprinkler system leak. Check your control valves for leaks and listen for the sound of running or hissing water. A few hours after your sprinkler system has been used, check the sprinkler heads to see if water is still leaking out.

## Let Us Help.

Like we said, plumbing emergencies do happen. So, please know, if you experience any plumbing problems, the folks here at Heidler, Inc. are here to help. Just give us a call 24/7 at 410-268-7191.



In the meantime, if you'd like a complete review of the "health" of your plumbing system, call us, and we'll schedule a visit. We can give your plumbing system a thorough inspection, noting any trouble spots as well as any problems that may be looming.

While plumbing emergencies can take a homeowner by surprise, many times the "pre-disaster" signs would have already been visible to a trained plumber. A plumbing inspection allows us to fix problems when they are small before they become a big, expensive mess.

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