



10 STEPS TO PREVENT PLUMBING EMERGENCIES

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By following this guide, you can significantly reduce the risk of plumbing emergencies in your home. Regular maintenance, being aware of your home's plumbing basics, and knowing when to call in a professional are key steps in keeping your plumbing system running smoothly.

1. Know Your Plumbing System

- **Understand the Basics:** Familiarize yourself with the main components of your plumbing system, including the water supply, drains, and sewer lines.
- **Locate Main Shut-Off Valve:** Know where the main water shut-off valve and the shut-off valves under the sinks are in your home. This is crucial for minimizing damage in case of a major leak.

2. Regular Maintenance Checks

- **Inspect Pipes Regularly:** Check for signs of corrosion, leaks, or damage. Pay attention to exposed pipes during cold weather, as they are more susceptible to freezing.
- **Drain Maintenance:** Clean out slow drains and use a hair catcher in shower drains to prevent clogs. Avoid chemical drain cleaners as they can damage pipes.
- **Water Pressure:** Use a pressure gauge to test your home's water pressure. High pressure can damage pipes, valves, and joints, leading to leaks. Maximum pressure should not exceed 80 psi.

3. Prevent Clogs Before They Happen

- **Be Careful What Goes Down Drains:** Avoid flushing anything down the toilet except for toilet paper and human waste. In the kitchen, do not pour grease or oil down the sink.
- **Use Strainers:** Place strainers in sinks to catch hair and other debris from going down the drain.

4. Protect Your Pipes

- **Insulate Pipes:** In cold climates, insulate exposed pipes to prevent freezing and bursting. Pay special attention to those in unheated areas like basements, garages, and crawl spaces.
- **Fix Leaks Promptly:** Even small leaks can lead to bigger problems, such as mold or structural damage. Fix leaks as soon as they are detected.

5. Be Prepared for Emergencies

- **Emergency Kit:** Have a plumbing emergency kit that includes a plunger, pipe tape, a wrench, and a bucket.
- **Professional Help:** Know when to call a professional plumber. Complex issues or emergencies that are beyond your skill level require expert intervention.

6. Educate Your Household

- **Inform Everyone:** Make sure all household members know where the main shut-off valve is and how to use it. Educate them about what can and cannot be flushed or poured down drains.

7. Seasonal Precautions

- **Winterize Your Plumbing:** If you live in a cold climate, take steps to winterize your home before freezing temperatures arrive. This includes draining outdoor faucets and sprinkler systems. Do not leave hoses connected. Purchase hose bib covers from Amazon or your local big box/hardware store.
- **Summer Maintenance:** Check for leaks after the heavy usage of water in summer, especially in outdoor faucets and sprinkler systems.

8. Upgrade Aging Components

- **Upgrade Hoses and Pipes:** Replace rubber hoses on appliances like washing machines with stainless steel braided hoses. Consider upgrading old pipes if your home is older and has not had a plumbing update.

9. Environmental Considerations

- **Water-Saving Fixtures:** Install low-flow toilets, showerheads, and faucets to reduce water usage and strain on your plumbing system.

10. Annual Inspections

- **Hire a Professional:** Consider having a professional plumber conduct an annual inspection of your plumbing system. They can identify potential issues before they become emergencies. AA Quality Plumbing LLC is happy to provide your annual inspection.