

Seasonal Plumbing Maintenance Checklist



A Comprehensive Guide for Homeowners

Quick Overview

A seasonal plumbing maintenance routine helps prevent leaks, frozen pipes, clogged drains, water damage, and expensive emergency repairs. By checking your plumbing system throughout the year, you can catch small problems before they become major issues and keep your home's water systems operating efficiently.

Before You Start

- Walk around your property and identify all indoor and outdoor plumbing fixtures.
- Locate and verify the operation of your main water shut-off valve.
- Find the shut-off valves for toilets, sinks, washing machines, and water heaters.
- Review any past plumbing repairs or recurring issues.
- Determine if your area experiences freezing temperatures, heavy rain, drought, or seasonal flooding.
- Set aside enough time to complete a thorough inspection.
- Make sure you can safely access attics, crawl spaces, basements, and utility rooms.
- Keep a notebook or digital app available to document any problems found.
- Decide which repairs you can safely handle and which may require a licensed plumber.

Tools, Supplies, or Resources Needed

- Flashlight
- Small bucket
- Adjustable wrench
- Screwdriver set
- Garden hose
- Work gloves
- Towels or rags
- Food coloring tablets for toilet leak testing
- Replacement faucet aerators or washers (optional)
- Pipe insulation for exposed pipes
- Caulk for exterior penetrations
- Smart phone or camera for documenting issues
- Home maintenance log or notebook

Spring Plumbing Checklist

Outdoor Plumbing

- Inspect hose bibs and outdoor faucets for freeze damage by turning them on and checking for leaks.
- Check garden hoses for cracks, leaks, or worn washers.
- Inspect irrigation and sprinkler systems for broken heads or damaged pipes.
- Verify that exterior drains and yard drains are free of leaves and debris.
- Check around your foundation for standing water that could indicate drainage problems.

Indoor Plumbing

- Inspect exposed pipes for leaks, corrosion, or water stains.
- Test all faucets and showerheads for proper flow.
- Check under sinks for moisture, mold, or damaged cabinets.
- Test every toilet for hidden leaks using food coloring in the tank.
- Verify that drains throughout the house are flowing properly.

Water Heater

- Check around the water heater for signs of leaks.
- Inspect the temperature and pressure relief valve discharge pipe.
- Remove sediment buildup by flushing the water heater if recommended by the manufacturer.
- Verify that the temperature setting is appropriate, typically around 120°F.

Summer Plumbing Checklist

High Water Usage

- Monitor your water bill for unexplained increases.
- Inspect washing machine hoses for bulges or cracks.
- Check dishwasher connections for leaks.
- Inspect refrigerator water supply lines and ice maker connections.
- Verify that outdoor faucets are not leaking after use.

Drain Maintenance

- Clean sink and shower drain strainers.

- Remove hair and debris from bathroom drains.
- Run plenty of water when using garbage disposals.
- Check for slow drains that may indicate developing clogs.

Sewer and Yard

- Watch for unusually green patches of grass that could signal underground leaks.
- Inspect sewer cleanout caps to make sure they are secure.
- Check that gutters and downspouts direct water away from the foundation.

Fall Plumbing Checklist

Preparing for Cold Weather

- Disconnect and drain all garden hoses.
- Shut off and drain exterior hose bibs if your plumbing system allows.
- Install insulated covers on outdoor faucets if needed.
- Insulate exposed pipes in attics, garages, basements, and crawl spaces.
- Seal gaps around pipes entering the home to reduce cold air infiltration.

Heating and Utility Areas

- Verify that your water heater is operating properly before winter.
- Test sump pumps by pouring water into the pit.
- Clean sump pump discharge lines and make sure they are unobstructed.
- Check basement and utility room floors for signs of moisture.

Winter Plumbing Checklist

Freeze Protection

- Keep indoor temperatures consistent, even when away from home.
- Open cabinet doors beneath sinks on extremely cold nights.
- Allow faucets to drip during severe freezes if necessary.
- Inspect exposed pipes for frost buildup.
- Verify that pipe insulation remains secure.

Emergency Preparedness

- Confirm everyone in the home knows where the main water shut-off valve is located.
- Keep a plumber's contact information readily available.
- Watch for sudden drops in water pressure that may indicate frozen pipes.
- Inspect ceilings and walls for water stains after freezing weather.

Year-Round Plumbing Maintenance Checklist

- Test water pressure and investigate unusually high pressure.
- Check for dripping faucets and running toilets.
- Listen for unusual noises in pipes or fixtures.
- Clean faucet aerators to maintain water flow.
- Verify that all shut-off valves can be operated.
- Keep grease, coffee grounds, and food scraps out of kitchen drains.
- Avoid flushing wipes, paper towels, feminine products, or other non-flushable items.
- Inspect exposed plumbing after major storms.
- Update your plumbing maintenance records after each inspection.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Ignoring small leaks because they seem minor.
- Using chemical drain cleaners repeatedly.
- Forgetting to disconnect garden hoses before winter.
- Storing items that block access to shut-off valves.
- Waiting until a pipe freezes before adding insulation.
- Flushing products labeled "flushable" without verifying local plumbing compatibility.
- Overlooking slow drains that may signal larger sewer problems.
- Neglecting water heater maintenance.

Safety, Quality, or Success Tips

- Wear gloves when inspecting plumbing systems.
- Use proper ladders when accessing attics or elevated spaces.
- Never force stuck shut-off valves.
- If you smell gas near a gas water heater, leave the area and contact the gas utility immediately.
- Keep photos and records of maintenance for future reference.
- Address small issues promptly to reduce repair costs.

Final Review Checklist

- All visible plumbing fixtures have been inspected.

- Indoor and outdoor pipes have been checked.
- Water heater maintenance has been completed.
- Drains and garbage disposal have been evaluated.
- Outdoor faucets and irrigation systems have been inspected.
- Pipe insulation has been checked or installed.
- Shut-off valves have been located and tested.
- Any needed repairs have been documented.
- Emergency contact information is available.
- The work area has been cleaned up.
- The maintenance log has been updated.

When to Get Help

Contact a licensed plumber if you discover:

- Active water leaks inside walls or ceilings.
- Frozen pipes that will not thaw safely.
- Sewage backups or foul sewer odors.
- Major corrosion on water lines.
- Low water pressure throughout the entire home.
- Water heater leaks or relief valve discharge.
- Repeated drain clogs affecting multiple fixtures.
- Cracked pipes or burst plumbing.
- Sump pump failures before heavy rain seasons.
- Any plumbing issue that could cause structural water damage.

Professional inspections are especially valuable for older homes or properties with a history of plumbing problems.