

It's a good time to give your home's plumbing attention

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Plumbing problems have a way of showing up when homeowners least expect them, and a small leak or slow drain can quickly become a much bigger headache if left unaddressed.



Late summer is a great time to give your home's plumbing a little attention. Taking care of minor problems now can help your plumbing system handle the colder months ahead and reduce the chances of an unexpected repair later in the year.

Start by checking for leaks throughout your home. Look under sinks, around toilets and near appliances like washing machines and dishwashers for moisture, staining or other signs of water where it shouldn't be. Pay attention to dripping faucets and toilets that continue running after they've been flushed, too. Even seemingly minor leaks are worth addressing before they have an opportunity to worsen.

Next, pay attention to your water pressure. A noticeable change in pressure can sometimes point to a larger plumbing problem, including leaks, mineral buildup or issues with your water supply. It is recommended to do a water-pressure check as part of routine plumbing maintenance. If your pressure suddenly drops or seems unusually high, a plumber can help determine what's causing the change before it puts additional strain on your plumbing system.

Your water heater deserves some attention, too. Sediment can accumulate inside a tank over time, potentially affecting its performance and efficiency. It is recommended to flush and drain a traditional tank water heater annually to help remove sediment buildup. If you're unsure when yours was last serviced or aren't comfortable performing the maintenance yourself, consider having a plumber inspect it before colder weather arrives and your household starts relying on hot water even more.

If your home has a basement, now is also a good time to test your sump pump. Heavy rain and seasonal storms can put it to work when you need it most. Check the pit for debris and test the pump to make sure it turns on and moves water away from your home properly. If your sump pump has a battery backup, make sure that's working as well. Finding out that your pump isn't functioning during a downpour is a surprise no homeowner wants.

As fall gets closer, turn your attention to the plumbing outside your home. Inspect outdoor faucets, hoses and sprinkler systems for leaks or damage. Once temperatures begin approaching freezing later

in the season, disconnect and drain garden hoses and properly winterize outdoor faucets and irrigation systems. Water left inside exterior plumbing can freeze and expand, potentially leading to burst pipes and expensive water damage.

It's also worth identifying any pipes that may be vulnerable once temperatures drop. Plumbing in garages, crawl spaces, attics, basements and along exterior walls can be particularly susceptible to freezing if it isn't adequately protected. Insulating vulnerable pipes before cold weather arrives can help reduce the risk of a plumbing emergency later in the year.

Finally, know where your home's main water shutoff valve is and make sure you know how to operate it. If a pipe bursts or a major leak develops, shutting off the water quickly can help limit damage while you wait for a plumber. It's a simple step, but in an emergency, knowing exactly what to do can make a major difference.

You don't need to overhaul your entire plumbing system before fall. Focus on catching the small warning signs, taking care of routine maintenance and preparing vulnerable areas for colder weather. A little preventive work now can go a long way toward keeping the water flowing where it belongs all season long.