

Plumbing Maintenance Checklist

A plumbing maintenance checklist covering pipes, drains, the water heater, leaks and shut-off valves.

Leaks & Water Detection

- Check under sinks and around toilets for drips and dampness
- Test for hidden leaks by reading the water meter with everything off
Movement with no water running means a leak
- Look for water stains, warping or musty smells on walls and floors
- Check toilet for silent leaks with a few drops of food coloring
Color in the bowl means the flapper is leaking
- Inspect washing machine and dishwasher hoses for bulges or cracks
- Consider a smart leak detector near the water heater and washer

Drains & Pipes

- Flush slow drains with hot water and a baking soda and vinegar mix
- Clean hair and debris from sink and shower stoppers
- Avoid pouring grease, oil or coffee grounds down the drain
- Use drain strainers in showers and kitchen sinks
- Inspect exposed pipes for corrosion, sweating or mineral deposits
- Skip harsh chemical drain cleaners that damage pipes over time

Water Heater

- Flush sediment from the tank once a year
- Test the temperature and pressure relief valve for safe operation
- Set the thermostat around 120°F for safety and efficiency
Lower temperatures reduce scalding and energy use
- Check for rust, leaks or pooling water around the base
- Inspect the anode rod every few years to slow tank corrosion
- Hire a licensed plumber for gas water heater repairs

Shut-Off Valves

- Locate the main water shut-off valve for the whole house
- Test that the main valve turns freely without sticking
- Identify shut-off valves under sinks and behind toilets
- Label valves so anyone can find them in an emergency
- Show every household member how to shut off the water

Fixtures & Fittings

- Clean faucet aerators and showerheads to clear mineral buildup
- Replace worn washers and seals on dripping faucets
- Recaulk around tubs, showers and sinks where grout is cracked
- Check that toilets flush fully and refill without running
- Tighten loose handles, supply lines and fittings

Seasonal & Outdoor

- Insulate exposed pipes before winter to prevent freezing

- Drain and shut off outdoor faucets before the first freeze
- Disconnect and store garden hoses for winter
- Test the sump pump before the rainy season and after long dry spells
- Clear outdoor drains and downspouts so water flows freely