

Plumbing Issues At Westchase Association

In a condominium, the association is responsible for transporting fresh water to your home, and for providing pipe connections for removing sewage from your home. In short the pipes are usually the association's responsibility, but maintenance of your plumbing fixtures and water cut-off valves is yours.

Plumbing in any home can be problematic. Pipes fail. Sewer lines clog. Faucets and toilet valves wear out. The same is true with the plumbing in the home right next to you. In fact, our experience has shown that poorly maintained plumbing (often by a neighbor) results in most emergency calls to management. All in all, plumbing faults are perhaps the most common problem faced by condominium owners. The Q&A below should help answer some of your plumbing questions.

Q. My kitchen sink/bathroom sink/bathtub drains slowly. Is repair my responsibility or the associations?

A. These types of problems are almost always due to clogs in the drain pipe below the fixture. These are almost always owner responsibilities.

Q. My toilet flushes very slowly. Is this my responsibility or the associations?

A. This problem is almost always due to a clog within the base of the toilet. These are almost always owner responsibilities.

Q: The water in my Sink/tub/shower/toilet is backing up or rising! What do I do?

A: Time is of the essence. Whether you experience a slow backup or an actual overflow, take action immediately! In a multifamily environment any delay increases the possibility of your problems spilling over to damage your property and your neighbor's property.

Steps to Take:

- **If your unit is on the ground floor, call Management!** The blockage may be in the underground sewer lines, not within your home's plumbing. They can contact a plumber/drain service to be dispatched to your home. NOTE - if you cannot reach management immediately, call any plumber for emergency service. The association may reimburse some or all of the service charge. Our preferred vendor for emergency drain service is Drain Dr at 214 372-4637

- Limit the potential for damage by letting the above-floor neighbors know about the problem and ask them to not use any water in their units until the blockage is cleared.
- **If your home (or the water back up) is from a location above the ground floor**, the blockage or slow drain is likely confined only to the pipes serving your home. This is usually less urgent because you normally have total control of the flow of water into the clogged area. You should cease using any water in your home and contact a plumber for assistance or call Management for referrals.

Q: What's causing the leak above my bathtub ceiling?

A: Most Common Cause: The drain connection under an upstairs tub or toilet is loose.

Less Common Causes:

- The pipe in the wall transporting water from the faucet to the showerhead has a loose connection. This often causes a leak when the shower is used, but not when the bathtub is used.
- The caulking around the tub/shower is old and leaking. Water is allowed to deflect out and down the outside of the tub or shower enclosure.
- The A/C condensate drain is clogged. This usually only occurs in the spring or summer when the A/C is used. In some, not all, homes this will occur in very humid conditions and when the drain line and pan in a ceiling A/C unit becomes clogged with rust or mold.

Q: Why do I hear the constant sound of running water in the walls?

A: Most Common Cause - A toilet running continuously at a very slow rate. Confirming this and locating the right toilet can be tricky. A deductive process is needed to locate the culprit.

The first step is to remove the toilet tank top of the most likely suspect. The center drain/overflow tube is designed to extend an inch or two above the water line in the tank. If the water in the tank is up to the top of the tube you probably have found the source of the noise. When you find water leaking over the top of the tube you have found both the source of the noise and a water waster. Water is wasted when it constantly fills the tank and drains out via this overflow tube. NOTE: The sound can run several feet through pipes in the walls. The source could be several feet away from the suspect toilet, or even from a neighbor's home that shares the wall with your home.

Less Common Cause:

- A pipe in the wall has a leak. This is rare. In this case the sound is usually a hissing sound. Water damage to the adjacent wall and floor is usually evident.