



# **MAINTENANCE GUIDE**



# WHAT'S IN THIS GUIDE?

- 1) Knowing the Difference Between Emergency and Routine Maintenance**
- 2) Troubleshooting By Issue: A Full Breakdown**
  - a) Leaks, Plumbing, Drains**
  - b) Alarms, Gas & Smoke Detectors**
  - c) Electricity**
  - d) Appliances/HVAC**

## The 6 Steps of the Troubleshooting Process

1. **Immediate Danger.**
  - a. **Make sure you are not in immediate danger, and if you are please call 911 or the appropriate authorities. For down power lines, please contact your energy provider. For gas leaks, please call you gas provider. Once you have determined you are not in immediate danger, please follow the steps below to assist us in solving the issue as soon as possible.**
2. **Is this a tenant responsibility?** Residents are responsible for lawn care, changing air filters, burnt out light bulbs, lighting pilot lights, checking for tripped breakers, pest control and other routine maintenance. Please refer to your lease if you are unsure if the issue is tenant responsibility.
3. **Use the guide below to isolate the cause of the problem and troubleshoot simple repairs to correct the issue as soon as possible.**
4. **If you are unable to correct the issue, submit an online maintenance request.**
  - a. Make sure we have your most current phone number
  - b. Make sure you answer your phone when an unknown caller calls
  - c. Be as detailed as possible about the issue; list what the issue is, where it is located and what troubleshooting was done. You can also upload photos so the contractor has a clear understanding of what is needed prior to arriving for the repair.
5. **Is the repair an emergency?** While most issues are an inconvenience, please see the list on the following page for what is considered “Emergency”
6. **If you have submitted a request for Maintenance Emergency (Listed Above) and not heard from a contractor within 24 hours to schedule, please contact our office via email, text, maintenance request, phone call etc. to let us know so that we can follow up with the vendor.**

## Emergency vs. Non Emergency Maintenance

Knowing what qualifies as an emergency is essential. Emergency repairs not treated as an emergency can lead to a costly pain later down the road. On the flip side, there are also many requests that come in as an emergency, but can be de-escalated to a standard maintenance request. When it comes to emergencies, it's important to keep everyone involved as protected as possible.

Below shows a basic chart of what qualifies as an emergency:

### WHAT QUALIFIES AS AN EMERGENCY ISSUE?



#### LEAKS THAT CAN CAUSE PROPERTY DAMAGE

This includes roofing leaks, lawn/sprinkler leaks, toilet leaks and overflows, sink leaks, and HVAC leaks.



#### NO FUNCTIONING TOILETS IN THE HOUSE



#### SEWAGE BACKUPS OR SEWAGE ON PREMISES



#### WATER ISSUES LIKE:

No water, dirty water, or no hot water



#### NO HEAT IN COLD WEATHER

under 45°F; 55°F if young children, elderly, or sick people are present



#### NO AC IN HOT WEATHER

over 95°F; 85°F if young children, elderly, or sick people are present



#### SECURITY AND SAFETY ISSUES

Broken windows or broken/open doors



#### CARS BLOCKED IN BY BROKEN GATES



#### ELECTRICAL OUTAGES:

(not caused by the power company) and loss of power to medical equipment



#### LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCIES

Gas leaks, carbon monoxide leaks, and fires are directed to 911

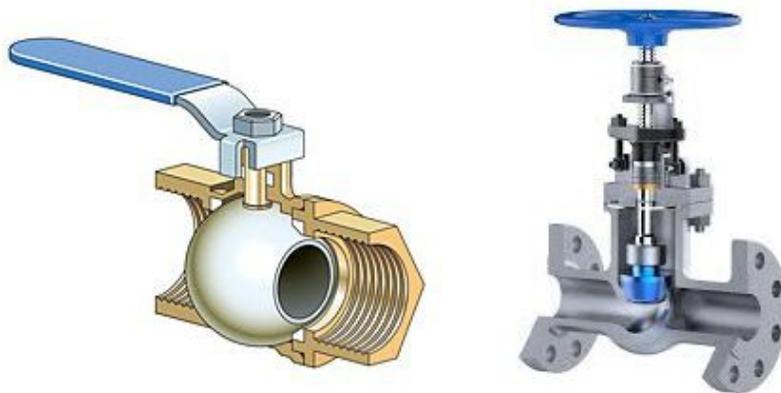
## TROUBLESHOOTING SPECIFIC ISSUES

### LEAKS:

For any active leaks coming from plumbing, immediately shut off the water supply – The main water supply shut off is usually located near the road. For a toilet or sink, there is normally a shut off located behind the toilet or in the cabinet under the sink.

The main shutoff valve in your house probably has one of two designs:

- **Gate valve:** Gate valves are very reliable and last for years, but they become difficult to turn after not being turned for years. If you haven't closed the main shutoff valve since you moved into your house, do it now. Better to find out that you can't turn it with your bare hands now than to wait until you're standing in 6 inches of water.
- **Ball valve:** Houses with plastic or copper main water pipes leading into the house may have a full-flow ball valve. This valve is open when the handle is aligned with the pipe. To close it, turn the handle clockwise 1/4 turn so that it's at a right angle to the pipe.



*Left: Ball Valve, Right: Gate Valve*

**Immediately soak up any standing water to prevent mold.**

## OVERFLOWING OR LEAKING TOILETS & SINKS:

Each sink or toilet should have one or two individual shut-offs at the wall to supply water. You can turn these off in the event of an overflow or leak.

- Turn the valve (*pictured below*) clockwise until it stops turning.
- Each toilet and sink will have their own shut off valve.



## CLOGGED DRAINS & PLUMBING:



Typically a [drain can be snaked](#) or cleared out with a drain cleaning product such as Drano.

This process should always be done using cleaning gloves.

To avoid dumping harmful chemicals into the drain, try first to clear the drain with a snake, similar to the one pictured here.

## CLOGGED TOILETS:

1. If the toilet bowl is full, put on gloves and use something to bail out the water into a bucket until bowl is only half full.
2. If the bowl is empty, add water to fill the bowl to halfway mark.
3. With plunger completely under water, fit the plunger completely over the bowl drain.
4. Press and pull the plunger rapidly up and down 15-20 times.
5. If water drains out of the bowl, add more water and repeat.
6. If water seems to be draining, try flushing the toilet.

**If the toilet is not clogged but won't flush, open the lid of the back of the toilet to make sure the flusher is still connected to the water drainer in the toilet tank.**

If the toilet is constantly running, it is likely also due to the chain disconnected.



Chain has likely become disconnected from flusher to valve

- Check Chain
- Re-attach if possible
- Use paperclip to reattach in interim
- If it cannot be re-attached, the flusher valve will need to be replaced.

## Roof Leaks

- For roof leaks coming from an active storm, set up buckets (and other preventative measures where possible) to catch the leaking water until the storm passes and a contractor can be dispatched for repair.

***\*\*Contractors cannot be dispatched to repair during an active storm\*\****

- It's typical to place a tarp over the roof when there is a day of no storm activity until the vendor can come out to repair the roof. We will often dispatch a handyman to inspect, and possibly tarp a roof in the event that there is a break in the storm, but there is rain in the forecast within 3 days.
- Warping of ceilings is an indicator that there is a leak requiring attention. A non-emergency work order should be submitted.

## ALARMS:

Ensure all of the batteries are fully charged in smoke and gas detectors, and any other battery operated alarms. These should be regularly checked and changed annually.



If an alarm is going off and there is no smoke or smell of gas, change the batteries - most will not have to be taken off the ceiling to have the batteries changed.

If the alarm is still going off after the batteries have been changed, submit a non-emergency work order.

## ELECTRICITY:

### Power outage:

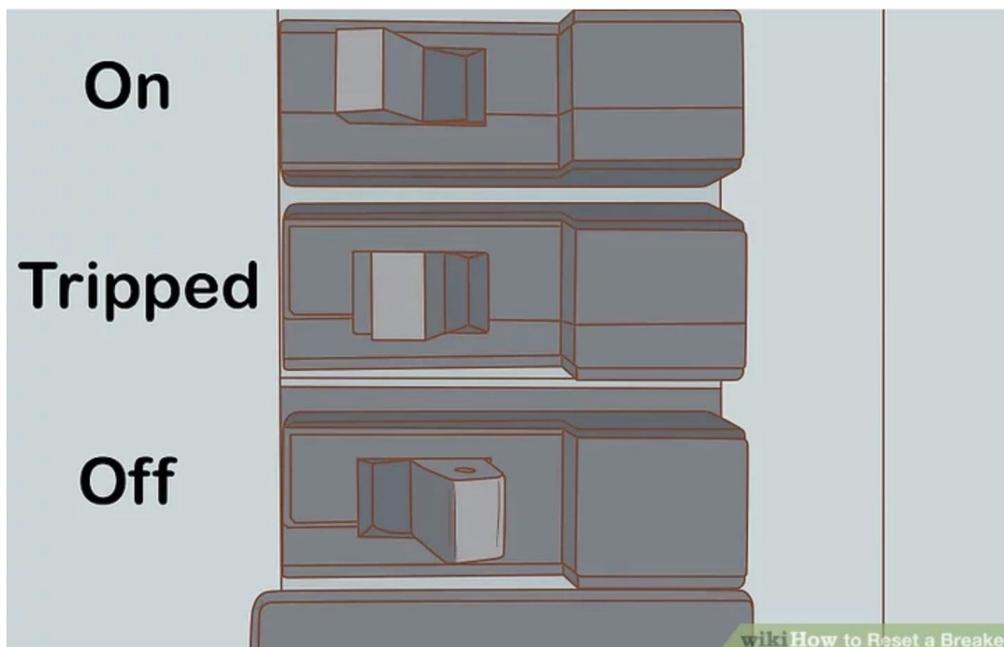
If experiencing a power outage, first check if other neighbors are experiencing a power outage. If so, call the electric company. If you are the only one experiencing a power outage, a circuit breaker may have been tripped and you can try resetting the breaker:

1. Find the main circuit breaker within the house or unit.



*These are usually painted grey and located in the garage, basement, and utility closet or outside of the home near the meter.*

2. Ensure your hands are not wet or damp before touching any part of the circuit breaker.
3. Look for any switches that are fully or partially tripped:



4. Flip any off or tripped breakers to “on” and check the power again.
5. DO NOT handle the breaker system if it is hot. Instead, immediately submit an emergency work order so we can dispatch an electrician to help.
6. If there is only a partial outage within the house, check the bulb to make sure they are not simply burnt out.

#### **OUTLETS NOT WORKING:**

If it is one particular outlet that is not giving power, try hitting the “reset button” on the actual outlet, if it is a GFCI outlet. It’s the top button of the two pictured below:



*If the outlet is not a GFCI outlet and does not have the reset buttons, check the main breaker box for any tripped breakers.*

## APPLIANCES/HVAC:

## GARBAGE DISPOSALS:



Garbage disposals often have an internal breaker that acts as a reset switch.

This is represented with a red button on the bottom of the disposal.

This can be pressed and the disposal may resume operation.

- Some disposals also have a dual ON/OFF switches. There is typically one on the wall, and occasionally a secondary one under a countertop lip or inside the closest lower cabinet. Try turning both of these switches on and off.
- If the disposal is caked with sludge or has a smell, ice can be put into the disposal and ran to clean it.
  - *You should typically avoid putting coffee grinds in the garbage disposal as this can lead to the sludge that can break the disposal.*
- If it is humming and appears jammed, there is often an Allen wrench taped to the back of the disposal (*or check around inside of lower cabinets*) that can be placed into a space on the bottom of the disposal to manually un-jam it.



## DISHWASHER:

1. If the dishwasher doesn't come on, check for local ON/OFF switches. There is often a circuit for a dishwasher. Also check the breaker system for the dishwasher.
2. If the dishwasher doesn't seem to clean well there is often lime and calcium that builds up inside, you can try running a cleaning product through a cycle to resolve this issue.

## WATER HEATER:

1. If it is not heating, check the breaker to ensure it hasn't been tripped.
2. Also check the pilot light to ensure it hasn't gone out. If the pilot has gone out you can re-ignite it:



- a. First turn off the switch to the gas before igniting the flame. This is usually a knob labeled "ON/OFF/PILOT"
  - b. Turn the knob to the PILOT position and push down to release the gas.
  - c. At the same time, push the ignite button and you should hear a whoosh sound.
  - d. Check that the flame is lit and turn the knob back to the ON position.
  - e. Some water heaters do not have an ignite button and need to be lit manually with a long lighter.
  - f. **DO NOT** leave the gas running for a long amount of time, you will put yourself at risk of a gas explosion.
  - g. If the pilot does not light within a few seconds, turn the gas off and try again.
3. If the water is not hot enough, you can adjust the temperature on the water heater, though water heaters should not typically exceed 140 degrees Fahrenheit

## **REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER IS NOT COOLING:**

1. If the freezer is working but the fridge is not, check the freezer to make sure nothing is blocking the vent from the freezer to the fridge.
2. Check to make sure the refrigerator plug did not come loose and is still plugged in.
3. Reset the outlet.
4. Check the thermostat in the refrigerator to make sure it is set to the desired temperature.
  - a. If the thermostat is set to the desired temperature yet the fridge still does not feel cool, submit an online maintenance request.
5. Listen for a buzzing - if you cannot hear a buzzing, the compressor/fans may not be working. This is not usually a DIY fix so you'll also have to submit an online maintenance request.
6. Feel the outer cabinet of the refrigerator; if it feels hot to the touch, this indicates that there is an airflow blockage. The vent is located at the very bottom of the fridge (think toe kick) this can be cleaned off to allow airflow.

## **HEATING/COOLING:**

### **SYSTEM NOT RUNNING AT ALL:**

If the HVAC is not running and the thermostat is blank

1. Check the breaker and make sure it hasn't tripped, if so reset breaker (see above for instructions on resetting breakers)
2. If breaker has been reset and still no power to thermostat, remove thermostat from wall and change batteries.



3. If this does not solve the issue, please submit an online maintenance request.

### **HEATING:**

If the heater is run by a pilot light, make sure that the pilot flame did not go out. If it has gone out, you need to call the gas company to reignite the flame.

If the heater is run by an electronic thermostat, check the main breaker for the heater.

## **COOLING:**

Check to make sure the air filters have been replaced recently. These should be replaced on a monthly basis. Dirty air filters can also contribute to poor air quality.

1. Turn off and unplug your air conditioner
2. Use a screwdriver to open the unit and remove the filter
3. If it is a washable filter, wash the filter with equal parts water and vinegar
4. If the filter is not washable and it is worn, you will have to buy a new filter and replace it. Below is a dirty vs. a clean air filter.



## **SYSTEM RUNNING BUT NOT HOT/COLD ENOUGH:**

If your system is running but not to the desired temperature

1. Check the thermostat and compare to the outside temperature, is it within 15 degrees in extreme heat (over 85) or extreme cold (below 32)? If so the unit is working properly, you can submit a non emergency work order and we can send someone to check the system if you would like, if no issue this will be charged back to you.
2. If it is not within 15 degrees of outside temperature, submit an online maintenance request and we will send someone out.