

Punctual



Timely Tips From Your Punctual Plumber Post

If there's any delay, it's you we pay!™

Spring 2007

From the Desk of ...

By Chris Stanfield

Ben's Words of Wisdom

In addition to his inventions, discoveries and his role in the Revolution and forming our Constitution, Benjamin Franklin was an eloquent and proverbial speaker and writer. Recently, I came across several of his famous and not-so-well-known quotes and, naturally, I saw a few that apply to plumbing.



Chris Stanfield

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” This is still the best advice any homeowner can heed when it comes to plumbing. Each and every issue of the *Punctual Post* offers several routine maintenance tips to help our customers prevent or detect plumbing problems.

“A little neglect may breed great mischief.” This one speaks to the value of paying attention to your plumbing system so that its many components don't turn into trouble spots.

“Keep thy shop, and thy shop will keep thee.” Whether it's your home or my business, keeping everything in good working order helps us make and save more of our hard-earned money.

“Glass, China and reputation are easily cracked, and never well mended.” We work hard to establish a strong reputation. Satisfying each and every customer is the only way to maintain it. ●

Preventing Water Damage – The Manmade Kind

This time of year, many homeowners worry about water damage from heavy rainstorms, yet few ever think about potential trouble spots in their own plumbing. Unlike the weather, plumbing-related water damage can be avoided with routine maintenance and a little assistance from a professional plumber.

Water leaks can happen anywhere in the house, but they occur most frequently in the kitchen, bathroom and laundry rooms. Early detection of problems in these areas can mean the difference between a simple mop-up job and major construction repairs.

Kitchen

Dishwasher – Periodically check under the sink to see if the hose connection to the water supply line is secure and is not leaking. Check around the base of the dishwasher for evidence of leaks. Look for discolored, warped or soft flooring materials or water damage to nearby cabinets.

Refrigerator – If your refrigerator has an icemaker, check the hose connection to make sure it is securely attached to the water supply line. The wet spot you see on the floor near the refrigerator may be melted ice cubes or it may be a crimped icemaker line about to burst.

Sink – Recaulk around sinks and pay attention to slow-draining pipes. This may indicate a partially blocked drain. Check the pipes under the sink for signs of water leaks.

Bathroom

Showers, Tubs and Toilets – Discoloration or soft areas around floors and walls nearby may be your first indication there is a leak somewhere. Check caulking at

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Stainless Steel Not the Only Show in Town

First it was the kitchen sink. Then appliances and faucet fixtures followed suit. When it comes to kitchen décor, stainless steel has come to define the 2000s as pea green did the 1960s. Now it's finding its way into new and remodeled bathrooms with increasing frequency.

Stainless washbasins, pedestal sinks, faucets, toilets and soaking tubs are available in greater number and variety

constant wiping and cleaning in order to maintain its shine.

Brushed nickel or chrome has a matte finish and is much less reflective than its chrome counterpart. It does a better job of hiding dirt and water spots and gives a bathroom a much softer and warmer feel.

Brass fixtures aren't as common as they once were, and they tend

popular look in the past few years. It is a dark finish, almost black, with highlights of the bronze showing through. It's a popular finish in rooms that use a lot of dark wood in the trim work and on the floor. They're also very popular in bathrooms with rustic looking tile.

“ ... if you choose to install a new fixture with a particular finish ... plan on keeping the theme for the entire kitchen or bath.”



than ever. The trend isn't based on fashion alone. Stainless steel surfaces are durable, easy to clean and sanitize. However, stainless isn't the only fashionable finish for plumbing fixtures, nor is it always the best option.

Traditional chrome is shiny and works very well in most bathrooms simply because it matches basically everything. The downside is that it tends to show water spots and requires

to have a smaller style selection available than do the chromes and brushed nickels. From a functionality standpoint, there is no difference. Brass fittings do tend to require a little more cleaning than the others, but if your goal is to create a luxurious and rich looking space in your bathroom, then this may be the way to go.

Oil-rubbed bronze, like stainless steel, has become an immensely

Remember that if you choose to install a new fixture with a particular finish, you should plan on keeping the theme for the entire kitchen or bath. A stainless sink will look out of place with a porcelain tub. Also keep in mind that certain fixtures may require special installation parts or techniques. Please call us if you need help with any plumbing-related aspect of the job!

Mellow Out a Rockin' Toilet



Wobbling toilets are a source of aggravation at best; at worst, they can cause damaging leaks and harm the bathroom subfloor or waste pipe.

Sometimes all that's needed to prevent a toilet from rocking is to tighten the mounting bolts located on the bottom of each side. Be careful not to crank them down too tight, which could crack the ceramic and lead to an expensive repair or, more likely, replacement. For another possible cure, try slipping flexible shims beneath the toilet base.

If you've ignored the problem for long, however, the smartest choice may be to call us, the professionals, to remove and reinstall the toilet. This will allow you to see whether all that rocking and rolling has broken anything or opened a leak under the toilet, where it's most difficult to spot.

We will inspect the flange for cracks that could also be causing the rocking. Our goal is to get you on steady ground, and you can trust the professionals at Benjamin Franklin Plumbing to do just that. ●

Buildup Can Bring a Water Heater Down

When water is heated inside a typical water heater, the mineral calcium carbonate precipitates out from the water and settles into the bottom of the tank. The resulting sediment can cause all sorts of problems if allowed to build up over time.

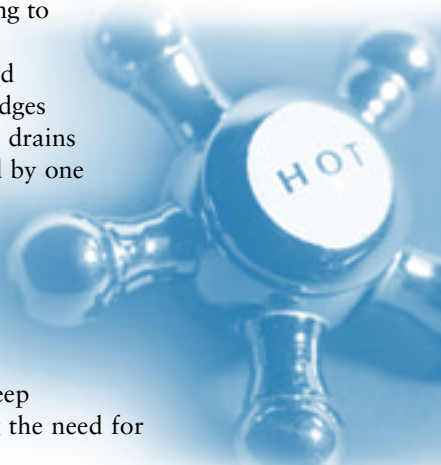
In gas water heaters, the sediment forms an unwanted layer of insulation between the burner and the water it's supposed to heat. This slows heat transfer and overheats the tank bottom, weakening the steel, damaging the glass lining and decreasing the lifespan of the unit. In the case of electric, it can bury the lower heating element, causing it to burn out.

Sediment buildup also creates a playground for corrosive active bacteria and lowers the energy efficiency of the tank. Sediment can even drift into recirculation lines, jam open check valves and cause the recirculation pump to stick until it burns out.

If all of that isn't bad enough, a heavy load of sediment can create an annoying noise that, at times, may be downright frightening. The clamor is caused by small amounts of overheated water under the sediment layer turning to steam bubbles, which then collapse violently.

Most tanks, both gas and electric, have domed bottoms so that sediment falls out toward the edges and stays there. To make matters worse, typical drains are small, plastic jobs that can easily be clogged by one large piece of sediment.

Having a plumbing professional conduct an annual water heater check-up where they drain the water heater can prevent the problems mentioned above from occurring. It's a job best suited for a professional, although routinely flushing the tank is a good way to keep sediment buildup to a minimum, thus delaying the need for a new water heater. ●



Preventing Water Damage

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joint where the walls meet the floor or the bathtub, looking for cracks or mold. If either is found, clean and remove loose material and apply new sealant.

Sinks – Check under the sink for signs of leaks from water supply lines or drainpipes.

Laundry/Utility Room

Washing Machine – Inspect washing machine hoses regularly for wetness around hose ends and signs of bulging, cracking or fraying. Replace the hose if a problem is found or every three to five years as part of a proactive maintenance program.

Water Heater – Wet spots on the floor or a rusted tank may signal a problem. Hot water heaters should be installed on the lowest level of the home and always located next to a floor drain. If installed above or adjacent to finished spaces, the hot water heater should be placed inside a drain pan with the drain pan piped to the floor drain.

Air Conditioning – At the start of the cooling season, have the A/C system serviced by a qualified contractor. Make sure their service includes inspecting and cleaning the air conditioner condensation pan drain line to keep it free of obstructions.

Don't forget that your first line of defense during a plumbing emergency is your home's main water shut-off valve. Know where it is and check it frequently to make sure it's operational. Keep the number of your Benjamin Franklin plumber nearby, too. Anytime trouble strikes, we're just a phone call away! ●

Big Roots, Big Problems

Tree roots will travel long distances to find water, especially when drought conditions persist. When trees and shrubs get thirsty, they follow the trail of moisture vapors escaping from small cracks, holes or poorly sealed joints in water and sewer lines. Roots penetrate the opening to reach the nutrients and moisture inside the pipes.

If not stopped, roots can completely fill a pipe with multiple hair-like root masses at each point of entry. The root wads quickly become clogged with grease and other debris flowing from homes to the main sewer line, resulting in reduced flow and slowed drains. A complete blockage may occur if the roots are not removed.

Roots can also exert considerable pressure at the crack or joint. The increased pressure often breaks the pipe and may require costly repair or replacement.

Clay pipe, which is most common in older water and sewer lines, is easily penetrated and damaged by tree roots. Concrete pipe and PVC pipe may also allow root intrusion, but to a lesser extent than clay. PVC pipe usually has fewer joints and the tightly fitted joints are less likely to leak as a result of settlement around the pipe.

If incoming water or outgoing sewer lines are slow and you suspect a clog, the problem will likely not go away, meaning it's time to investigate the problem. If roots have entered your pipes, Ben Franklin can remove them using powerful cutting blades. The process could require digging or new trenchless technology to reach the affected pipe(s), usually several feet down. Once the trench is dug, the plumber can repair or replace the pipes and cut away any threatening roots.

Special Offer

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Steel Braided Washing Machine Hose Set

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Are we perfect? No. No one is. But every day, every person at Benjamin Franklin the Punctual Plumber is striving to be excellent at what we do and how we serve you. You, our customer, are the most important person in our career and we never forget it.

Our whole business was built with you in mind. Our service isn't for everyone, only those who value their time and want:

- Service competence at all levels
- Unsurpassed honesty, integrity and consideration
- Ease of doing business
- Punctual service
- Informed choices

Make us an elite service provider today! With our 100% Satisfaction Guarantee, we will do everything to make you happy and proud to call us your plumber. That's our pledge, and we'll honor it!

Don't Sweat the Stool Stuff

By Don Langel

Just like that cold fountain drink you enjoy on a hot afternoon, the tank portion of some toilets can be prone to sweating, especially during warmer months of the year. Condensation is created by cold water in contact with the warmer walls of the porcelain tank. The moisture can form into beads and, if large enough, will drip onto the floor, making bathroom carpet wet or potentially accumulating in puddles on a hard surface.



Don Langel

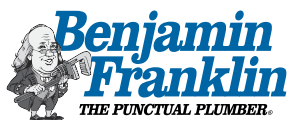
There are Four Basic Solutions to the Problem

1. Install insulating foam products to isolate the water from the interior tank walls.
2. Another option is to have us install a mixer valve, which uses both hot and cold water to neutralize the water temperature.
3. Then there's another option: replacing the guts of the toilet with a pressure-assisted unit, which reduces the amount of water needed in the tank (about 1 gallon per flush). With less water sitting in the tank, condensation is eliminated. The contraption will save water, too.
4. Of course, there's always the option of replacing the entire toilet. Older models hold much more water in the tank and thus are more prone to sweating. Today's low-flush and pressure-assisted toilets eliminate the sweating problem and use up to five times less water.

Don't let your toilet sweat through another summer. The above tips will keep water where it belongs – in your tank. ●

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