

Specific Tips for Preventing Water Damage



To Prevent Bursting or Leaking Pipes

- Look for *visible corrosion*. For example, green on copper is an indication of cold water pitting, which normally occurs within the first four years of the installation.
- Listen and watch for *rattling, shock, or vibration* when water is turned on or off, as this can indicate a velocity or piping support issue.
- Replace piping that is over 40 years old. Start watching at 20 years.
- Look for *blue or green staining* on sinks or taps, which can indicate high concentrations of carbon dioxide or a low water pH.
- Check for *acidic water*. Low pH water (7.2 or below) can corrode pipes and fittings.
- *Treat hard water*. Hard water (with significant mineral content) can cause pitting.
- Measure your water pressure. Pressure above 80 psi / 552 kPa and velocity of more than 4 FPS (1.2 m/s) can result in pipe burst.
- Monitor the water meter for water usage. Check with your water company to get a historical baseline.

**The above list is not intended to be an all-encompassing corrosion prevention list. Consult with a water treatment professional to discuss specific corrosion treatment options.*

To Keep Roofs From Leaking

- Conduct routine inspection and maintenance to help anticipate possible problem areas and have them fixed before the intrusion of water causes a serious problem.
- Repair blisters, ridges, wrinkles, cracks, tears, open seams, punctures, pinholes or other conditions.

- Repair split, cracked, or deformed flashings, especially at edges, corners, and skylights.
- Improve drainage where ponded water remains beyond 48 hours.
- Unclog roof drains and gutters, especially from ice dams.
- Safety remove excess snow and ice from the roof
- Ensure good drainage around mechanical and HVAC units

To Prevent Bathroom and Kitchen Plumbing Issues

- Keep an eye on toilets, sinks, and other common bathroom fixtures, especially in multi-story buildings, with stacked plumbing, as they are a leading cause of water damage.
- Inspect all plumbing hoses periodically, especially their coupling connections. Hose failures from washing machines and kitchen appliances are common.
- Replace hoses that show signs of imminent failure such as blisters, bulges, bubbles, cracks, unraveling, discoloration, crimps or kinks especially near connections and turns in hose.
- Replace all hoses within the manufacturer's recommendations, even hoses that appear to be functioning normally. Chubb recommends hoses be replaced every 3-5 years.
- Install water detection sensors and/ or automatic shut off valves behind toilets.
- Consider installing water detection sensors and/or automatic shut off valves under sinks, dishwashers, ice makers, laundry washing machines, and other appliances.



Typical Lifespan of a Water Heater is 8-10 years. Do you have a Replacement Schedule?

Keep Fire Sprinkler Systems in Top Condition

- Strictly enforce compliance with NFPA 13 and 25 fire protection standards.
- Repair any physical or mechanical damage, or corrosion to sprinklers, pipe, hangers, and related equipment.
- Train your staff to know exactly what to do in the event of a sprinkler waterflow alarm. Preplan your response with your local fire department.
- Ensure that low temperature alarms are installed in any sprinkler riser room where temperatures may reach below 40°F (4°C).
- Confirm that a 5-year internal pipe inspection is conducted to ensure the sprinkler pipe itself is in good shape.
- Inspect and annually test antifreeze systems and solutions to ensure they are effective in preventing freeze ups.

Prevent Water Heater Issues

- Even if they look good on the outside, replace hot water heaters at least every 10 years, as they have a high failure rate after 7-10 years. Check the date stamp on the specification plate.
- Routinely look for signs of rust and corrosion.
- Keep water pressure no higher than 80 psi / 552 kPa.
- Install a catch pan (drip pan) under the heater to catch small leaks. Make sure it is connected to a waste line or other means of removal.
- Add a water detection sensor and/or automatic shut off valve near the heater.

Prevent Water Damage on Vacant Property

- Pay special attention to preventive measures in vacant properties because they lack the day-to-day activity that naturally mitigates common hazards.
- Ensure there is adequate heat for boilers and machinery that have not been drained.

- Drain and disconnect kitchen and other appliances that use or contain water.
- Shut off water in all areas of the building where it is not needed.
- Drain water pipes and add environmentally friendly antifreeze to any areas where water might remain, such as drain traps.
- For areas protected by wet pipe sprinkler systems, maintain adequate heat (of at least 40°F (4°C)) to help prevent freezing water in sprinkler pipes.
- Add a low temperature alarm connected to a UL Listed Central Station that detects temperatures that drop below 40°F (4°C) in any area.

Keep HVAC Equipment Working Well

- Look for clogged drains, frozen evaporator coils, and pipes not properly connected, which are primary culprits for HVAC leaks resulting in water damage.
- Change the HVAC filters regularly to keep the unit from overworking, which can cause freezing and defrosting on the evaporator coils.
- Check the condensation drain line monthly to ensure it's clear. When the unit is running, check the line to ensure water is flowing to the drain.
- Follow a formal maintenance program for the HVAC equipment that is consistent with the manufacturer's guidelines.
- Install water detection sensors in the units so they will automatically shut down if the level of water in the condensate pan is too high above normal operating levels.
- Deploy additional sensors into unheated spaces that have piping concealed spaces.