



## **PLUMBING MAINTENANCE TIPS**

*August 2016*

To all Lafayette residents,

As you know, living in a historic high rise can be wonderful, but given the age of our building we have to adapt to the building and its older plumbing. Below are some handy Lafayette plumbing tips.

### **Low Water Pressure after a Building Water Shut Off**

Occasionally we shut off the water to the building so that owners can repair valves in the units. Sometimes when the water is turned on again, bits of sediment may get caught in sink faucet aerators and/or shower heads. Unscrew and rinse out the aerators and/or shower heads to remove any sediment that may impede water flow to restore pressure.

### **Avoiding Clogged Drains**

Here are some tips to help you prevent clogged from forming in the future:

1. Cover drains with hair and food catchers, also called strainers (which you can pick up at Vons, Lowe's, Home Depot or the 99 Cent Store), to keep these items from entering the drainage pipes and causing a clog.
2. Run hot water down the drain after each use. Hot water washes away any fresh buildup, allowing it to flow through the drain, as opposed to sticking to the sides of the pipes.
3. Add a handful of baking soda to your drains and follow with hot water. Baking soda is a great natural cleaner and will help remove odors. Vinegar, bleach or hydrogen peroxide are other great natural cleaners for drains (but **do not** mix them together).

### **Home Remedies for a Clogged Drain**

Although stores sell many chemicals to clear your drain, these products are harsh and can cause damage to the pipes. Many times these products simply move the clog further down, which can cause a larger backup later on. When faced with a clog, try these home remedies first:

1. Pour boiling water down the drain. Add salt to help break up the clog.
2. Pour baking soda and vinegar into the drain together. Allow the combination to foam for a few minutes and follow up with boiling water.

3. Use the correct type of plunger for the job. If you don't have standing water in the sink or tub, add some to help the plunger get better suction and remember to cover the overflow when plunging.

### **Tips to Keep Your Garbage Disposal Running Right**

Garbage disposals are great for getting rid of unwanted leftovers, expired food, and discarded peels. Follow these five simple tips to extend the life of your garbage disposal and prevent clogs and jams.

1. Run your garbage disposal on a regular basis. Even if you don't have anything to grind up, turn on the water and run the disposal every few days to move the parts around. Otherwise, the disposal can freeze up, rust, or corrode; and any leftover food inside can harden, leading to odors and clogs.

2. Run cold water—not hot—when using your garbage disposal. Hot water works great for cleaning most things, but not your garbage disposal. Hot water can melt the food your disposal is trying to grind up, allowing the waste to cling to the sides. Cold water, on the other hand, hardens food, making it easier for the garbage disposal to grind it up and push it out the drain pipe.

3. After your garbage disposal has finished grinding up the waste, keep it and the water running for a minute. This ensures that all the food has been flushed out of the drain pipe to prevent clogs. You can also run cold water and a little dish soap down the drain after you've finished grinding up the waste. This will help clean out the disposal and make sure nothing remains behind or is clinging to the sides.

4. Your garbage disposal is only so big, and its blades and motor are only so powerful, so don't expect miracles if you feed it large chunks of meat or fruit. Go easy, cut waste into smaller chunks, and only put in a few pieces at a time. Otherwise, you can overwork the disposal and clog or jam it—or worse, break it altogether.

5. Soap and cold water will go a long way toward keeping your garbage disposal clean; but once in a while, toss the peel from an orange, lemon, or lime in your disposal. The peel will help clear excess waste in the disposal and eliminate any unpleasant odors.

### **What Not to Put in a Garbage Disposal**

Some foods don't grind up easily, so avoid putting the following items in your garbage disposal:

- **Grease or oil** can solidify inside a garbage disposal and cause clogs in the drain pipe.
- **Potato peels** contain starch which can cling to the sides of the disposal, making it difficult to flush out into the drain pipe.
- **Glass, plastic, metal, or paper** can jam or dull the blades of a garbage disposal.
- **Big bones, seeds, or pits** can also dull the blades, jam the disposal, or become lodged in the drain pipe.
- **Expandable foods**, such as pasta and rice, also contain starch which can cling to the disposal. In addition, water can cause them to expand in the disposal and cause a clog.

If you still have water pressure issues, a clogged sink/tub or your garbage disposal has issues, please call a qualified plumber to handle the repairs for you.

Thank you, *Board of Directors*