

July 2008 Newsletter

Our latest **Video Clip** is **“Dial M for Maintenance”** which provides an entertaining look at how to do important routine maintenance for your plumbing. It can be found at: <http://www.home-wizard.com/DialM.asp> (4 minutes 50 seconds)



Dial ‘M’ for Maintenance: “The Case of the Unsuspected Leak”

This month’s video is a “Film Noir” styled short clip (less than 5 minutes) that is an entertaining look at how to do routine maintenance on your home’s plumbing system. We think that this is our best video yet!

If your first thought is that “plumbing maintenance” means calling a plumber, well, this is what we are trying to help you avoid. And even more important that reducing the chances of clogged drains, routine plumbing maintenance helps you to detect water that is leaking in out-of-the-way places, like under a sink, which can cause very expensive problems to your home.

As you’ll see in the video, twice a year you just need to treat your drains with baking soda and hot water. And once a year you should inspect your plumbing for leaks.



For treating your drains, first, run some hot water down the drain, then pour a handful or so of baking soda into the water, and flush the drain well with hot water. This will clear away any grease or sediment that has built up in your pipes, minimizing clogs and keeping them draining properly. For the low cost of some hot water and baking soda, you can help clogs from forming that can require expensive repairs.

An important problem you always have to think about when dealing with water in your home is the possibility of leaks. Big leaks are bad enough, but even a small leak over time can create nasty moist areas which attract pests, mold, and a lot of other stuff that you don’t want in your house! When water gets in places it isn’t supposed to, it can cause damage that can be difficult and costly to repair, so it’s important to examine your home for the signs of moisture where it doesn’t belong. In addition,

small leaks left to drip for a long time can build up into a surprising amount of wasted water, wasted water you will have to pay for on your water bill.

To prevent these unnecessary expenses, look under sinks for evidence of leaks. Inspect the pipes for condensation or slow drips. And keep an eye out for the development of rust or white lime deposits, as they can be early indication of moisture damage. Search for any cracks in the toilet bowl where it is bolted to the floor. Even tiny cracks need to be caught, as they usually are on their way to developing larger cracks that can lead to leaks. Also check for leaks in the toilet’s water inlet pipes and tank bottom. Finally, inspect your faucets and showerheads for drips, and make sure the toilet flush valves are all functioning properly.



We think you will enjoy our latest video, which hopefully you will find both entertaining and informative. Click below to see it now:

<http://www.home-wizard.com/DialM.asp>

Home-Wizard.com

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Rub-A-Dub-Dub

Not only can worn-out grout and caulk spoil the look of your tile bathroom, but also their deterioration can allow water to seep into your walls and floor.

To keep your tile looking its best and prevent serious water damage, during July, inspect the grout and caulk around your tub, sink, and shower.



Chip out the grout where you find cracks, then refill the empty spots with new grout. Use a household cleanser to take care of caulk that is stained, discolored, or mildewed. Caulk that doesn't scrub clean should be scraped off and replaced with new caulk that will resist mildew. Grout and caulk should be checked about once a year, and it makes sense to do it in July when you're doing your plumbing inspections and drain treatments in your bathroom.

To learn more, see:

<http://www.home-wizard.com/maintenance/showertub.asp>

Can You Hear Me Now?

This July, think about giving your telephone service provider a once-over to make sure you're getting the best rates possible.

Telephone service plans are prone to frequent change, so it's a good idea to keep an eye out for new services that can save you money on your communication costs. Many providers are able to recommend the service package that will give you the best deal for your money based on your particular phone use patterns. Often they can suggest changes in your usage routine that will help you keep your rates down, such as combining your long distance and cell phone services, or avoiding calls during peak rate periods. Give the



company a call and ask for their recommendation. Also, don't be afraid to shop around a little and compare the services of one provider or another to find the best prices on a plan that suits you. A little investigating can save you a lot of money on your phone bills. The Internet and the yellow pages are good starting places to look to see what your options are. You should check at least once a year in July to see if your current plan is still the best one for you.

For more information, visit the Telephone Service Rates webpage of our online library at:

<http://www.home-wizard.com/maintenance/telephonerates.asp>

Dollars and Dust

As the hottest days of summer draw near, you'll be increasingly glad if you've got an air conditioner at home to help you beat the heat. And with energy costs reaching record highs, anything that can make your air conditioner more cost-efficient to use would be a welcome way to make you feel less guilty whenever you turn it on. Making sure the filter on your air conditioner is clean and in good repair will help keep you cool when you need it most, and help keep down the expense of running it. Over time, filters gather dust and pollen particles that clog it up, making the fan have to work harder to move cool air through it. This uses more power and is therefore more expensive to operate, not to mention making the unit wear out faster. Cleaning or replacing the filter also improves its ability to trap free-floating allergens and maintain the air quality in the house.



Some filters only need to be cleaned, while others require complete replacement; it depends on the manufacturer's directions for your unit. Your filter is typically rectangular in shape and slides into the main ductwork by the inside fan unit. Whether you have central air or room air conditioning units, remove the old air filter and either clean it or put a new one in its place. Make sure the filter is positioned in the right direction for the air flow. Each month during the summer, you should replace or clean your air conditioner's air filter. Cleaning or replacement requires only about fifteen minutes and no special tools, and will help keep the cost down of keeping you cool.

For more on Air Conditioner maintenance, visit our online library:

<http://www.home-wizard.com/maintenance/airconditioning.asp>

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