

RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR BEING PLUMB SMART (A Lease Addendum)

Taking good care of your plumbing (being plumb smart) is a learned skill. It will help you save time and money as a tenant and eventually as a homeowner. The cost of a service call in today's market is usually in excess of \$70.00, so avoiding unnecessary service calls is important. You can avoid all of the most common problems by learning and obeying several rules, our "GO DOWN" rules and our "TURN OFF" rule.

First, the GO DOWN rules:

- 1.) ONLY SOAPY WATER SHOULD GO DOWN A SINK
- 2.) ONLY TOILET PAPER SHOULD GO DOWN A STOOL (Well, maybe more than just toilet paper, but nothing else that you can buy in a store and definitely **not** paper towels.)

Most plumbing problems relate to violation of the above rules. Food, sand (from washing pets, toys, or kids), hair, kitchen utensils, bottle caps, etc. will plug your drainpipes quickly. Unused food and plate scrapings should be treated as solid waste for your garbage rather than scraped into the sink. Grease and oil solidify in the pipes when they cool, build up over time, and slowly plug the arteries of your plumbing drains. To prevent this, grease and oil should be poured into a container (can, milk jug, etc.) and disposed of as solid waste. Before they are washed, pans or plates containing grease or oil should be wiped with paper towels, and the paper towels should then be disposed of as solid waste. Most of the major chemicals designed for unplugging sinks do an excellent job of eating the pipes as well. Replacing damaged plumbing is very expensive, so the solution is to avoid the problem rather than to put everything down the sink and then use corrosive chemicals.

Toilets should be protected from receiving items such as toys, combs, and toothbrushes. These items will lodge out of sight in the stool's internal trap when the stool is flushed, and are difficult if not impossible to remove. **Items such as paper towels, disposable wipettes, and feminine hygiene products should NEVER NEVER be flushed down the stool.** They frequently plug the stool directly. They also have a nasty tendency to snag in the drain lines and block the entire sewer line to your house or apartment; a blocked sewer will not usually be discovered until sewer starts backing up into your unit or the unit below you. **If your stool or your sewer is plugged, the presence of any store product other than toilet paper will result in your being charged for all of the resulting work, damages, and repairs.**

Besides toilet paper, the two major candidates for flushing down your stool have been described by humorist David Barry as: a.) # 1, a liquid, and b.) Acts of Congress. You should have a **heavy-duty** plunger (the kind you can buy from a hardware store, Lowe's, or a plumbing supply store) on hand in case an especially large act of Congress is accompanied by paperwork so extensive that the stool plugs. The stools required by today's law flush on much less water, thereby helping preserve one of our natural resources while at the same time being much more likely to plug. Fortunately the large quantities of toilet paper that can plug your stool will not plug your sewer once the stool has been plunged. Although our service personnel are available for plumbing work, **you will be charged for a trip that should have been prevented or can be solved by simply plunging with a suitable plunger.**

Tub and shower drains seem to be especially designed to readily clog from human hair. The best way to prevent this type of clog is to make sure that the drain contains a strainer and then carefully remove any hair that the strainer catches.

If you are on a septic system as opposed to the city sewer system, a few more GO DOWN rules apply. In the county you will frequently be on a septic system, in the city you will be on a sewer system. If you have any question, please ask us. A septic system is vulnerable to bleach, most laundry detergents, many dishwashing soaps, and to corrosive chemicals of any kind—these materials kill the bacteria that are necessary for the system to function. Accordingly, bleach must be used sparingly if at all, and the amount of detergent and dish soap should be minimized. Even water volume is critical on a septic system, so stools should be carefully monitored so that they function properly.

Now, the TURN OFF rule. When you turn off a stereo, you already know not to turn the knob as hard as you can --- that would damage the stereo. For the same reason:

3.) TURN OFF FAUCETS GENTLY

Although we use high quality faucets, when they are tightened too much the washers inside the stems will be damaged and require a service call for replacement. The faucet should be turned until you feel resistance. Remember that some water may still be in the faucet and will drain out after the faucet valve has been turned completely off, so continuing to vigorously turn the faucet knob until the last drop of water has stopped coming out will simply damage the washer. This is especially true for tubs, where the shower must still drain back after the water has been completely turned off. Similarly, outside water faucets can be seriously damaged by continuing to tighten them until all water has stopped draining; these faucets are designed to be self draining to prevent winter freeze-up, so at least a half cup of water will drain from them after they are completely shut off.

Please let us know immediately when you have a dripping faucet or a running stool; each will run up your water bill and may even cause additional damage. A dripping faucet can ruin the faucet seat over a period of several weeks, and a running stool can result in water damage to the floor or to structural components below the floor. We don't charge for problems with plumbing drips and running stools unless we have to do repeated calls because of tenants misuse or abuse. For example, you would be charged if we have just replaced a faucet washer and a return trip shows the washer to be deeply gouged or cut into pieces because the faucet has been over tightened.

Tenant has read the above Lease Addendum, which is part of the lease. _____ (Initial)