

Questions & Answers

This page will answer some common questions we often receive about plumbing in general and Neptune Plumbing specifically.

Neptune Plumbing

What is Neptune Plumbing's geographical service area?

You may see our Neptune Plumbing trucks all over Northeast Ohio.

Areas serviced by Neptune Plumbing:

Bedford, Bedford Heights, Brook Park, Brooklyn, Cleveland Heights, Cuyahoga Heights, East Cleveland, Euclid, Fairview Park, Garfield Heights, Lakewood, Maple Heights, Parma, Shaker Heights, South Euclid, University Heights, and Warrensville Heights

What is Neptune Plumbing's pricing system?

At Neptune Plumbing, there are no hidden costs because we charge our clients a flat rate for our services instead of the hourly fee most of our competitors charge. We believe our clients should know what their costs are up front before we perform any plumbing services on their home. Therefore, we have devised pricing to reflect the quality of our services.

Can you tell me exactly how much this job will cost me?

In our years of experience we have found that our customers prefer an accurate price based on their exact plumbing problem. Most phone quotes are subject to change once the service technician sees the job. We don't think that is fair to you. By allowing us to diagnose your plumbing problem in person, you will know exactly what it will take to get the job done.

What training is required of Neptune Plumbing technicians?

Neptune Plumbing technicians receive the highest quality education that includes hundreds of hours of training. At Neptune Plumbing, we continue educating our technicians beyond the technical service training and educate them on proper forms of professionalism and customer service.

Water Heaters

How do I find the right size water heater for my home?

Use this handy guide to choosing the right size water heater. Enter the answers in the boxes, then total them up.

Number of people in household _____

Number of tubs and/or showers _____

Add 1 for a dishwasher _____

Add 1 for a washing machine _____

Add 1 for a whirlpool tub _____

Miscellaneous additions* _____

TOTAL _____

*Other things to consider:

- If children are entering their teen years, you may want to add 1 to miscellaneous additions.
- If you want a more efficient water heater, consider an upgrade to a high-efficiency heater.
- If you find yourself running out of hot water, add 1 to miscellaneous additions or upgrade to a quick-recovery and/or high-efficiency water heater.
- If there is a whirlpool tub, use a 50-gal. or higher gas or electric heater as a minimum.

After totalling the boxes, use the following chart to determine the size of water heater necessary. If Total Is...

GAS:

4 or less: 30 gallon water heater

5 to 7: 40 gallon water heater

8 or more: 50 gallon water heater

ELECTRIC

4 or less: 40 gallon water heater

5 or 6: 50 gallon water heater

7 or 8: 65 gallon water heater

9 or more: 80 gallon water heater

Water Temperature & Water Bills

The temperature of my hot water seems to be higher than what I think I need. How can I conserve energy, yet also be sure that there is an adequate amount of hot water?

Most people are comfortable with their hot water set at 120°F, which is also the new standard that manufacturers use when pre-setting it at the factory. If you have an older model, set the thermostat at medium. On a gas model, there is a dial on the front of the gas valve. On electric models, the thermostats (there may be two) are concealed behind the two panels on the side of the tank. **NOTE: Turn off the electricity before removing the panels. There are exposed wires behind the panels containing HIGH VOLTAGE. IF YOU FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE DOING THIS ALONE OR ARE UNSURE, PLEASE [CONTACT US](#) TO HAVE A TECHNICIAN COME OUT TO ASSIST YOU.**

There are four people in our house, two adults and two teens. We are constantly running out of hot water. After a five-minute shower, the water starts to turn cold. This change occurred quite recently. What's going on?

There are two possibilities. First, the dip tube may have broken off. This is a tube that forces incoming water to the bottom of the tank so that hot water will be drawn off of the top. When the dip tube breaks, cold water entering the tank mixes with the hot water and cools it down. This can occur in both gas and electric models.

Second, if your water heater is electric, the lower element that heats the water may not be operating properly, thus only the upper half of the tank will heat up. The cause of this problem could be a bad element or a thermostat malfunction. This type of problem should be evaluated by a qualified technician.

You may want to check to see if a toilet is leaking. First, check the water level to ensure that water is not overflowing the tank by way of the overflow pipe. This is the pipe in the middle of the tank. It has small tubing connected to it. If water is running into the overflow, adjust the fill valve to stop the flow approximately one inch below the top of the overflow tube or to the water level mark stamped on the side of the tank.

Second, you can dye test the tank to test the flush valve mechanism. Dye test kits can be provided to you by Neptune Plumbing Technicians. If the water in the bowl changes color within 15 minutes, this is an indication that water is leaking into the toilet bowl and that the ball or flapper needs to be replaced.

Toilet Replacement

We need to replace a toilet in our home. We have heard coworkers and friends complain that the new toilets do not flush properly, and that they require multiple flushes. What is the recommendation for toilet replacement?

When the federal government mandated that new toilets use no more than 1.6 gallons per flush, manufacturers had to develop a toilet that would achieve this but that would also flush properly (clear the bowl) and carry the waste to the city sewer or septic system. Some of the early models did not do this properly. Since then, the complaints have forced the manufacturers to develop new ways of flushing toilets. Recently, manufactures have created toilets that use less water and are still capable for flushing effectively. When considering a new fixture for your home such as a toilet, we recommend that you choose a fixture made by one of the major manufacturers, such as Toto, Gerber or Kohler.

Slow Drains & Faucets

My shower head and faucet aerators have a buildup of a white substance around the area where the water comes out. Is there anything I can do other than replace them?

The unsightly buildup is mineral deposits. To remove these deposits from the showerhead, take a plastic bag and pour a cup of vinegar in it. Place the bag over the showerhead and use a twist tie to hold it in place overnight. In the morning, remove the bag and use an old toothbrush to gently scrub off the deposits. You might be able to remove the aerators from the faucets and allow them to soak in the vinegar overnight.

Foul Odors

I am getting a foul odor from a bathroom in the basement. We hardly ever use this bathroom except when we have company. This is embarrassing. What can we do?

Plumbing systems are designed to prevent foul odors from entering the house by means of the trap attached to fixtures. Traps contain water to seal out foul odors; if the water seal evaporates, the odors enter the house. To solve this problem, pour a bucket of water in each trap, sink, shower and floor drain. This will prevent the odors from entering the house.

I have a foul odor coming from my garbage disposer. What can I do to eliminate this odor?

Foul odors occur from a buildup of food debris within the disposer. To eliminate this odor, place ice cubes and lemon or orange peels in the disposer and run for 30 seconds. Next, squirt a little liquid dish detergent into the disposer while it is still running. Finally, run cold water for about 30 seconds to rinse all the debris away.

Freezing Pipes

We live in Northeastern Ohio. Winters are cold and we were told to turn off the outside faucets in the fall before the freezing weather arrives. We did this, however the pipes leading to our outside faucet still froze and broke. What did we do wrong?

Turning off the water is not enough. You must also disconnect the garden hose connected to the faucet to allow the water in the pipe to drain out. This will allow the piping to withstand the cold weather.

Root Growth

How do roots grow?

Tree and shrub roots require oxygen and water to grow. Growth rate is variable and is affected by the soil depth, water supply, aeration, mineral supply and temperature. Root systems are made up of large, permanent roots for support and stabilization, and many small, temporary feeder root and root hairs. These small roots are the primary water and nutrient absorbers. Most roots can be found in the top 6 to 18 inches of soil, where water, nutrients and oxygen are found. Roots generally extend up to two or three times the height of the tree, but can extend as far as seven times the height of the tree. Large, mature trees may have thousands of feet of root system searching for nutrients. Roots will be less extensive in clay soils than in sandy or well-drained soils.

Question

answer

How does weather impact root growth?

During drought conditions and in the winter, roots will travel long distances in search of moisture. When trees and shrubs get thirsty, they follow the trail of moisture vapors escaping from small cracks, holes, or poorly sealed joints in the water and sewer lines.

The roots penetrate the opening to reach the nutrients and moisture inside the pipes.

What happens when roots get inside lines?

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

Once roots have entered the pipe, they continue to grow and expand, exerting considerable pressure at the crack or joint. The increased pressure often breaks the pipe and may result in total collapse, which requires repair or replacement.

Some pipe materials are more susceptible to root intrusion than others. Clay tile pipe 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 pipe. PVC pipe usually has fewer joints and the tightly fitted joints are less likely to leak as a result of settlement around the pipe.

How can I control roots in my pipes?

If roots have entered your pipes, a technician can remove the roots using powerful cutting blades. Your technician will recommend the application of RootX to slow future root growth. RootX will kill only the roots growing in the pipes and will not affect the rest of your tree's root system.

Strange Noises

When the water heater is operating, I hear a rumbling sound coming from it. What could cause this?

Rumbling sounds coming from a water heater are an indication that sediment has built up on the bottom of the water heater. What you are hearing is water that is trapped in the sediment and is boiling. This is an indication that the water heater is not operating efficiently. Sediment will not allow the heat to transfer to the water in the tank, which sends the heat up the flue.

You may try draining a few gallons of water off the bottom of the water heater tank. This is done by attaching a drain hose to the valve at the bottom of the tank. Allow it to drain for about five minutes.

****WARNING:** HOT WATER IS DANGEROUS. DISCHARGE THE WATER INTO A FLOOR DRAIN, LAUNDRY TUB OR BATHTUB. HOT WATER WILL KILL YOUR GRASS IF DISCHARGED ONTO THE LAWN. HOT WATER WILL CRACK A TOILET BOWL IF DISCHARGED INTO THE TOILET. IF YOU FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE DOING THIS ALONE OR ARE UNSURE, PLEASE [CONTACT US](#) TO HAVE A TECHNICIAN COME OUT TO ASSIST YOU.**

Many newer models of water heaters have a new feature that prohibits the buildup of sediment in the tank. If your heater is an older model, it may be cost effective to replace the water heater if the buildup is severe.

I am hearing a whistle sound that seems to be connected to the plumbing system. It comes and goes at times, but I can't find the cause of it. What could cause this?

The sound you are describing is usually caused by a toilet fill valve that is slowly leaking. To locate the leaking toilet, remove the lid of each toilet tank and adjust the fill valve mechanism until it stops. Once you have found the toilet causing the problem, repair or replace the fill valve.
