



Wellington Park HOA Newsletter

Special Homeowners Edition by Chris Franchi

January 2021

In the spirit of the New Year, and in hopes of continuing to make our community better, we wanted to assist our newsletter readers with common issues they may run into while at home. The homes within Wellington Park are now 30 + years old and will certainly experience problems as time ticks on. Failure rates of critical home components increase greatly with age. Our hope is to help provide some tips each quarter that will help our neighbors and hopefully prevent homeowners from paying exorbitant repair costs.

January 2021 --- Things to Watch in Winter

1. Water Heater Failure

If you're unlucky enough to have been through a water heater failure, you know how important it is to keep up routine maintenance. Having to take a cold shower or dealing with running water from a busted/leaking water heater pipe are just a couple of the unfortunate results of water heater failures. Typical water heaters have an average lifespan of 10-12 years. If your water heater is advanced in age or hasn't been serviced within the past 12 months, schedule a routine inspection to ensure the tank is working optimally and can last through the winter. A maintenance fee is far less expensive than dealing with damage from a busted water heater, and replacing one all together which can range from around \$5,000 - \$10,000.

DIY Tip – One common occurrence with the gray polybutylene pipe connected to your water heater is that it can spring pin hole leaks. If this happens, you may not have time to wait for a plumber since water may be leaking profusely in your crawl space, or worse, in your home. You can easily and very quickly patch this by purchasing a couple of Shark-Bite Polybutylene to Pex pipe adapters, along with a piece of white Pex pipe at your local Home Depot or Lowes. These adapters are push-to-connect, simple to use, and are a completely qualified way to repair a leaking pipe.

2. Frozen Pipes

Make sure you are monitoring any unprotected pipes. Pipes can freeze and burst when the weather is cold enough. For those that want to make their own protection, you can use insulation or warming cable. Proper insulation for your pipes can protect them against freezing. This may be even more important given that much of the plumbing in our Wellington Park homes are made with grey Polybutylene piping, which is cold resistant, but still can fail. If your pipes do freeze, turn the water off immediately and call a plumber. A frozen pipe can burst and cause significant damage to your entire system. In general you should call a professional plumber if you are completely unfamiliar with your plumbing system and would like to safeguard it against winter issues.

DIY Tip – Also keep in mind that many of our homes have downspouts that connect to black PVC tubing that carries water underground and away from your home. Many of our neighbors disconnect the black PVC tubing from the downspout during the winter months for added security against freezing issues.

3. Clogged Drain

During the holidays, even with COVID, we may have had more guests and activity than normal. You're bound to have additional cooking, eating, and cleaning from Thanksgiving through New Years. Every drain in your home – from the toilet to the garbage disposal – works overtime. Schedule preventative maintenance with an environmentally friendly drain cleaning service. Your pipes could have a better flow rate, and you're less likely to need an emergency plumber due to clogged drains.

DIY Tip – One of my favorite drain cleaning materials is called THRIFT. This is an industrial strength drain cleaner and a plumber favorite. It comes in a plastic jar, in the form of dried flakes. You use this in conjunction with hot water, and if you ever have a slow, or clogged drain, we highly recommend it. It's even fun to watch do its magic, but don't have your face over the drain until it's done working as the chemical reaction can create some residual effects in the air that is typically minimal and diminishes in seconds.

4. HVAC Failure

We all have, more than likely, turned on our heat for the winter and our furnaces are beginning their winter duty cycles. If you haven't already done so, schedule a reputable HVAC company to come out and do a basic winter servicing on your furnace. Just like the age of our homes, many furnaces in the neighborhood have been around a long time and are susceptible to failure issues. One simple maintenance visit can ensure sure your drain lines are staying clog-free, burners are clean and firing appropriately, blower motor is running optimally, and there are no problems with leaks. Once more, a single maintenance visit is far cheaper than the cost of a new furnace unit, which alone can be \$3,000-\$7,000.

Also, check the furnace from time to time to make sure you're not hearing atypical noises, or seeing any leaks. Some of our homes in Wellington Park use what's known as a condensing furnace. This type of furnace produces a decent volume of water. If you notice leaking from the furnace body, or having standing water under, or around the furnace unit; it could be indicative of clogged lines that need to be blown out. Water near the furnace can be dangerous as there may be exposed wires or electrical circuitry that may get damaged. Get any issues such as these checked immediately if seen.

If you have questions for Chris or tips for home maintenance you would like to include in our next Homeowner's Special Edition, please email them to wphoa2020@gmail.com