



**PLUMB INC**

LOS ANGELES · CA LICENSE C-36 #1095692






FREE HOMEOWNER RESOURCE

# LA Homeowner's Plumbing Emergency Playbook

## What to Do in the First 30 Minutes

---

A water emergency at home can escalate from minor inconvenience to major disaster in minutes. This guide tells you exactly what to do — step by step — before the plumber arrives, so you can minimize damage, protect your home, and make smart decisions under pressure.

-  How to locate and shut off your water in under 2 minutes
-  5 signs of a hidden leak quietly raising your water bill
-  Decision checklist: call a plumber now vs. wait it out
-  How LA's hard water destroys pipes — and what to do about it
-  What to ask your plumber before any work begins

**Plumb Inc** — 5-Star Rated · 100+ Google Reviews

CA License C-36 #1095692 · Licensed · Bonded · Insured

24/7 Emergency Service · West LA & San Fernando Valley

**100+**

5-Star  
Google Reviews



## How to Shut Off Your Water Step-by-Step for LA Homes



### Do This Today — Before You Need It

Find your main water shutoff NOW while everything is fine. In an emergency you won't have time to search. Most LA homeowners don't know where theirs is until water is pouring through the ceiling.

1

### Locate the Main Shutoff Valve

In most LA-area homes built before 1980, the main shutoff is near the street in a concrete box flush with the ground — look for a rectangular metal or plastic lid labeled "Water." In homes built after 1990, it's often inside: under the kitchen sink, in the garage, or along the front wall of the house.

Pro tip: Write the location on a sticky note inside your circuit breaker panel right now.

2

### Turn It Off (Righty Tighty)

Gate valve (round wheel): turn clockwise until it stops. Ball valve (lever handle): turn 90° so the handle is perpendicular to the pipe = OFF. If the valve is stuck or hasn't been turned in years, don't force it — call us instead of risking a broken valve.

Older homes: keep an inexpensive water meter key in your emergency kit for street-level shutoffs.

3

### Open a Faucet to Release Pressure

After shutoff, open the lowest faucet in the house (a hose bib, bathtub, or laundry room sink) to drain remaining pressure and prevent continued flow from gravity-fed water still in the pipes.

4

### If You Smell Gas — Different Protocol

Do not touch light switches or electrical outlets. Leave immediately, leave the door open, and call SoCalGas at 1-800-427-2200 from outside. Gas leaks are not a DIY situation.

Never use open flame to check for gas leaks.



## 5 Signs of a Hidden Leak Costing You Money Right Now

# \$200+

## Unexplained Bill Spike

A single toilet with a worn flapper wastes up to 200 gallons/day. If your DWP bill jumped without a change in habits, a hidden leak is the most likely cause.



## Soft Spots in Walls or Flooring

Press your hand on drywall near plumbing walls. Soft, spongy, or discolored drywall indicates moisture from a slow leak inside the wall — often behind a shower or under a sink.



## Musty Odor in Cabinets

A persistent musty smell under sinks or in closets near plumbing is mold growing on constant moisture. By the time you smell it, the leak has been going on for weeks.



## Meter Moves with Water Off

Turn off all water inside. Check your meter. If the dial moves — even slowly — you have a leak somewhere in the supply line. This is the most reliable hidden leak test.



**Quick Meter Test:** Check your meter reading, wait 2 hours with no water use, check again. Any increase = active leak. Note the meter ID number and share it with your plumber.



## Call a Plumber vs. Wait? Decision Reference

Use this table to decide how urgently you need professional help. When in doubt, call — a plumbing emergency that turns into water damage costs **10–20× more** to fix.

SITUATION	ACTION	NOTES
Active water spraying / flooding	<b>CALL NOW</b>	Shut off water first, then call. Every minute counts.
Sewage smell or backup	<b>CALL NOW</b>	Health hazard. Do not run water. Ventilate the space.
Gas odor near appliances	<b>EVACUATE + 911</b>	Leave immediately. Call SoCalGas + 911 from outside.
No hot water (water heater failure)	<b>CALL TODAY</b>	If tank is leaking or making popping sounds, urgent.
Slow drain in 1 sink only	<b>MONITOR</b>	Try a plunger first. Recurring = professional drain cleaning.
Slow drain in multiple fixtures	<b>CALL SOON</b>	Multiple slow drains = main line issue. Don't ignore it.
Running toilet	<b>SCHEDULE</b>	Wastes ~200 gal/day. Fix within a week to protect your bill.
Dripping faucet	<b>SCHEDULE</b>	A drip at 1/sec = 5 gal/day. 30 gal/month down the drain.
Low water pressure (whole house)	<b>CALL SOON</b>	Could be a PRV issue or a supply line problem developing.
Water discoloration (brown/orange)	<b>CALL TODAY</b>	Rust = old galvanized pipes failing. Run cold tap 5 min first.



## LA's Hard Water Problem What It's Doing to Your Home

Los Angeles Municipal Water has a hardness rating of **250–400 mg/L** — classified as "very hard." This means every gallon of water running through your home deposits microscopic calcium and magnesium crystals inside your pipes, fixtures, and water-using appliances.

Over years, these deposits (called scale) constrict pipe diameter, reduce water heater efficiency by up to 25%, and dramatically shorten appliance lifespans.

**25%**

#### **Water Heater Efficiency Loss**

Hard water scale on a water heater element forces it to work harder — raising your energy bill and cutting lifespan from 12+ years down to 6–8.



#### **Signs Your Home Has a Hard Water Problem**

White/chalky buildup around faucet bases · Soap that won't lather well · Spots on dishes after dishwasher · Reduced water pressure in showers · Water heater making popping or rumbling sounds (scale buildup on elements)

**The solution:** A whole-home water filtration or water softener system eliminates scale at the source — protecting every pipe, fixture, and appliance in your home. Plumb Inc installs **whole-home filtration systems** with a written workmanship guarantee.



## Trenchless Sewer Repair What It Means for Your Yard & Wallet



### No Digging. No Yard Destruction. Guaranteed Work.

Traditional sewer repair tears up your lawn, driveway, and landscaping to expose and replace the damaged pipe. Trenchless technology repairs or replaces the pipe from the inside — leaving your yard intact.

#### Traditional Sewer Repair

- Excavates 3–8 feet deep along entire line
- Destroys lawn, landscaping, driveway
- Restoration cost: \$2,000–\$8,000 extra
- Visible disruption for weeks
- No guarantee on surrounding soil

#### Trenchless Repair (Plumb Inc)

- Only 1–2 small access points needed
- Yard, driveway, landscaping stay intact
- Typically same-day completion
- Written workmanship guarantee
- Often costs *less* than traditional + restoration

**How it works:** Plumb Inc uses a camera inspection to diagnose the issue, then inserts a resin-coated liner or pulls a new pipe through the existing damaged one. The new pipe is seamless, joint-free, and rated for 50+ years.



### LA's Older Sewer Lines Are Failing

Most homes built before 1970 in LA have clay or cast iron sewer lines. Root intrusion from trees (especially ficus and palm) is the #1 cause of sewer blockages in West LA and the Valley. If you've had two or more sewer backups in five years, your line needs inspection — not just snaking.



## Before the Plumber Starts 7 Questions That Protect You

- "Can I see your CA license number?"** — Every plumber in California must carry a C-36 license. Verify at CSLB.ca.gov. Unlicensed = no recourse if work fails.
- "Give me a written estimate before you touch anything."** — Reputable plumbers write it down. If a plumber won't quote in writing, walk away.
- "Is this quote 'not-to-exceed' or can costs change?"** — Know if the price is fixed or an estimate that can balloon once walls are opened.
- "What exactly does your warranty cover?"** — Get it in writing. A verbal guarantee is worthless. Plumb Inc provides written workmanship guarantees on all work.
- "Do you pull permits for this work?"** — Certain plumbing work in LA requires permits. Unpermitted work can cause problems when selling your home.

- "What happens if there's a problem after the job?"** — Know the callback policy. Is there a fee? How quickly do they respond?
- "Are your technicians background-checked and insured?"** — Workers' comp and liability insurance protect you if someone is injured on your property.

## Book a Free Home Plumbing Assessment

Plumb Inc offers a complimentary 20-minute walkthrough for LA homeowners. We'll check for hidden leaks, assess your water quality, and identify anything that needs attention — no pressure, no surprise charges. Written quotes on everything.

[plumbinc.net/booking](https://plumbinc.net/booking)

Or call (888) 852-0055  
Available 24/7

CA License C-36 #1095692 · Fully Licensed, Bonded & Insured · 5-Star Rated · 100+ Google Reviews  
Serving West LA (Santa Monica, Culver City, Brentwood, Venice) + The Valley (Burbank, Glendale, Sherman Oaks, Encino)