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Maintenance Guide

FOR CONDOMINIUMS

One of the best ways to protect your investment as an owner of a condominium is to regularly monitor and maintain your unit and its components.

However, we realize that it's not exactly common sense knowing what to look for, and when.

For this reason, we have compiled a list of common maintenance items to help you better protect your home, reduce liability and increase safety. **By checking and repairing these small items, you can drastically reduce your cost by being proactive rather than reactive.**

Plumbing

There is no question that moisture is one of the worst offenders of causing significant damage to condominium units and creating significant expenses for owners. Unfortunately, hidden issues in your unit could affect your neighbors and even become your expense. Taking a quick walk around your home can go a long way when you know what to look for. Here are some suggestions:

Water Shut Off Valves

Compression or gate valves were commonly used in most older homes. These particular valves are simply not designed to last and incorporate internal rubber parts that deteriorate with time. These valves are prone to leaking, especially when operated frequently. We suggest considering

having a plumber change your shutoff valves to a newer style called ‘quarter turn style’ which are much less prone to leaking. Check the valves under your sink, behind your toilet and at your washer/dryer hookups.

[Click here for a full article.](#)

COMPRESSION OR GATE VALVE



NEWER STYLE QUARTER TURN BALL VALVE



□ Loose Toilets

Loose toilets can be a serious offender in hidden leaks that may affect the unit below. Simply place your leg on the side of the toilet and apply pressure to see if it moves. If it does, the toilet should be tightened or resealed. Don't forget to look for signs of moisture around the base and walls near the toilet.

□ Constantly Running Toilets

Listen to your toilet for signs that the tank parts are going bad. Constantly running toilets stresses the plumbing system and increases cost. Toilet parts are generally inexpensive and easy to replace.



□ **Sink Drain & Valve Leaks**

It's a good idea to regularly monitor under your sinks for signs of leaks. To find hidden leaks, you can fill the sink to halfway and drain while shining a light under the sink and feeling around the drainpipes and valves for moisture.

□ **Grout & Sealant**

Grout and sealant are some of the most common items overlooked in a home. Grout is the material used in-between tiles and helps to keep a watertight seal. If your bathroom/shower contains missing or deteriorated grout and/or sealant you could be causing major damage to your unit and/or the unit below and not even know it! If this gets neglected overtime, often mold and water damage ensue, and the shower surround must be completely replaced! It's important to regularly monitor these areas with a flashlight and replace sealant around the joints of your shower annually. [Click here for a DIY guide.](#)



Water Heater

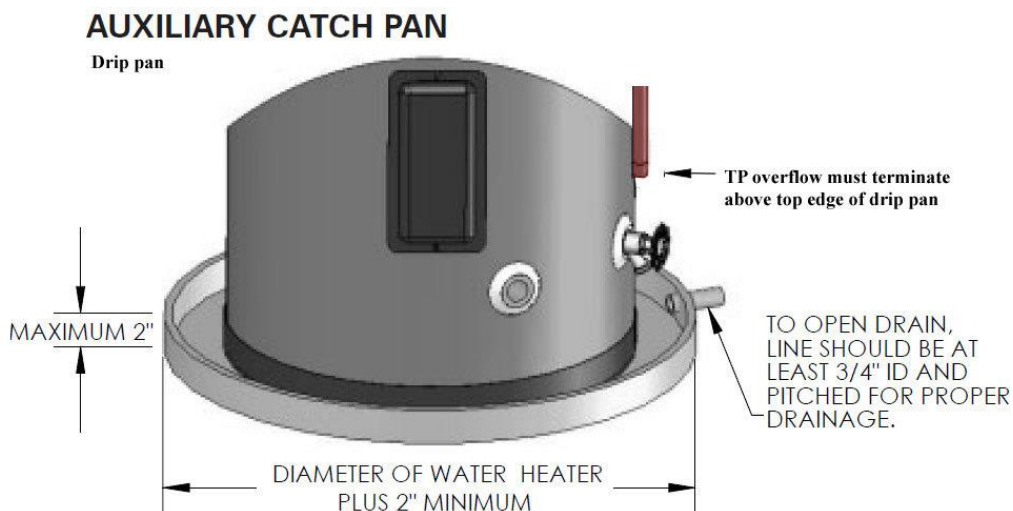
Hot water tanks usually leak to let you know they have reached the end of their life. This could cause serious water damage to the living space, depending on its location. Here a few ways to prevent major damage:

□ Age of The Water Heater

Water heaters typically deteriorate from the inside out, so simply looking at the heater will tell you very little about when it might be reaching the end of its life. The average life span of a heater is 8-12 years. It is strongly advised to consider replacement if your heater is more than 15 years old.

□ Drip Pan & Water Leak Detectors

Drip pans are designed to be installed under the water heater to contain water in the event of a leak. Ideally this pan would be piped to a safe location. Piping to the exterior is not always possible in a condo. Luckily you can purchase water leak detectors that sound and/or alert you on your smart phone when moisture is detected. These are an inexpensive safeguard that can alert you before major damage occurs. [Click here for an example of inexpensive option.](#)

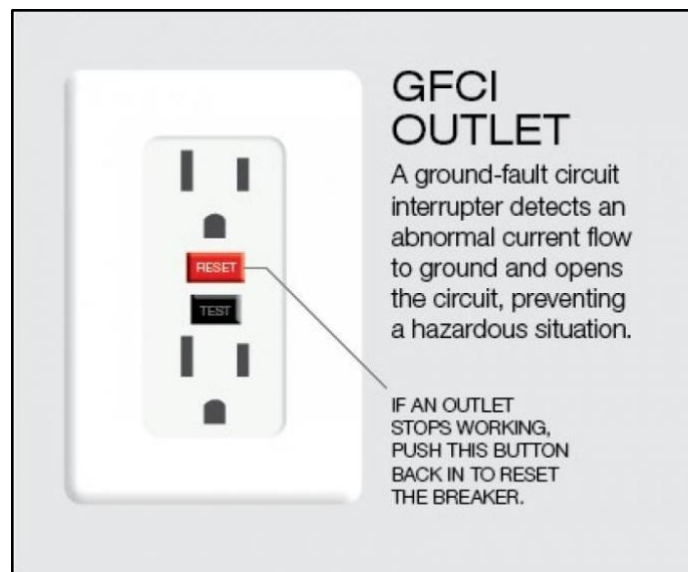


Electrical

When it comes to electricity, safety is paramount. Here are some suggested items to make your home safer:

□ GFCI Receptacles (Outlets)

These are the slightly different receptacles (outlets) that are now required in all bathrooms, kitchens, garages and outside. These receptacles/outlets keep you and your occupants safe. It is highly recommended to have these installed if they are not already. [Click here to see how GFCI receptacles keep you safe.](#)



GFCI receptacles should also be tested regularly to make sure they are functioning properly. Simply press the “TEST” button on the receptacle/breaker and it should make a click noise. Then press the “RESET” button or reset the breaker by flipping to full off, then on which should make the receptacle/breaker work again. If the TEST or RESET function does not work, the receptacle/breaker should be replaced.

□ Smoke Detectors

Smoke detectors should be located in every bedroom, outside of every bedroom & kitchen and tested regularly for function.

□ Corroded Receptacle (Outlets) & Switches

Due to Hawaii’s coastal environment, it is common to find corroded receptacles and switches and periodic replacement is considered routine maintenance. Signs of corrosion may be difficulty plugging in to an outlet or signs of improper function including an arching sound from switches. If you suspect corrosion on any outlets or switches, it’s best to have them replaced.

- **Make sure all cover plates are installed on receptacles (outlets) and switches**
Missing or damaged cover plates are a major safety concern due to hot wires being easily accessible. Keep you and your occupants safe by checking all cover plates in the unit.



► Dryer Vent Maintenance

Lint and other debris can build up in your dryer hose and vent duct, reducing air flow, and have even been known to cause fires. Clogged vents can also greatly reduce energy efficiency by causing far longer dry times. To avoid these issues here are a few tips:

- **Inspect and Clean Your Dryer Vent Annually**
To inspect and clean the vent simply pull the dryer away from the wall to gain access to the rear. The large hose can be removed to be inspected and cleaned.
- **Limit Hose Length to Only What You Need**
A vent hose that's longer than needed or with lots of twists and turns increases the possibility of clogs and reduces efficiency. Shorten your hose to the appropriate height and keep it as straight and level as possible.
- **Vertical Dryer Exhaust**
If your dryer vent must be ran vertically, it is even more important to disconnect the hose and inspect and clean each year. Lint and debris are more likely to collect in a vertical run than a horizontal one.

□ **5 Warning Signs It's Time to Clean Your Dryer Vent**

1. Drying time for clothes takes longer and longer
2. Your clothing and the outside of the dryer are very hot
3. You notice a burning smell
4. The vent hood flap doesn't open properly
5. It's been longer than a year since you last inspected/cleaned the vent.



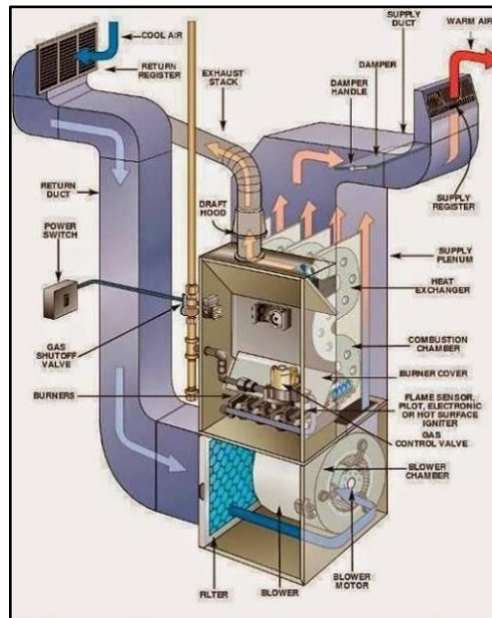
Air Conditioning

Air conditioners are complex machines that require regular maintenance. Due to the complexity of the units, I would recommend having it serviced by a reputable company service the unit every 6 months to a year. Here are some DIY maintenance tips

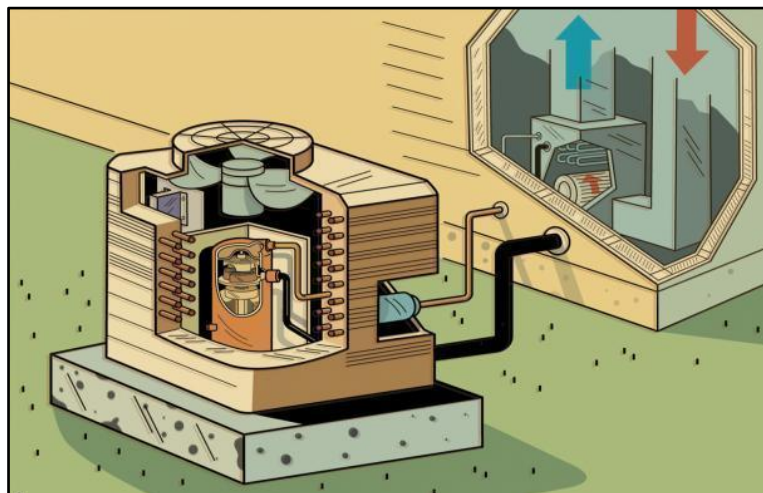
At minimum, be sure to:

- Change out the air filter on the unit and be sure to write the date of install on the new filter. It's very important to have the correct size filter. If you're unsure, take a look at the existing filter to obtain the size

The filter is usually located on the side of the air handler, which is often times in the attic.



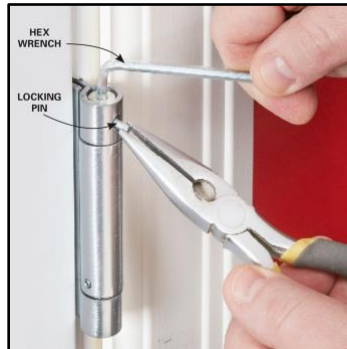
- Inspect the pipe insulation on the condensing unit (which is found outside). If the insulation is missing or degraded, replace.



Garage

The safety features of the occupant and overhead vehicle doors are important to keep you and your guests safe. There are four things you can check pretty easily.

- **Occupant doors connecting the garage to the living space should be self-closing in order to keep harmful fumes out of the living space.** Most are equipped with spring hinges that may need to be adjusted. If a spring hinge does not exist, you can pick them up from your local hardware store. For a tutorial on how to adjust these hinges [click here](#).



- **Check the spring tension for the door.** The springs on the garage door are tested by bringing the door to halfway and pulling the manual disconnect. The springs should assist it in remaining stationary. If the door were to drop rapidly, this would indicate the spring(s) need adjustment or replacement. Faulty springs stress the door opener(s) and could be a hazard to someone standing in doorway if disengaged from track.
- **Check the photo sensors.** Simply press the garage door opener to close the door, as it's coming down, kick your foot in front of the photo-electric sensors. Be sure the door reverses. These sensors should also be within 6 in. of the ground.



- **Test the pressure sensitive reverse feature.** Modern automatic garage door openers are installed with a pressure sensitive function which will reverse the garage door if an object obstructs the path. Put slight pressure on the garage door while it is closing to test this function. Use only very slight pressure to ensure no components are damaged should the test fail. If the test fails, this function can be adjusted by referring to the garage door opener owner's manual.

▶ Thank you!

Obviously, there are other major components to a home that require specific expertise, training and experience to inspect. We do hope this helps you to be proactive about addressing issues before they cause harm or damage.

**Some of these items *may* pose reasonable risk to inspect and for this reason we do not suggest anyone except a qualified professional do anything that could be deemed unsafe.

If you have any questions at all, please feel free to contact us directly at (808)796-1077.

Sincerely,



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