

Plumbing Emergency: 5 Things To Do When A Water Line Is Hit

With the recent rise in DIY, it's no wonder more and more home improvement mishaps take place. Repairing a running toilet or installing a faucet is one thing, but when the self-proclaimed plumbers make a mistake, there are a few things to remember in order to prevent further damage.

A punctured water line can wreak havoc depending on its location. And, when a simple plumbing upgrade or even just digging around in the garden goes awry, action must be taken and fast. When a water line is hit resulting in a geyser high enough to get the whole neighborhood's attention, the following list will help get things under control.

1. Stop The Leak Before It's A Lake

One thing all homeowners should know is the exact location of their main water supply shutoff valve. When that plumbing nightmare is soaking everything in sight, the last thing that should be taking place is a scavenger hunt.

The shutoff valve, in the form of a stopcock, can usually be found next to or inside the water meter box in the front yard near the curb. A tee-handle tool may be needed for this type of valve. If the valve isn't there, try under the sink where main water lines commonly enter a house. Also, it's important to turn off the water heater, run the faucets, and flush all toilets to drain the access water out of the plumbing system.

2. A Much Needed Break

Now that the flow of water is under control and bathing suits are no longer necessary, it's time to find the exact location of the puncture point. In most cases this is easily done considering it's the homeowners fault. Also, a monsoon isn't exactly hard to miss.

If it's not an obvious water line break, some signs to look for are sink holes in the yard and soggy spots in the grass. If the break occurs indoors behind a wall for instance, wet spots forming on the drywall and loss in water pressure are great indicators. In any case, take some time to find and assess the water line break.

3. It Could Be Shocking

If the break is in the vicinity of an electrical outlet or exposed wires of any kind, it's crucial to stay away from the leak and turn off electrical power to the house immediately. Water carries an electrical current and when plumbing and power mix, the results can be extremely dangerous.

The same goes for outdoor water line breaks. When an underground line is severed, there's no telling if an electrical line to the front yard light pole or sprinkler system valve box has been hit too. In any case, it's best just to practice safety and shut off power.

4. Time For A Pro

If no other damage is done, simply call a plumbing professional to come out and repair the problem. Just make sure the issue is thoroughly described so the plumber arrives prepared. But, if that little leak turns into a home makeover, it's time to contact a water damage restoration company.

Unless the homeowner is well versed in plumbing and home renovation, it's best just to leave this to the professionals. Besides, taking on a project as large as water damage restoration without proper knowledge can and will lead to more problems down the road.

5. A Bit Of Insurance

Let your insurance agent do some of the work for you. They're there to help in times of home disasters. When making a water damage insurance claim, be thorough and concise. Most insurance companies will send an agent. If this isn't the case, just ask for an agent to come and inspect the damage. And, remind them to bring some rain boots.

Remember the above instructions and when that break does occur, rest assured in knowing what to do. After everything is under control and the water stops flowing, let the professionals take it from there. A well-informed homeowner is a happy, and dry, homeowner.