



How to take care of your plumbing and pipes.

Plumbing problems can cause a lot of heartache for homeowners, especially in winter. Follow our tips to help you avoid blocked drains, burst pipes and leaky plumbing all year round.

As with anything that works behind the scenes, we never notice or think about our pipes until there's a problem. And then it's too late. To avoid burst pipes or no running water at all, it's worth knowing how to keep your pipes in good condition.

Caustic caution

When drains clog, it can be tempting to reach for the chemicals and empty them down the plughole. While this may clear the blockage enough to allow water to drain, it can cause unseen damage to your pipes.

Most drain unblockers only remove part of the blockage. More often than not, build-ups return, requiring more unblocker. Over time, the corrosive chemicals will eat through pipework and cause leaks.

To remove a blockage fast, empty half a cup of baking soda followed by a cup of white vinegar down your drain. Then pour very hot (but not boiling) water. Keep flushing with the water until the drain clears. If this fails to clear your blockage, you'll need to call a plumber to snake the drain.

Burst pipes

Check your home insurance to see if it includes cover for escape of water. If it does, check for any requirements if your home is empty for more than a few days or over the winter period.

Your insurer may provide home emergency assistance services for customers who need immediate help with emergencies such as water leaks, broken windows, or locked out situations.

Customers can contact Intact Insurance at (01) 832 8757 for 24/7 assistance. If you have an emergency, it's recommended to report it to your insurance provider to arrange for a plumber or other necessary services.

If your insurer doesn't provide Home Emergency Assistance, consider a separate, dedicated policy.

Drain pain

To avoid your drains reclogging, keep fats and oils well away from them. If you have a lot of fat or oil left over after cooking, don't pour it down the drain. It will solidify as it cools and block your pipes.

Instead, pour it into a container and leave to solidify before putting it in the general waste bin. It's also a good idea to put a plughole screen in your sink and bath or shower. This will prevent hair and food from getting into the pipes and blocking them.





Winter is coming

Freezing temperatures can damage pipes and plumbing at a time when heating or hot water are in use. There are simple steps you can take to keep your plumbing in order throughout the winter:

- Make sure to disconnect and drain hoses from outdoor taps during the winter. An overnight freeze can cause the tap and pipe to burst.
- Wrap any exposed pipes in unheated areas of your home, such as the attic or garage, in insulation tape. This will protect them during the winter. You can buy tape at any hardware store.
- If you're away for any period of time during the winter, there's a chance your pipes and any water in them will freeze. This could lead to them bursting. To help prevent such a situation, set the heating to come on periodically at a lower temperature during cold snaps. Alternatively, turn your water off completely and drain your pipes before going away.
- If your pipes freeze and you know where the freeze has occurred, put a hot water bottle on the pipes to thaw them out.

By knowing how to keep your pipes in good condition, you'll avoid bursts, leaks and no running water.

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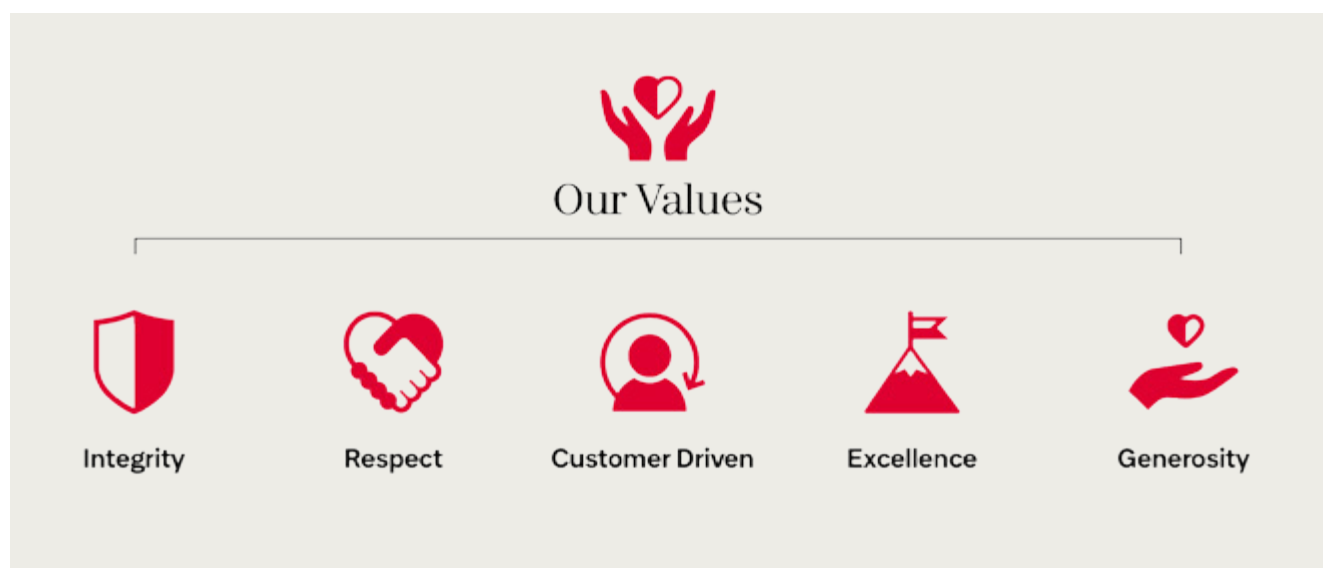
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