

# Troubleshooting Guide

## ELECTRICAL

### **Some of the outlets in my property do not work.**

Outlets are controlled by a GFCI outlet in series to prevent electrical shock when touched with wet hands, etc. A GFCI outlet is found in all areas that are near water such as kitchens, bathrooms, and garages. So, if the kitchen outlets are not working, go to the outlet with the GFCI reset button and press the reset button. This should engage the outlets in this area so that they are working again. If you have outdoor outlets not working, usually the GFCI outlet in the garage will control these so start there to reset and see if they start working. Some builders run these in series differently so even a lower level bathroom or other bathroom GFCI can control outdoor outlets. Also, remember that all homes have an electrical panel and sometimes a circuit will trip so anytime you have an appliance or room that does not have power, check the electrical panel for a tripped breaker.

### **A new bulb was replaced in a light and it still does not work.**

Rarely does a light go bad and many times this can indicate a bad bulb even if the bulb was just purchased. Test the light by taking a bulb that lights up in another light to confirm it is not just a “bad bulb”.

## PLUMBING

### **I have a leak and don't know how to stop it.**

Locate the main water shut off and shut it off in order to prevent damage to the home. Keep in mind, if the water is coming from a toilet or sink, the shut off valve can be used to shut the water off at the location of the leak so that you can have water to the other areas of the house while you wait

for the repairman. If your hot water heater is leaking, there is a water shut off above the hot water heater that can be turned off. You will not have hot water then but you will have hot water to the rest of the house. The hot water heater will continue to drain the contents in the water heater until the tank is empty. Put in a work order once you have stopped the water running so that the leak can be repaired.

### **My garbage disposal quit working.**

Most likely you have gotten something in the garbage disposal that has caused the blades to get stuck. First, check to make sure that there is no water leaking from the garbage disposal by opening up the sink cabinet underneath the sink. If you have cracked the garbage disposal, you will see water leaking from the disposal and into the cabinet. Put a bucket under the disposal and mop up water to dry the area. Then fill out a work order so that a repairman can be summoned to replace the disposal. Refrain from using that side of the sink until the disposal is replaced and mop up excess water and get a fan on the cabinet to dry it out to prevent further damage to the cabinet. If no leaking noted, locate the Allen wrench and insert it into the bottom of the disposal, and twist manually to loosen the blades. If you loosen the blades and it doesn't appear to have power, push the reset button on the bottom of the garbage disposal to restore power after loosening the blades.

### **My garbage disposal smells.**

These do require cleaning on occasion. It can be as simple as running lemon or lime rind through the disposal or ice cubes once in awhile. You can also purchase products specifically for improving smell of garbage disposals. Make sure that you are also cleaning the rubber top of the garbage disposal as this can also be a source of odor with food buildup.

### **There is no water pressure to my bathroom sink or shower.**

Check the aerator (screen) on your sink faucet or screw off the shower head as calcium/mineral deposits will develop overtime and clog the heads

preventing the water from coming out full force. These simply need to be shaken out to clear the obstruction. CLR and vinegar can also be used to clean these aerators (screens). Another thing to check is the shut off valves under the sink to make sure they are open.

### **My sink is plugged/clogged.**

Tenants are responsible for sink clogs as these are due to tenant habits. A household plunger should clear the obstruction. Make sure the plunger is applied to the drain so it is flat and makes a seal around the drain and then plunge. Put the stopper in the other side of the sink that you are plunging to create suction and to clear the clog. DO NOT USE DRANO OR SIMILAR CAUSTIC AGENT AS YOU WILL DAMAGE THE PLUMBING. If you are unable to clear the obstruction, contact a local plumber such as McCann Plumbing. Do not use Roto Rooter type companies who will try to upsale their services. These plumbing charges are the responsibility of the tenant and are not paid by the owner or property manager.

### **My toilet is plugged/clogged.**

Tenants are responsible for toilet clogs and any associated overflow of the toilets as these are due to tenant habits. A household plunger should clear the obstruction. Use the plunger to force the obstruction down the sewer line. DO NOT USE DRANO OR SIMILAR CAUSTIC AGENT AS YOU WILL DAMAGE THE PLUMBING. If you are unable to clear the obstruction, contact a local plumber such as McCann Plumbing. Do not use Roto Rooter type companies who will try to upsale their services. These plumbing charges are the responsibility of the tenant and are not paid by the owner or property manager.

### **My toilet seat is loose or broken.**

Toilet seats can be tightened at the hinge, some by turning the nut underneath and some require a wrench. If the hinge is broken, replace the toilet seat as this would fall under repairs under \$50 that are tenant's responsibility.

### **My tub won't drain.**

Usually tubs that will not drain can be plunged as well but in some cases will need to be snaked out by a plumber. **DO NOT USE DRANO OR SIMILAR CAUSTIC AGENT AS YOU WILL DAMAGE THE PLUMBING.** If you cannot clear the tub drain with a plunger, put in a work order.

### **The floor drain in the utility room by the furnace or in the garage is not draining well.**

A plunger can be used on floor drains, just like other drains. Make sure if there are hoses, i.e., AC condensation lines near or attached to the drain cover, that these are moved aside to get a good seal with the plunger over the drain. Additional water should be poured down the drain and plunging repeated to clear the drain and open up the line. Floor drains in garages can pose a similar scenario with minimal water going in them, i.e., during the winter snow melt off the cars and debris can make these drains sluggish as well. A water solution with bleach or cleaner can help them remain clear and odor free.

## **APPLIANCES**

### **My refrigerator shows that it needs a new filter, where do I get one?**

Refrigerator filters are replaced at check out by the outgoing tenant. If your refrigerator stops making ice or dispensing water, it can indicate that the filter needs replacing as some require more frequent changing. Also, some refrigerators will leak water from the dispenser/ice maker when the filter needs changing. Most hardware stores and Home Depot type stores sell the filters. Some may need to be purchased online if they are less common.

### **My dishwasher is not getting the dishes clean.**

Mineral deposits in the water do collect over time and can clog the sprayers in the dishwasher and this will hinder performance. Run the dishwasher with several cups of vinegar in the bottom to help loosen the minerals and clear the sprayers periodically. You can also purchase a product that is specifically for cleaning dishwashers such as those developed by Finish & Cascade. Also, please understand that dishwashers do not as a rule do well on heavily soiled dishes and pre-rinsing is needed for sticky and heavier food items that are left on dishes. It is also important to not overload the dishwasher and to stack dishes so that water is able to circulate around the dishes to get them clean.

### **My dishwasher will not drain or it appears to be leaking some around the seal when it is used.**

First, check to make sure that the cycle has actually completed. If a cycle has been interrupted for some reason, you may see water in the bottom of the dishwasher. Also, check to make sure there is not heavy debris or some item in the bottom of the dishwasher. If the dishwasher continues to not drain, put in a work order. If there is some wetness in front of the dishwasher or around the sides, clean the seal around the door of the dishwasher with vinegar or use vegetable oil to soften the seal. A dishwasher will also leak if too much soap is used, so run the dishwasher with 2 cups of vinegar only for a cycle in order to get rid of excess soap buildup. The best soap product to use in this area is Finish and do not use more soap than is recommend by the manufacturer.

### **My microwave has a code flashing on the panel and will not work.**

Sometimes this is just a simple reboot needed like a computer. Unplug the microwave, wait a few minutes and then plug it back in to see if that takes care of the problem.

### **My gas range has a burner that will not light.**

One of the most common causes is debris blocking gas flow to the ignitor. Remove the grate, burner cap and clean the area with a warm, soapy wash cloth. Clean any remaining debris out of the burner holes with a toothpick, sewing needle or compressed air.

## **HVAC (HEATING & COOLING) & HUMIDIFIER**

### **My air conditioner is not cooling the house.**

First of all, make sure that your furnace filter has been changed recently and you are not using too heavy of a filter that it hinders the performance of your furnace. Double Check the thermostat to make sure it is set to Cool and at an appropriate temperature to cool the home. Then check to make sure the outside unit is running. If the outside unit is not running, check the breaker to make sure this has not tripped. If tripped, turn the breaker back on and monitor that it does not trip again. If the outside unit is running, check for evidence of frost on the outside unit. If you see frost, the unit may be low on Refrigerant and you would need to shut the AC off and put in a work order. In these cases, the furnace blower usually is running and warm air is coming through the registers. The HVAC technician will need the unit to be thawed in order to work on it so that is why you shut the AC off until he arrives. Please also understand that in extreme temperatures, it is unreasonable to keep the house extremely cool. HVAC experts will tell you that is unreasonable to expect house temperatures to be more than 20 degrees cooler than outside air temperatures.

### **There is water running out of my furnace.**

There is a tray that holds condensation so if you see water pooling on the furnace while the AC is running, check the condensation hose for blockage. This blockage can be cleared by using a dowel pushed down the hose or by blowing on the hose to free the debris that collects over time. If you cannot clear the hose or this doesn't do the trick, put in a work order as the

pan under the A-coil may be blocked and it will require a professional service.

### **My furnace quit running.**

First, make sure that if there is a service switch in your utility room near the furnace that someone didn't turn this off because they confused this with a light switch. Check the breaker box to make sure the breaker has not been tripped. Sometimes a breaker appears to not be tripped but can be so switch it to off and then back on to make sure this is not the case. Also, check the thermostat to make sure that the fan has not been switched off and it is set to fan or auto. Another thing to check is the filter. Has the filter been changed recently? A filter that is too dense, i.e., heavy duty HEPA filter, can actually cause the furnace to shut off as the furnace does not get the proper air flow. Use only a medium weight filter and spray with PAM if you think you need more dust control. In the winter months, if your furnace has quit heating and you have a fireplace, please use the fireplace to keep the house from getting too cold until the HVAC tech can arrive.

### **When do I change the furnace filter?**

Change the filter every 30-45 days, depending on number of animals in the house or other living habits. Failure to change the filter on a regular basis will cause that filtration residue around the perimeters of carpeted rooms and carpeted stairs that can be impossible to get clean by even professional carpet cleaners.

### **When do I change the humidifier pad?**

Outgoing tenants will replace the pad at the time of clearing. If you are multi-year renter, you will need to replace this at the beginning of each heating season.

**Everything is so dry in my house and we are getting static shocks.**

If your house has a humidifier, make sure you are running this during the heating season. See the website for specific instructions on how to start the humidifier at the beginning of the heating season. If you do not have a whole house humidifier, a table top version can be purchased at the hardware store.

**There is water pooling on my windows and sills during the winter time.**

Most likely, you have the humidifier setting too high. While 35 is a recommended setting for the Humidistat, it may not be for your family situation or property. Turn the Humidistat down to a lower number until you stop seeing this occur. If you continue to allow water to collect on the windows and sills, you will cause damage to the home.

**The thermostat does not appear to be working as the temp in the house will not get up to where I have my thermostat set or the display will not light up.**

The batteries in the thermostat most likely need to be changed. Also, make sure that you have realistic expectations regarding temperatures, i.e., in extreme heat, it is unlikely to cool the house more than 20 degrees cooler than outside temperature.

**Some of the rooms in my house are not getting warm/cold.**

Double check the registers in the rooms. In the winter you want to open the registers in the basement and lower levels and close them on the top level as heat naturally rises. Most thermostats, especially in a split entry style home are on the top level. So if you leave all the registers wide open on the top level, your thermostat will read the temp on that floor and shut off, which will then leave the lower level freezing. In the summer, you do the opposite, close the registers in the lower level as it is naturally cooler on that level, forcing more of the cool air through the registers on the main level. In a two-story home, you will need to work with the registers to force the warmer and cooler air up to the upper level, same concept as a split



entry style home. The other thing that controls air through vents are dampers on the duct work coming from the furnace so double check to make sure this is not the case. Also, make sure that a previous tenant has not obstructed air flow in a room vent by placing something in the vent under the register cover in that room.

## **GARAGE DOORS**

**My garage door will not go down unless I hold down the button on the garage wall.**

Garage doors are equipped with safety eyes which are located about a foot off the ground on the garage door rails. When the eyes are properly seeing one another, the one side will show a green light and the other side will have an amber or red colored light. These will get bumped on occasion or vibrate loose and lose their proper position so they no longer light up. The garage door will then not go down because it senses that there is something in the way of the door, i.e., small child, and will pop back up as a safety measure. Reposition the safety eyes so that both sides light up and the door should go down again without holding the button.

**My garage door operator can't seem to lift the door.**

You may have a broken spring. Check the coiled spring at the top of the garage door to see if it is separated. If the spring is broken, DO NOT CONTINUE TO TRY AND USE THE OPERATOR AS YOU WILL BURN OUT THE MOTOR. These springs are required to lift the weight of the garage door and the operator cannot do it alone. Put in a work order to have the spring replaced. In order to get a vehicle out of the garage, pull the release cord and lift the door manually until the repairman can get to you.

# DAMAGE TO WALLS

## How do I match paint?

If there has been damage to the walls, it is best to contact a professional. Spot painting rarely gives a good result and most often the entire wall will need to be painted corner to corner and ceiling to floor in order to repair damage to walls. Also, do not paint over holes, cuts, gauges, etc., without these being properly repaired with spackle, etc. Per the Tenant Responsibilities guide, no anchors, mollies, TV brackets, etc., should be mounted on the wall so if you follow these guidelines, there will only be small nail holes to fill. Small nail holes that are filled with spackle and wiped off with a wet sponge, will disappear if you do this properly and there is no need to paint over these. **NEVER under any circumstances do you fill a hole with spackle and paint over it without ensuring the wall is smoothly sanded first!** Also, do not use paint to cover dirt and black marks. Cleaning the walls with a mild detergent such as Dawn dishwashing soap or using a Magic Eraser sponge will take care of most marks and will give a far better result than mismatched paint.

# PESTS

## I have ants in my kitchen.

Ants are opportunists and they gravitate toward areas where tenants keep food. Ant bait traps are the best method of eliminating ants. You can also use a home remedy of Borax or vinegar that works very well on controlling ants. Peppermint, Cinnamon and lemon also work well to control ants. Google home remedies or go to the hardware store and purchase ant control products such as Raid if you prefer those methods.

## Some critter is digging tunnels in the yard.

Moles are common in this area and quite frankly, they are pretty difficult to get rid of. The hardware store has remedies to purchase to help control

moles. Also, applying grub control to the lawn in the fall is also an important way to control moles.

### **I have evidence of mice in the home.**

Mouse traps and mouse bait can be effective in controlling mice. Both items can be purchased at the hardware store or stores such as Wal Mart. Also, make sure that you are not leaving garage doors open for extended periods and check for points of entry where they might be getting in to the home. Do not store pet food in open bags in the garage and refrain from keeping other food sources in the garage as well.

### **I have wasps.**

Aerosol products such as Raid can be purchased to spray on wasp nests. If this fails, put in a work order and we will have a professional spray the home to rid the home of wasps.

### **I have spiders.**

You will see spiders in Kansas whether the house is sprayed by a professional or not. There are remedies that can be purchased at the hardware store or contact a professional for ongoing treatment if that is your preference.