****

**MAINTENANCE TROUBLESHOOTING- Frequent Work Orders:**

This is to assist tenants in troubleshooting common repair items that are in some cases tenant responsibility to repair, and failure to follow the troubleshooting tips could lead to a maintenance chargeback for a “user error”, negligence, or misuse:

* Toilet backups
* Slow draining/clogged sinks or tubs
* Garbage disposal malfunction
* Smoke/CO2 detector battery replacement
* Replacing Light bulbs (fixtures + appliances)
* Fridge water filter replacement
* Pest Control
* Replacing HVAC filters
* Resetting electrical breakers/GFCIs
* Preparing for Freezing Temperatures
* **LOST KEYS-** If you are locked out of your residence during normal business hours, please call our office and we may be able to assist you. If you are locked out after our normal business hours, do not call the emergency maintenance line, you will be charged. Lost keys after hours are not a maintenance emergency. We recommend calling a locksmith for after hours lockouts.

**After a tenant has attempted to troubleshoot and a work order is submitted, a $65 trip charge will be assessed if any of the following occur:**

* Any tenant who makes an appointment, but fails to be at the property during the scheduled time with the vendor/Novus PM staff for work orders or inspections.
* There is a non-kenneled or unconstrained dog and the vendor is unable to access and must reschedule..
* The tenant fails to schedule an appointment and requires Novus PM staff to meet the vendor at the property to provide access
* There is an underage child (17 or under) unattended at the property and the vendor is unable to access and must reschedule.

**What maintenance issues are considered HIGH URGENCY?** Note: a $65 fee will result if tenant contacts emergency maintenance line and it is not a true after hours emergency.

* **Gas leaks/FIRE-** tenant should contact Gas Company/Fire Dept/911 immediately, then report concern to us.
* **Electrical Hazards-** sparks, buzzing switches or outlets, burning/fishy odor around outlets, discoloration around outlets, hot outlets/switch plates. If issue seems severe, tenants should leave property and call 911. Then report it to our company.
* **Water Leaks or Flooding-** Uncontrolled water leaks can cause flooding which can cause thousands of dollars in property damage. Any water source must be stopped immediately until the source of the issue/cleanup can be completed. The goal is to get the water OFF until further help can arrive.
* **Heating Failure during Extreme Cold \*outside temperature is below 50 degrees**
* **A/C Failure during Extreme Heat \*outside temperature is above 85 degrees**
* **Sewage Backups**
* **Clogged toilet- if only one toilet in the home**
* **Loss of power or water that is not a result of an outage or issue with the utility company.**
* **Tree falling on house**
* **Garage door repair ONLY if a car is shut in the garage and the emergency release latch has malfunctioned.**

**What Maintenance issues are considered Moderate Urgency and can be handled during normal business hours? Target: 2-4 business days**

* **Hot water outage**
* **A/C Failure if outside temperature is below 85 degrees**
* **Heating Failure if outside temperature is above 50 degrees.**
* **Fridge outage**
* **Plumbing repairs with the exception of clogged toilets**
* **Electrical problems (non-hazardous)**
* **Roof Leaks**

**What Maintenance issues are considered Normal Maintenance? Target: 4-8 business days service**

* **Garage door repairs (utilize emergency release latch to open/close garage if garage door opener is malfunctioning.)**
* **Loose railing/wobbly decks (tenants should not use until repaired)**
* **Dishwasher/stove/microwave/garbage disposal outage**
* **Leaky faucets**
* **Broken windows**
* **Repair/replacement of light fixtures after tenant has attempted to change bulbs.**

**What Maintenance Issues are considered a non habitability issue/non-essential maintenance?- these issues may be taken care of within 30 days with owner approval, or reviewed with the owner at renewal period to be completed at a later date:**

* **Fence repair**
* **Gutter cleaning**
* **Screens**
* **Pressure washing**
* **Broken tree limb**
* **Broken window shade**
* **Broken doorbell**
* **Mailbox replacement**
* **Broken/missing tub stopper**
* **Cosmetic items**

1. **A/C or Heat Not Working Properly and Other HVAC Concerns:**

* when is the last time your air filter(s) has been replaced? (not applicable for Cottages UWG tenants) – we change their air filters for them. If the tenant states they do not know, or it has been longer than 2-3 months, we would recommend they change the air filter prior to dispatching First Degree. Youtube link you can provide on changing filters:

[How to Change a Furnace Filter For Dummies (youtube.com)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGYrVgFSzV4)

* If they report a heat outage- check if the property is total electric or gas (Monday.com Property Bible), if it has gas heat- ensure the tenant has had the gas connected and/or propane tank refilled. Obviously, if it is a couple of months into winter- we don’t have to worry about this being the case as much or they would have reported no heat during cold temperatures prior. However, when it first begins to get cold- we frequently receive these reports and tenants who have not connected gas.
* If they report that the thermostat is blank or malfunctioning- request they ensure it is properly set to “cool” or “heat”- request they change the batteries in the thermostat prior to dispatching First Degree.
* Sometimes, they are expecting too much from the system in extreme temperatures- for example, if it is 20 degrees outside, and they are complaining they have the thermostat set to 74 heat and it won’t get above 70- they are just not being realistic about the outdoor temperatures. Our HVAC systems in GA are not made to withstand extremely cold temperatures- as we rarely experience those. Additionally, no hvac system can keep up in extremely hot temperatures (90 degrees Fahrenheit and up) so they will sometimes report in the summer that they have their a/c set to 68 and it won’t go below 72- which is again, not being realistic for the temperatures outside. It is common for a unit to keep an indoor temperature around 20 degrees cooler/warmer than the outdoor temperature.
* If they complain about a high power bill we always recommend temperatures of 66-68 during the winter, and 76-78 during the summer.
* If they complain about it being hotter on a 2nd floor- heat rises, so this is standard. However, we instruct that they ensure all vents are open and that leaving doors open helps the air to flow.
* Homes with multiple thermostats/floors- all thermostats should be set within 2-3 degrees of each other. For example, if the downstairs thermostat is set to 68- the upstairs should be set to 65-70. If they set the numbers too far apart, the system will not function properly.

1. **PLUMBING RELATED ISSUES**

* **Garbage Disposals-**
* Reports clogged: Clogged garbage disposals are most often the tenant’s responsibility, and should a technician need to assist, it will likely be at the tenant’s expense. They need to turn the garbage disposal off, and UNPLUG the unit prior to attempting to unclog it on their own. They will need to remove excess food/foreign objects and use a disposal wrench on bottom of disposal (can find at local hardware store.) You may send them the below video link to instruct them on attempting to try and unclog the disposal their selves <https://youtu.be/FL5GlsTzS-I> Other helpful notes:
* Do not put potato peelings, coffee grounds, or eggshells into your disposal. These items will stick to any sludge in the pipe and quickly create a clog.
* Do not use liquid drain cleaner in the kitchen sink, especially in a garbage disposal.
* Bad smells- To clean your disposal you can use real lemon peels or ice chips. Please do not use full lemons or large ice cubes as they may jam the disposal.
* Reports garbage disposal will not operate or “hums”: press reset button on bottom of disposal

Additional tips/tricks can be found through this link:

[InSinkErator Garbage Disposal Installation and Troubleshooting | InSinkErator US (emerson.com)](https://insinkerator.emerson.com/en-us/support)

* **Toilet running constantly**

-check for kink or disconnect of lift chain from the handle lever which is preventing the flap to seat properly.

-if this doesn’t correct the issue- turn off the water to the toilet using the knob behind the toilet until maintenance is able to assess the problem. This will prevent high water bills. If you only have one toilet in the home, you may turn this on to utilize the toilet and back off upon completion, until maintenance can make it to the property.

* **No Hot Water or Hot Water is “Too Hot”**

-ensure if property is gas, tenant has gas connected. If it is gas, 2nd step is to check if the pilot light is lit. Link to video on steps to relight pilot light: <https://youtu.be/Bx7ak5YFHlg>

-Check the breaker panel or fuses

-If hot water is not warm enough or too hot check the thermostat on the tank and turn up/down as needed. Ensure you follow proper steps and turn off the hot water heater at the breaker 1st. The standard recommendation is 120-130 Fahrenheit. Below 120 can create a risk for bacteria, and above 130-140 can create a risk for scalding.

[How To Adjust The Temperature On An Electric Water Heater (youtube.com)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yh8omS9oLTE)

* **Clogged sinks or toilets**

-interior plumbing clogs are typically tenant responsibility unless it is a plumbing issue that is the result of an exterior plumbing problem (i.e. septic tank needs to be pumped, sewer line needs to be jetted.) we will provide some tips to avoid a plumbing bill chargeback:

* Make sure hair and grease are not disposed of in toilets or sinks.
* Never flush: wipes (even flushable ones), paper towels, feminine products, disposable diapers, cotton swabs, kitty litter, hair, dental floss, dryer sheets.
* Use a plunger with short, quick motions for toilet clogs. If the toilet has water to the brim or higher than normal do not flush again until the water level is at its normal level in the bowl- it will overflow, and you will be responsible for any damages as a result.
* How to stop an overflowing toilet: remove the tank lid and life the fill valve (or float ball)- turn off the water valve behind the toilet near the base of the wall.

<https://youtu.be/BA-11wvO9lk>

* For sink clogs- take a small washcloth and close the emergency overflow drain and use a plunger on the sink OR
* Purchase a drain snake from your local hardware store- such as this one, this can help to remove hair and product build up creating slow draining or clogged plumbing.



* **Plumbing Leaks**
* shut water off immediately until maintenance can arrive to prevent further damage.

How to turn off water supply?

Most fixtures will have an individual shut-off located beneath the fixture. It will likely be a chrome valve. Sinks and showers may have two valves, one for hot and one for cold. Turn both these valves clockwise until valve is closed.

 Some appliances, such as washing machines, dish washers, and refrigerators, may have a water shut off switch on the body of the appliance or on the hose connecting the appliance to the wall.

To find the shut off for a water heater, look for a water cutoff valve directly above the heater on a connected pipe.

**Identify the main shut off valve.**

This is usually a brass valve that has a round handle. In most homes, it is located near the main water pipe leading into your home. Common locations for this pipe include garages, basements, crawl spaces, or a utility room.

If all else fails, the water can be turned off at the meter typically located in your yard closest to the street.

* **Ceiling Leaks-** check to see if it’s due to a bathroom above the leak- did water overflow from a toilet, shower, or tub? If there isn’t plumbing above the ceiling leak- it may be HVAC related, so it’s important to provide these details so we can dispatch the appropriate vendor and have this resolved more quickly. Isolate where the leak is coming from (place bucket under the leak if a small leak)- if leak occurs when toilet is flushed, turn off water to that toilet- if leak occurs when shower or tub is used- discontinue use of that fixture until the issue is repaired.

1. **APPLIANCES:**

* **Dishwasher Troubleshooting**
* Dishwasher does not work- no sound, water, or lights: check for a blown fuse, tripped circuit breaker, reset GFCI outlet near the sink (see electrical troubleshooting), check that the dishwasher is plugged in securely, check the door latch/ensure locked is engaged if applicable.
* Water does not drain from the dishwasher- clean the drain and look for any foreign items/food that could be creating a clog. Re-run and entire cycle and submit a work order if the problem continues.
* Dishes are not cleaned or drying adequately- get Affresh dishwasher cleaning tablets or similar products you can purchase at Walmart, Amazon, and follow instructions to clean the dishwasher, additionally clean the drain screen, and spray off dishes adequately prior to using the dishwasher. Run several cycles with no soap to clear out soap residue. For drying issues, utilize Jet Dry or a similar product.
* **Refrigerator Troubleshooting**
* **Icing over/or not cooling properly-** check to make sure the seal around the fridge is clean and sealing properly to the frame. Ensure the air vent in your refrigerator/freezer located on the top shelf isn’t blocked. Ensure thermostat settings are correct and adjust to see if that helps. Clean the grills at the front and back of the fridge- dust/dirt build up can clog air flow leading to cooling problems.

1. **Electrical- Circuit Breakers & GFCI Outlets**

* When your power goes out, 1st check with neighbors to see if is a power outage or contact your electric company to see if there is an outage and/or confirm your account is current. If neither of these resolve your issue, go to breaker panel and check for flipped switches- flip back to “ON” to restore power. Below is a link to a video that shows how to do such. [**https://youtu.be/5eZFZXJRnKE**](https://youtu.be/5eZFZXJRnKE)
* Reset GFCI Outlets- located in wet areas of your home (i.e. kitchens or bathrooms)- when power becomes overloaded they will “trip”- stop working. Press the reset button on them to power back on. If they are still not working, follow the step above and go to the breaker panel to flip.
* If the circuit breaker continues to go off check if too many appliances are running at the same time (microwave, toaster, blow dryer, heaters, fans, curling irons, computers, etc.)
* Individual lights not working- change the bulbs first (light bulbs are tenant responsibility to change out) then try the above, if neither of these help it’s likely an issue with the light fixture/wiring, and a work order will need to be submitted.

1. **SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS**

Smoke detectors are provided in each property and tested prior to your tenancy. If your home isn’t total electric and has natural gas or propane, your smoke detector is a combo smoke/co2 detector. If you feel your home is not properly equipped with either of these, contact our office immediately.

Throughout the term of your lease, you are responsible for testing and replacing smoke detector batteries. When you hear the “chirp” coming from the smoke detector- you can replace the battery by following these steps:

* Disconnect the smoke detector by twisting counter-clockwise
* Replace the battery with a new one
* If it is still chirping, remove the battery and hold down the test button for 15 seconds to drain any remaining charge.
* Insert the new battery and reattach to the wall/ceiling
* While you have the smoke/co2 detector removed- check the year on it. If it is older than 10 years, please submit a work order so that we may replace it.
* If this doesn’t fix the problem or you feel the smoke/co2 detector is malfunctioning, please contact our office immediately. Do not Remove Detector. It is required by law.

<https://youtu.be/G9VePsq3yuU>

1. **GARAGE DOORS**

* Ensure there is nothing blocking the lasers/sensors at the bottom of the entrance to the garage and that they are lined up. Wipe the sensor lenses with a soft cloth. Examine the connections and rectify any loose wiring.
* Ensure the system has power- if you see the light bulbs are off or an LED light on the wall button, you know you have power to your system- if not, check the breaker in the breaker panel. Ensure the motor is plugged in.
* Remote control malfunction- replace the batteries. If this doesn’t help, you may need to purchase a universal remote and program it to your garage door opener.
* Garage Door Emergency Release Latch- Garage Door Openers have an “emergency release latch” mechanism that allows you to operate the garage door manually in the event you lose power. If your garage door opener is not working, ensure this latch has not been pulled. IF so, pull the release cord again to make sure it’s fully open. Manually raise or lower the door until the carriage locks into place.

1. **Prepare Property for Freezing Temperatures:**

* Keep hot and cold-water faucets open, allowing a light stream of water to run. Pay close attention to kitchen and bathroom sinks connected to exterior walls, as these are particularly susceptible to freezing.
* Open cabinets under sinks to allow heat to reach these areas.
* Adjust thermostats to a minimum of 55 degrees if you plan to be away for an extended period. Ensure heat is working properly and contact our office if you are experiencing issues with your heating system.
* Remove and drain outdoor hoses and Cover any exposed exterior faucets. Your local hardware store, Lowes, Home Depot, and Amazon sell faucet covers for freezing temperatures.
* In the event of frozen pipes, turn on your faucet and use a hairdryer to thaw the frozen pipe.
* Also, please ensure that you or your landscaping company have turned off and properly winterized your irrigation systems if applicable.

Important Note: Failure to take proper precautions may result in maintenance chargebacks for any property damage or repairs due to busted/frozen pipes.

1. **PEST CONTROL:**

Pest control is tenant responsibility outside of termites and in some cases, rodents (if they are gaining access through issues in the exterior of the home)

* Throw away trash regularly- on the interior and exterior- do not leave trash bags piled on your porch or at your front/back doors.
* Clean regularly- ensuring no sticky or sugary substances remain on floors/countertops
* Reduce clutter- this prevents creating hiding places and nests for pests.
* Remove leaf and debris piles on the exterior
* Put away food in tightly sealed containers (this includes dog/cat food!)
* Make sure garbage bins have lids and remain closed
* Ensure all pets are up to date on vaccinations and receive monthly flea and tick prevention medications
* Eliminate standing water- water is very attractive to insects/rodents.
* Eliminate cardboard storage
* Exterminate regularly- we recommend utilizing a professional pest control company- but you can purchase products at your local hardware stores- we recommend researching your products to ensure they are EPA certified. Remember to keep pets and children away!

If your property has an infestation, we will hire a pest control company to eliminate the issue- at your expense.

**MISCELLANOUS TIPS to keep your property clean, safe, and avoid maintenance chargebacks:**

* **Clean your lint trap on the dryer after each use**
* **When clocks are set forward or back, make it a habit to test your smoke and CO2 detectors at this time. Contact our office if any issues arise or they are older than 10 years.**
* **Make sure you use the bathroom exhaust fan, or leave the bathroom window open each time you shower. If you do not have a bathroom exhaust fan, or it is malfunctioning- please report this to our office. Utilizing this as well as leaving the bathroom door open post shower, helps to prevent mold and mildew. Regular thorough cleaning is important as well.**
* **Never pour grease down a drain!**