

AROUND THE HOUSE...KNOW YOUR VALVES!

Furnace

Where is it? What kind of fuel does it use? How often do you have to clean or replace the filters? Where do you get new filters? If it's an oil furnace, when do you need to refill it and whom do you call? If it goes out, who do you call to repair it? Can you get a maintenance contract? Where's the reset button? Does it have a fan to cool the house in the summer?

Water heater

Does it have a pilot light? What if it goes out—how do you relight it? How do you set the temperature? What temperature should you set it to?

Fireplace Flu

Be sure to have it cleaned every 1 to 3 years, depending on how often you use your fireplace. Avoiding it can cause the chimney not to draw well (you'll notice that smoke stays in the room instead of going out) or can ultimately cause a chimney fire.



Shut-Off Valves

Review the location of all of the shut-off valves and how to turn them off with all your family members so you'll be prepared for emergencies.

- **Gas shutoff valve:** Locate and show entire family how to turnoff.
- **Electrical Panel/Breaker box:** Label main circuit breaker and show entire family how to shut off main breaker in an emergency, or flip any circuits back on after an overload.
- **Whole-house water shutoff valves:** The main shutoff should be beside the meter if you are on City water. If you use a well, the shutoff will be on the house side of the pressure tank. You should also know how to cut power to the tank.
- **Whole-house hot water shutoff:** There should be a valve on the hot water outlet of the water heater, which controls all of the hot water to the house.
- **Toilet shutoffs:** Show your entire family how to shut off the toilet by turning the ribbed oval handle under the tank if it ever starts to overflow.
- **Sink shutoffs:** You should have handles beneath the sinks or within the cabinets; the one on the left is usually for hot water, the one on the right for cold.
- **Dishwasher shutoffs:** Look under the kitchen sink for a reducer coupling and shutoff valve leading to the dishwasher on the 1/2" inch hot water sink supply line.
- **Washing machine:** Valves are usually where the washer hoses meet the house supply lines. However, washer hoses are notoriously weak, so consider changing them routinely every year or at least close the valves when leaving home for an extended period.

SAFETY TIP

Pilot Lights

Many older gas appliances and most water heaters have a small, continuously burning gas flame—the pilot light—that ignites the main burner. Some newer models have electronic igniters. To be safe, you should:

- Know which of your appliances have a pilot light.
- Know how to relight any pilot lights following the appliance manufacturer's instructions. If needed, call your local utility company for assistance.
- Know where the instructions are. Often, basic relight instructions are located inside the main burner compartment door.
- If you cannot relight the pilot light yourself, call your local utility company and ask for assistance.