PLUMBING & WATER HEATER MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

(Monthly Plumbing Inspection)

Monthly Plumbing Inspection

For the Month of ....., Date .....

TASK	STATUS
Walk the facility and check under all sinks, around toilets, and behind fixtures for active leaks, water stains, or moisture.	
Run water in all sinks, showers, and tubs. Check for slow drainage that could indicate developing clogs.	
Flush all toilets and urinals. Verify they fill, flush, and stop running within a normal cycle. Check for running toilets (wasted water).	
Test hot water temperature at representative faucets. Delivery temperature should not exceed 120°F at the tap for anti-scald protection (OSHA recommendation).	
Inspect exposed pipes in utility rooms, basements, and mechanical spaces for leaks, corrosion, condensation, or insulation damage.	
Check water pressure at a ground-floor faucet using a pressure gauge. Normal range: 40–80 PSI. Pressure above 80 PSI can damage pipes and fixtures.	
Inspect all floor drains in restrooms, kitchens, laundry, and mechanical rooms. Pour water into infrequently used floor drains to refill the P-trap and prevent sewer gas entry.	
Visually inspect the water meter reading. Compare to the same period last year. A significant unexplained increase may indicate a hidden leak.	
Check the area around the water heater for leaks, moisture, or corrosion on the floor or surrounding walls.	
Additional Task:	

Instructions:

Perform monthly year-round. Floor drains that dry out lose their P-trap seal, allowing sewer gas into the building. Pour water into every infrequently used drain monthly. If water pressure exceeds 80 PSI, install a pressure-reducing valve to protect pipes, fixtures, and the water heater.

PLUMBING & WATER HEATER MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

(Monthly Water Heater Inspection)

Monthly Water Heater Inspection

For the Month of ....., Date .....

TASK	STATUS
Visually inspect the water heater tank exterior for rust, corrosion, bulging, or water stains.	
Check all pipe connections (hot water outlet, cold water inlet, T&P relief valve discharge pipe) for drips or moisture.	
Verify the thermostat is set correctly. Recommended: 120°F for general use. Commercial kitchens may require higher settings for dishwashers.	
Gas water heaters: Look through the burner access panel. The pilot flame should be steady and blue. A yellow or flickering flame indicates a combustion problem.	
Gas water heaters: Check the area around the unit for gas odors. If you smell gas, shut off the gas supply, ventilate the area, and contact your gas company immediately.	
Check the flue pipe and exhaust vent for proper connection, upward slope, and no blockages. A disconnected or blocked flue can cause carbon monoxide buildup.	
Inspect the tank insulation blanket (if installed). Repair or replace if damaged or gaps are present. Do not cover the thermostat, burner access, or flue.	
Check the drain pan beneath the water heater (if installed). Empty any standing water and verify the drain line is clear.	
Listen for rumbling, popping, or banging noises from the tank during heating cycles. These sounds indicate sediment buildup on the heating elements or tank bottom.	
Additional Task:	

Instructions:

Building staff can perform these monthly visual checks. If you smell gas near a gas water heater, do NOT operate any switches or flames. Shut off the gas supply at the valve, ventilate the area, and call your gas company. Rumbling or popping sounds from the tank mean sediment has built up on the heating surface — schedule a flush.

PLUMBING & WATER HEATER MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

(Quarterly Maintenance)

Quarterly Maintenance Tasks

from ..... to .....

TASK	1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH
Test the Temperature & Pressure (T&P) Relief Valve: lift the lever for 5 seconds and release. Water should discharge through the drain pipe and stop when released. If it doesn't discharge or continues to leak, replace the valve immediately.				
Inspect the T&P discharge pipe. It must run downward to within 6 inches of the floor or to a safe drain. It should never be capped, plugged, or reduced in size.				
Check all shutoff valves (main water, individual fixture, water heater). Turn each valve to confirm it operates. Valves that are stuck or won't close need immediate service.				
Inspect toilet supply lines and shut-off valves for corrosion or slow leaks. Braided stainless steel supply lines are preferred over plastic or rubber.				
Clean faucet aerators and showerheads. Remove mineral buildup by soaking in vinegar solution or replacing the aerator.				
Check the water softener or filtration system (if equipped). Verify salt levels, filter condition, and regeneration schedule.				
Inspect caulking and grout around sinks, showers, tubs, and wall penetrations. Deteriorated caulk allows water behind walls and causes hidden damage.				
Test backflow prevention devices per your local code requirements. Annual testing by a certified tester is required in most jurisdictions.				
Additional Task:				

Instructions:

The T&P relief valve is the most critical safety device on any water heater. A failed T&P valve on a pressurized tank can generate explosive force. Test quarterly and replace if it fails to operate or leaks after testing. Backflow prevention testing is required annually in most jurisdictions by a certified tester — this cannot be done in-house.

PLUMBING & WATER HEATER MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

(Annual Water Heater Service — Licensed Plumber)

Annual Water Heater Service

For the Month of ....., Date .....

TASK	STATUS
Schedule a licensed plumber for a full annual water heater inspection and service.	
Drain and flush the tank to remove sediment buildup. Sediment insulates the heating element, increases energy costs by 25–40%, and accelerates tank corrosion.	
Inspect the anode rod. If more than 6 inches of core steel wire is exposed or the rod is heavily corroded, replace it. Anode rods should be replaced every 3–5 years.	
Test the T&P relief valve operation and inspect the discharge pipe. Replace the valve if it fails to operate or leaks after testing.	
Verify thermostat accuracy by comparing the set temperature to the actual water temperature measured at the outlet. Calibrate or replace inaccurate thermostats.	
Gas units: Clean the burner assembly, inspect the gas control valve, and verify proper combustion (steady blue flame, no soot or carbon buildup).	
Electric units: Test heating element resistance with a multimeter. Inspect elements for scale buildup. Replace failed or scaled elements.	
Inspect all water supply connections, gas fittings, and electrical wiring for wear, corrosion, or damage.	
Check the expansion tank (if installed) for proper air pressure charge per manufacturer specs.	
Record the water heater age. Tank water heaters typically last 8–12 years. Tankless units last 15–20 years. Plan for replacement as the unit approaches end of life.	
Additional Task:	

Instructions:

Annual service should be performed by a licensed plumber. Sediment buildup is the #1 cause of water heater inefficiency and premature failure. A $30 anode rod replacement every 3–5 years prevents $3,000–$8,000 in premature tank replacement. Record the unit's age — plan for replacement before failure, not after.

PLUMBING & WATER HEATER MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

(Seasonal / Winterization)

Seasonal & Winterization Tasks

For the Month of ....., Date .....

TASK	STATUS
Insulate exposed pipes in unheated areas (basements, crawl spaces, parking garages, exterior walls) before the first freeze.	
Disconnect and drain outdoor hoses. Shut off the supply valve to exterior hose bibs and open the spigot to drain remaining water.	
Identify pipes most vulnerable to freezing (exterior walls, uninsulated crawl spaces). During extreme cold, let faucets drip to keep water moving.	
Ensure the water heater thermostat has not been turned down below 120°F. Water below this temperature increases the risk of Legionella bacteria growth.	
Check pipe insulation throughout the facility for gaps, damage, or missing sections. Replace as needed.	
Test the main water shutoff valve. Confirm all staff know its location and how to operate it in an emergency.	
For seasonal or unoccupied properties: drain all water lines, toilet tanks, and the water heater. Add RV antifreeze to drain traps to prevent freeze damage.	
Spring: inspect all pipes and connections for damage caused during winter. Check for frost-related cracks, leaks, or burst fittings.	
Additional Task:	

Instructions:

Pipe freezing and burst events cause more insurance claims than almost any other plumbing failure. Insulate all exposed pipes in unheated areas before the first freeze. Water below 120°F promotes Legionella bacteria growth — do not lower the water heater thermostat below this temperature, even for energy savings.

PLUMBING & WATER HEATER MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

Documentation and Compliance

Date .....

TASK	STATUS
Maintain a water heater service log: date, tasks performed, technician name, T&P valve test result, anode rod condition, and sediment flush confirmation.	
Record water meter readings monthly. Flag any unexplained usage increases for leak investigation.	
File all backflow prevention device test certificates. Most jurisdictions require annual certified testing and retain records for 3–5 years.	
Keep anode rod replacement records with the date, rod type, and next scheduled replacement.	
Document any plumbing repairs, emergency calls, or water damage incidents with date, cause, resolution, and cost.	
Maintain a list of all shutoff valve locations with a facility map accessible to all maintenance staff.	
Keep the water heater manufacturer manual on-site. Record the unit age, model, serial number, and warranty status.	
Retain all plumbing and water heater maintenance records for a minimum of 3–5 years for insurance and compliance purposes.	
Additional Task:	

Instructions:

Insurance adjusters check water heater maintenance records after every water damage claim. A failed T&P valve, a corroded anode rod, or heavy sediment with no documented service history signals negligence. Claims are routinely reduced or denied when maintenance logs are missing. Backflow test certificates are required by most jurisdictions and must be filed with the local water authority.