



GARBAGE DISPOSAL USE RECOMMENDATIONS TO REDUCE PLUMBING COSTS AT CLARK TERRACE

Our buildings are aging, 30 plus years, and with it our water and sewer pipes are becoming fragile. They require more maintenance, which means monies out of the reserve funds.

Recently we had an immovable clog between the second and third floors that could not be dislodged using a snake from either above or below. After several visits by the plumbing service the only alternative was to remove kitchen cabinets and access the clogged pipe through the wall of a second floor unit. The costs involved included several visits by the plumber, removing and reinstalling kitchen cabinets, removal and reinstallation of sheetrock and finally painting to bring the unit affected back to current condition. As you can imagine this incident was at a sizeable cost to the association's reserves, and to each of the owners that pay monthly assessments.

Below are plumbing industry recommendations for use of garbage disposals and what should and should not be placed in them. We ask that each of us review the guidelines below and implement them. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

The proper care and feeding of your garbage disposal

1. Use your trash can

Keep anything too hard out of the disposal. The shredder will dull and become less efficient. Small hard objects can also get stuck and jam the rotating parts. Each garbage disposal has its own capacity for hard objects. The more expensive models of the same brand tend to have higher hardness capacities. The instruction manual usually specifies a list of objects to avoid. You can also gain experience with your own garbage disposal. Strong vegetable fibers can jam some garbage disposals, as well. If something may be harder than what the disposal handles, just put it in your trash.

Some items to avoid are:

hard shells from shrimp, crabs and other shellfish

un-popped popcorn kernels

hard bones

2. Do not put fibrous or starchy items in the disposal

Both can cause particularly stubborn drain blockages (fibers get tangled, and starches get thick). The following items should be put in the disposal in minimal increments, preferably cut into small pieces, or **NOT AT ALL**.

eggshells

banana peels

celery

potato peelings

corn husk or corn cobs

artichokes

coffee grounds (in quantity) or coffee filters

fruit pits and hard seeds from things like avocados or peaches

onion skins

3. Cut large items into smaller pieces

If they are too large, like the skins of melons, cut them into smaller pieces and put them one at a time into the disposal instead of trying to shove a large amount in at once. If you find yourself with a lot of larger pieces to cut up, it may be best to place them in the compost or trash instead.

4. Run water while the disposal runs

Run cold water while the disposal is on. Keep disposer and water running for 30 to 60 seconds AFTER the waste matter has cleared *your* drain. The waste still has a distance to go. Cold water keeps the motor, bearings and shredder assembly from overheating. It also lets the waste go down easier because the water is pushing it down. Don't use hot water, because it can melt fat and allow it to re-solidify as a blockage further down in the drain.

5. Clean it regularly

With the disposal off, clean the inner side of the rubber in the center of the sink leading to the disposal. It gets very dirty, and gives off an odor when not cleaned. Just wipe it with a paper towel.

Throw some ice down once in a while. While ice will not sharpen the shredders (as is commonly believed), it *does* knock off any debris build-up on the sharp edges that keeps them from grinding food properly.

6. Caring for a garbage disposal

If the disposal jams, turn off the power and look underneath the sink. There is a place in the center of the motor shaft, on the bottom of the unit, where you can use an Allen wrench to manually turn the motor. Give the motor a few manual turns to get it unstuck. Remove the Allen wrench before you try to run the motor again. Also, press the reset button/ circuit breaker on the bottom of unit, if applicable.

There are commercial products that are designed to freshen your disposal. One product is a biodegradable bag filled with a cleaning powder that you drop into the disposal; it foams up as you run your garbage disposal with the faucet on.

Garbage disposals are noisy, somewhat unreliable since you cannot always know exactly what will go down and what will not, and the powerful and reliable ones are expensive. A great alternative is a trash can with a lid that seals in the smells. Keep it right next to the counter by your sink so the waste can go right into it from over the counter.