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Water is an essential resource for our daily lives, from drinking to cooking, cleaning, and bathing. However, there are times when we may need to turn off our water supply for various reasons, such as repairs, maintenance, or in case of an emergency. Knowing how to turn the water back on is an important skill that can save you time, money, and potential damage to your property. In this article, we will discuss the different ways to turn water back on, depending on the type of water shut-off valve you have in your home. We will also provide step-by-step instructions on how to safely and effectively restore your water supply without causing any damage. Types of Water Shut-Off Valves Before attempting to turn the water back on, it is important to know the type of water shut-off valve you have in your home. There are two main types of water shut-off valves: the main shut-off valve and individual shut-off valves. The main shut-off valve controls the flow of water to your entire house. It is usually located near the water meter or where the main water line enters your home. This valve is usually a gate valve or a ball valve. Gate Valve: A gate valve has a round handle that you turn clockwise to shut off the water flow. To turn the water back on, simply turn the handle counterclockwise until it is fully open. Ball Valve: A ball valve has a lever handle that you turn perpendicular to the pipe to shut off the water flow and parallel to the pipe to turn it back on. Individual Shut-Off Valves: Individual shut-off valves are located near plumbing fixtures such as sinks, toilets, and appliances. These valves allow you to shut off the water supply to a specific area without affecting the rest of the house. Individual shut-off valves can be gate valves or ball valves, similar to the main shut-off valve. Turning the Water Back On Now that you have identified the type of water shut-off valve you have in your home, it is time to turn the water back on. Follow these step-by-step instructions to safely restore your water supply: If you have a gate valve as the main shut-off valve, follow these steps to turn the water back on: 1. Locate the main shut-off valve near the water meter or where the main water line enters your home. 2. Turn the valve handle clockwise until it is fully open. 3. Check for any leaks or drips around the pipes. 4. If you notice any leaks, tighten the valve or call a plumber for assistance. If you have a ball valve as the main shut-off valve, follow these steps to turn the water back on: 1. Locate the lever handle of the ball valve and turn it parallel to the pipe to open the valve. 2. Check for any leaks or drips around the valve. 3. If you notice any leaks, tighten the valve or call a plumber for assistance. Individual Shut-Off Valves: If you have individual shut-off valves near plumbing fixtures, follow these steps to turn the water back on: 1. Locate the shut-off valve near the fixture you want to restore water to. 2. Turn the valve handle counterclockwise until it is fully open. 3. Make sure to turn it slowly to prevent any sudden pressure surges in the pipes. 4. Check for any leaks or drips around the valve. 5. If you notice any leaks, tighten the valve or call a plumber for assistance. Safety Tips: Before turning the water back on, it is important to inspect the plumbing system for any leaks, cracks, or damage. If you notice any issues, it is recommended to call a professional plumber to assess and repair the problem. When turning the water back on, do so slowly to prevent any sudden pressure surges in the pipes. This can help prevent damage to the plumbing system and fixtures. Always check for leaks or drips around the shut-off valves after turning the water back on. If you notice any leaks, tighten the valve or call a plumber for assistance. If you are unsure about how to turn the water back on or encounter any difficulties, it is best to seek help from a professional plumber. They have the knowledge and expertise to safely restore your water supply without causing any damage. Conclusion: Knowing how to turn the water back on is an important skill that can come in handy in various situations. Whether you need to restore water after repairs, maintenance, or an emergency, following the proper steps can help you safely and effectively restore your water supply without causing any damage. By identifying the type of water shut-off valve you have in your home and following the step-by-step instructions provided in this article, you can confidently turn the water back on and ensure that your plumbing system operates properly. Remember to always prioritize safety and seek help from a professional plumber if you encounter any difficulties. The water is a precious resource, and knowing how to turn it back on can save you time, money, and potential damage to your property. So, take the time to learn how to turn the water back on, and you'll be prepared for any situation that may arise. 1 Close all faucets and sinks except for one. Professional plumber James Schuelke says to leave 1 sink or faucet on to help equalize the pressure when you turn the water back on; any sink will work.[2] Make sure it's turned on all the way and then turn every other faucet all the way off in and around your home.[3] If possible, turn on the faucet that's located at the highest point in your house. Some plumbers say this helps equalize the pressure better.[4] Equalizing the water and air pressure helps prevent the initial, high-powered stream of water from damaging your pipes.[5] 2 Locate your shut-off valve outside your home. In most areas, Schuelke says you can find your main water valve located outside; it might be at "the front of the house, side of the house, back of the house," or near the street.[6] The valve is usually housed in a grate in the ground. If you lift up the grate, you should see a hole with a pipe running through it and your home's water meter.[7] If you live in a colder climate, the water valve may be inside your home. Master plumber Dave Jones says, "If your home has a basement, you'll likely find the main water shutoff valve on a basement wall facing the front of your house" or near your water heater. "On slab homes, the valve is often hidden from view inside a closet or wall access panel near the front of the house." [8] To open the water valve grate, simply reach down and pick it up. If this is hard to do, Jones says you may need to insert a "wrench or meter key" into the keyhole. Then, turn it and lift up the grate.[9] Advertisement 3 Identify the water valve. You may notice a water meter or gauge with 1 or more turn handles on either side. These handles are the water shut-off valves.[10] In newer homes, there may be 2 valves, with 1 on either side of the water meter. In this case, use the valve closest to your house, which is usually a gate (or wheel-shaped) valve. Simply turn this by hand. In older homes, there is often just 1 valve, called a ball valve. It usually has a notched top that is perpendicular to the pipe. Jones says you typically need a meter/water key for "turning the water on and off." Luckily, you can find these keys online and at most hardware stores.[11] 4 Slowly turn the valve counterclockwise. ¼ of the way at a time. Start by rotating the water valve counterclockwise (left) and making ¼ of a rotation. Pause for 20 seconds to listen for water filling the pipes. When the noise changes, turn the valve ¼ of the way again. Wait for the noise to change again and then fully open the valve. Opening the valve slowly allows the water to start running fully without the risk of damaging or bursting your pipes.[12] If the valve is wheel-shaped, turn it with your hands or with a wrench. If the valve is a ball valve with a notched top, use a water key. Hold the T-shaped side and place the other side on top of the notch. Then, turn it. Jones says, "When the valve's handle is in line with the pipe, it's open. When it's perpendicular to the pipe, it's closed." [13] If the valve won't turn, don't force it. Instead, call your water company or a plumber to help. Forcing the valve can cause a leak.[14] Advertisement 1 Locate the supply shut-off valve near the appliance or fixture. Professional plumber David Balkan explains that almost "every plumbing fixture...like a sink, or toilet, slop sink in the basement, you name it...[has] their own dedicated valves." [15] Most of these supply valves either look like a wheel or a lever.[16] Jones says the valve is attached to the pipe running out of the appliance, fixture, or device.[17] The wheels are called gate valves while the levers are called ball valves. Note: Some older houses may not have supply shut-off valves for specific appliances and sinks. In this case, you need to turn on the water at the main valve. 2 Turn the supply valve counterclockwise. If you're dealing with a gate valve, it may take 2 to 4 full turns before you turn it on. If it is a ball valve, turn the lever so it is parallel with the pipe.[18] You should be able to turn the valve with your hands, but if that is difficult, use a wrench to help you. 3 Avoid forcing the valve open. If the valve won't turn, call a plumber. Forcing the valve can cause the pipe to crack, burst, or leak. A plumber will be able to fix or replace the valve for you.[19] Advertisement 1 Turn the upper valve on the water pump. Look for a pipe coming up and over your well's water pump. It may have a ball valve (which looks like a lever). Turn this so that it is parallel with the pipe.[20] If you have a wheel-shaped gate valve at the bottom of your water pump, do not turn this on the on position. Leave it closed. 2 Locate the well's electrical switches. In most cases, the electrical power for the well pump will be shut off at the same time as the water itself. Your system may have 2 switches: one near the pump and one at the main electrical breaker. Check both to see if they have been switched off.[21] 3 Flip the electrical switches on. If you have 2 switches that are turned off, turn on the main electrical switch first. Then, turn on the switch next to the pump. Make sure that there is no standing water under or around you. If there is, do not touch the switch. Dry or mop up the water and make sure your hands are dry. Otherwise, you may be at risk of electrical shock.[22] 4 Wait for the pump to fill. It typically takes a few minutes for the pump to fill and for you to use the water. While the pump fills, you may hear water in the pipes. Simply turn on a sink to see if the water is working. The sink may sputter and spit for several minutes.[23] If the water doesn't start running, call a plumber. Advertisement 1 Contact the water company. In most cases, let public works or the municipal water company turn your water on for you. Just contact your local water company by calling them or using their online assistance portal.[24] This is especially the case if your water was disconnected by the water company for nonpayment or other reasons. Some cities consider it illegal to turn the water back on yourself.[25] If your water is drawn from a well, you do not need to contact the water company. 2 Ask the water company to start service if you just moved. Contact the company about 2 weeks in advance of your move. If possible, ask them to turn the water on the day before you move in. You may need to provide basic identification, proof of residence (like your deed or rental lease), and a form of payment.[26] Many water companies allow you to turn the water on using an online form. Some may ask you to visit in person. 3 Explain what the problem is if your water stopped unexpectedly. Schuelke agrees that if your water stopped unexpectedly, the water company may be able to tell you why.[27] Some common problems include:[28] Unpaid bills. You may be asked to pay your water bill and extra late fees. Neighborhood or city leak. You will have to wait until the leak is fixed. A broken valve. They may send someone to inspect your valve or suggest that you hire a plumber. If the valve is broken, the city must fix it. 4 Request permission to turn the main valve on yourself. The main valve and water meter are the property of your city. Schuelke recommends calling the water company to get permission to touch or handle the main valve.[29] If you are not allowed to touch the main valve, they will do it for you.[30] You only need permission if you are turning on water for the entire house or property. Appliance supply valves can be turned on or off at your leisure. Advertisement 1 Turn off all faucets. If you winterized the house, you likely left all of the faucets open. Go through the building and turn all of these faucets off for any showers, sinks, or baths you have.[31] Remove any aerators you put on your faucets, sinks, or tubs to prevent mineral build-up when the water starts. 2 Turn on the supply valves. These are the valves underneath your fixtures and water devices, including your sinks, toilets, and water heater. Simply them counterclockwise.[32] 3 Check the pipes for visible damage. Jones recommends checking every pipe in your home to make sure no breaks or cracks developed. If you notice any damage, call a plumber to have the pipes repaired. Just don't forget to check your:[33] Water heater Sinks Toilets Showers and baths Refrigerator Washing machine Hoses 4 Turn on the water at the main shut-off valve. Once you have checked everywhere for leaks, locate the main shut-off valve, either outside or in your home. Turn it a quarter of the way counterclockwise and wait 20 seconds. Then, give it another quarter turn.[34] Water valves are usually located near the street beneath a grate. If there are 2 valves, use the one closest to your house. If you can't turn the valve by hand, use a wrench or a water key. Do not turn the valve on all at once. This could flood your pipes and cause a leak. 5 Check for leaks again. Quickly go back into your home to check all of your fixtures. Look for any water leaking from small cracks in the pipes that you may not have noticed before. If there are any leaks, call a plumber.[35] 6 Turn on your faucets one by one. Let the faucet run for about 20 seconds before turning it off. Check for leaks around the pipes again. If there are no leaks, move on to the next faucet.[36] If you notice a leak, call a plumber for repairs. Advertisement Add New Question Question Can I turn my water back on myself? Dave Jones Master Plumber, Roto-Rooter Plumbing & Water Cleanup Dave Jones is a Professional Plumber and the Midwest Regional Vice President at Roto-Rooter Plumbing & Water Cleanup. In 1992, Jones joined Roto-Rooter as a drain service technician at the age of 18. Since then, he has risen through the ranks into positions of increasing authority. Dave served as general manager of Roto-Rooter's Charlotte, North Carolina, and Atlanta, Georgia branches before being promoted to Contractor Area Manager and later to Regional Vice President. Dave holds Master Plumber Licenses in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Georgia. Some valves have a specific "key" you need to use to unlock the valve and turn it. There are also some valves that require a wrench. It really just depends on the type of valve you have. Question Is my water valve inside or outside? I can't find it. Dave Jones Master Plumber, Roto-Rooter Plumbing & Water Cleanup Dave Jones is a Professional Plumber and the Midwest Regional Vice President at Roto-Rooter Plumbing & Water Cleanup. In 1992, Jones joined Roto-Rooter as a drain service technician at the age of 18. Since then, he has risen through the ranks into positions of increasing authority. Dave served as general manager of Roto-Rooter's Charlotte, North Carolina, and Atlanta, Georgia branches before being promoted to Contractor Area Manager and later to Regional Vice President. Dave holds Master Plumber Licenses in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Georgia. It depends on where you live. In most areas, the valve will be in the basement at the front of the house. It may be tucked behind an access panel. In some states, the valve is actually on the outside of the building near the front. It really depends on where you live, but those are the two main locations you'll normally find it. See more answers Ask a Question Advertisement Thanks Thanks Advertisement Thanks Thanks Advertisement Co-authored by: Master Plumber, Roto-Rooter Plumbing & Water Cleanup This article was co-authored by Master Plumber, Roto-Rooter Plumbing & Water Cleanup. In 1992, Jones joined Roto-Rooter as a drain service technician at the age of 18. Since then, he has risen through the ranks into positions of increasing authority. Dave served as general manager of Roto-Rooter's Charlotte, North Carolina, and Atlanta, Georgia branches before being promoted to Contractor Area Manager and later to Regional Vice President. Dave holds Master Plumber Licenses in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Georgia. This article has been viewed 259,261 times. Co-authors: 9 Updated: May 30, 2025 Views: 259,261 Categories: Water Article SummaryDepending on where your water is shut off, there are a few different things you can do to get it running again. Sometimes it's necessary to shut off a water supply valve for a specific plumbing fixture, like a sink, tub, or toilet. To turn the water to the appliance back on, look for a valve attached to a nearby pipe. It should look like a wheel or lever. If it's a wheel-shaped valve, turn the wheel 2 to 4 turns counterclockwise to open it. For a lever, or ball valve, turn the valve so that it's parallel to the pipe. If you can't get the valve to turn at all, be careful not to force it. You may need to call a plumber to help so that you don't accidentally damage the valve or pipe. If you think the water has been shut off at the main valve, start by turning off all the faucets in the building except for one. Leaving one faucet on will help equalize the pressure in the pipes. Next, find the main water supply valve, which is typically located outside near the street. You may need to lift up a grate to access it. To turn the main water valve, you'll need a water key, which you can get at a hardware or home supply store. Use the key to turn the valve counterclockwise about ¼ turn at a time until the valve is completely open. Wait 20 seconds between each turn so you don't flood your pipes too quickly and damage them. If you get well water instead of municipal water, look for a ball valve, which looks like a lever, attached to the pipe above the water pump. Open it by turning it so it's parallel to the pipe. If you see a wheel-shaped valve at the bottom of the pump, leave it closed. Next, find the power switches for the pump. There may be one at the pump and another one at the main breaker for the building. Make sure both of them are switched on. Wait a few minutes for the pump to start working, then turn on a sink to make sure your water is flowing. If it's not, you may need to call a plumber for help. To learn how to switch on the main water valve, read on! Print Send fan mail to authors Thanks to all authors for creating a page that has been read 259,261 times. "My husband passed away a year ago, and this was very helpful! It was a blessing and so easy to understand! I was able to do it on my own without getting ripped off again..." - more Share your story To switch on your main water valve, leave one faucet open and turn off all the rest. Find the main water valve outside your house and slowly turn the knob a quarter-turn at a time until the water is fully flowing. Pause between turns to let the water stream settle (or else you may risk bursting your pipes). 1 Close all faucets and sinks except for one. 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Print Send fan mail to authors Thanks to all authors for creating a page that has been read 259,261 times. "My husband passed away a year ago, and this was very helpful! It was a blessing and so easy to understand! I was able to do it on my own without getting ripped off again..." - more Share your story Get Current 2.0 Program 1743687740 Eligible Customers Receive Up to 50% in Bill Credits and Waived Fees - Runs March 1 to June 30 What's Your Pipe Type? 1729877861 Learn about our lead reduction program. It's something every homeowner needs to know: Where is your home's main water valve, and how do you turn it off and on? Keep reading and we'll give you some very helpful tips. Last Modified: December 23, 2020, 1:31 pm EST Trending Popular Content as Author: Dr. Jonathan Hessel | Last update: Sunday, August 27, 2023 After resolving the plumbing issue, you will need to turn the main water valve back on. Leave one faucet on, at the highest level. Close all the other faucets around the home. Then, slowly and partially (about ½ the way to full) turn the valve on. Should 1 open faucets before turning water back on? One should normally open all faucets then turn on the main. This will allow any trapped air to be purged from the system and eliminate any "banging" noise. How long does it take for water pressure to return to normal? To return to normal, it may take a few minutes. Flushing and recirculating takes minutes. How long does it take to get air out of water lines? Once all your faucets are turned on, including the outside spigots, turn the main water valve all the way on. Let the water run through all of your faucets for 10-15 minutes to make sure you see a steady stream of water, or aren't hearing any noises coming from your piping anymore. How do you turn water back on after getting air out of the pipes? Turn the main water supply back on. With your faucets turned on, turn the main water supply valve back on. Let the water run through your faucets for 10 to 15 minutes. You need to make sure you see a steady stream of water without any noise from your piping. How Long Should You Take To Turn Water Back On: Time To Open Water Supply After Turn Shut Off How do you flush air out of a water line? Removing the Air in Water LinesTurn off Your Main Water Supply. As with most plumbing projects, it's important to turn off your main water supply first. ... Twist All Faucets a Half Turn and in Order. ... Flush the Toilets. ... Let it Flow, Let it Flow, Let it Flow. Why do I have no water pressure after turning water back on? If one of these valves is partially or fully turned off for some reason, it can cause your water pressure to decrease considerably. This might happen when the water is temporarily shut off and then turned back on again – a valve could accidentally be left partially closed rather than opened back up all the way. How long should you let water run after shut off? 4. After all faucets are open, let the COLD WATER run for at least 30 minutes. During this time, also flush each toilet in your home 2 or 3 times. Can turning water shut off affect water pressure? The house water shut off valve can easily affect water pressure if it is accidentally nudged towards the off position, thus restricting water flow and causing low pressure. The water shutoff valve is located outside the house at the water meter or near the PRV. Why is my water supply not working? You should call the water department to find out what the issue is and how long your supply will be off. Check Your Water Main: Check the location of your main shut-off valve. If you're not getting any water in your home, it's likely because of a problem with the valve. The valve is one of a city's main water lines. The main water line is a large pipe that carries water from the water treatment plant to your home. If the valve is closed, no water will flow. 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Facing the front of your house" or near your water heater. "On slab homes, the valve is often hidden from view inside a closet or wall access panel near the front of the house." [8] To open the water valve grate, simply reach down and pick it up. If this is hard to do, Jones says you may need to insert a "wrench or meter key" into the keyhole. Then, turn it clockwise. [9] Advertisement 3 Identify the water valve. You may notice a water meter or gauge with 1 or more turn handles on either side. These handles are the valve. [10] In newer homes, there may be 2 valves, with 1 on either side of the water meter. [11] 4 Slowly turn the valve counterclockwise, ¼ of the way at a time. Start by rotating the water valve counterclockwise (left) and making ¼ of a rotation. Pause for 20 seconds to listen for water filling the pipes. When the noise changes, turn the valve ¼ of the way again. Wait for the noise to change again and then fully open the valve. Opening the valve slowly allows the water to start running fully without the risk of damaging or bursting your pipes. [12] If the valve is wheel-shaped, turn it with your hands or with a wrench. If the valve is a ball valve with a notched top, use a water key. Hold the T-shaped side and place the other side on top of the notch. Then, turn it. Jones says, "When the valve's handle is in line with the pipe, it's open. When it's perpendicular to the pipe, it's closed." [13] If the valve won't turn, don't force it. Instead, call your water company or a plumber to help. Forcing the valve can cause a leak. [14] Advertisement 1 Locate the supply shut-off valve near the appliance or fixture. Professional plumber David Balkan explains that almost "every plumbing fixture...like a sink, or toilet, slop sink in the basement, you name it...[has] their own dedicated valves." [15] Most of these supply valves either look like a wheel or a lever. [16] Jones says the valve is attached to the pipe running out of the appliance, fixture, or device. [17] The wheels are called gate valves while the levers are called ball valves. Note: Some older houses may not have supply shut-off valves for specific appliances and sinks. In this case, you need to turn on the water at the main valve. 2 Turn the supply valve counterclockwise. If you're dealing with a gate valve, it may take 2 to 4 full turns before you turn it on. If it is a ball valve, turn the lever so it is parallel with the pipe. [18] You should be able to turn the valve with your hands, but if that is difficult, use a wrench to help you. 3 Avoid forcing the valve open. If the valve won't turn, call a plumber. Forcing the valve can cause the pipe to crack, burst, or leak. A plumber will be able to fix or replace the valve for you. [19] Advertisement 1 Turn the upper valve on the water pump. Look for a pipe coming up and over your well's water pump. It may have a ball valve (which looks like a lever). Turn this so that it is parallel with the pipe. [20] If you have a wheel-shaped gate valve at the bottom of your water pump, do not turn this to the on position. Leave it closed. 2 Locate the well's electrical switches. In most cases, the electrical power for the well pump will be shut off at the same time as the water itself. Your system may have 2 switches: one near the pump and one at the main electrical breaker. Check both to see if they have been switched off. [21] 3 Flip the electrical switches on. If you have 2 switches that are turned off, turn on the main electrical switch first. Then, turn on the switch next to the pump. Make sure that there is no standing water under or around you. If there is, do not touch the switch. Dry or mop up the water and make sure your hands are dry. Otherwise, you may be at risk of electrical shock. [22] 4 Wait for the pump to fill. It typically takes a few minutes for the pump to fill and for you to use the water. While the pump fills, you may hear water in the pipes. Simply turn on a sink to see if the water is working. The sink may sputter and spit for several minutes. [23] If the water doesn't start running, call a plumber. Advertisement 1 Contact the water company. In most cases, let public works or the municipal water company turn your water on for you. Just contact your local water company by calling them or using their online assistance portal. [24] This is especially the case if your water was disconnected by the water company for nonpayment or other reasons. Some cities consider it illegal to turn the water back on even if you weren't, but it depends on the reason it was shut off in the first place. You may want to contact a plumber or your city's water department first. Question Why can't I turn the valve by hand? Dave Jones Master Plumber, Roto-Rooter Plumbing & Water Cleanup Dave Jones is a Professional Plumber and the Midwest Regional Vice President at Roto-Rooter Plumbing & Water Cleanup. In 1992, Jones joined Roto-Rooter as a drain service technician at the age of 18. Since then, he has risen through the ranks into positions of increasing authority. Dave served as general manager of Roto-Rooter's Charlotte, North Carolina, and Atlanta, Georgia branches before being promoted to Contractor Area Manager and later to Regional Vice President. Dave holds Master Plumber Licenses in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Georgia. It depends on where you live. In most areas, the valve will be in the basement at the front of the house. It may be tucked behind an access panel. In some states, the valve is actually on the outside of the building near the front. It really depends on where you live, but those are the two main locations you'll normally find it. 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