

How To Flush Your Hot Water Heater

CAUTION: Flushing your water heater will produce extremely hot water. Please use caution to prevent scalding.

Sediment can gather inside your water heater causing your heater to be less efficient and even producing discolored water.

In gas heaters, sediment will come to rest at the bottom of the tank, creating a buffer between the heater and the water and can eventually clog the drain valve.

In electric heaters, the sediment will cling to the heating coil and create a scale, making the hot water heater less effective. Just like gas heaters, this scale can also come to rest at the bottom of the hot water tank and clog the drain valve.

If you notice that your cold water is clear and the water from your hot water tap is discolored, you may need to flush your hot water.

To do this:

1. Switch the circuit breaker for the hot water heater to OFF (electric) or turn OFF the main gas line (gas).
2. Turn off incoming water supply.
3. Attach a length of garden hose to the drain valve and route water into a drain on the floor or outside.

CAUTION

Be sure no one is near the drain hose or they could be scalded.

4. Open the temperature and pressure relief valve at the top of the heater.
5. Open the drain valve (you may notice some white particles in the water as the scale/sediment is flushed out).

6. When the water stops, turn back on the incoming water supply (cold water) valve and allow the water to flow until the water looks clear.
7. Once clear, turn off the incoming water supply valve.
8. Close the drain valve and remove the hose.
9. Close the temperature and pressure relief valve.
10. Turn on/open one hot water faucet somewhere in the house to let air in.
11. Turn on the cold water valve again and you will hear the tank fill with water.
12. When you have a steady stream of water from the open faucet in the house, turn the faucet off.
13. Allow the tank to fill completely and check the drain valve one more time to make sure it is tight.
14. Switch the circuit breaker for the hot water heater back ON (electric) or turn back ON the main gas line (gas).

Homeowners should flush their heaters at least once every six months. Areas with hard water or homes with infrequent hot water use (i.e. vacation homes) may need more frequent flushing to prevent sediment build up.