

Everything to Know About Cast Iron Pipes and How to Prevent Costly Repairs

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TUCSON, AZ, UNITED STATES, October 14, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Homes built in the 1990s or earlier likely contain [cast iron pipes](#) that may be

corroding beneath the surface. Over time, cast iron pipes deteriorate due to exposure to water and air, potentially leading to expensive, unexpected repairs. However, with the right preventive measures and expert assessments, staying ahead of these issues is possible before they turn into costly disasters.

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Andrew Dobbins

Intelligent Design Air Conditioning, Plumbing, Solar, & Electric, a leading service provider in Tucson, is now offering an opportunity to get cast iron pipes inspected through advanced video inspection technology, ensuring potential problems can be caught early. Additionally, their team of experts offers targeted solutions like descaling, pipe lining, or full replacements if necessary. This proactive approach helps prevent significant damage, keeps repair costs manageable, and protects the longevity of plumbing systems.



What Are Cast Iron Pipes and Why Are They a Problem?

Cast iron pipes were the standard in homes built before the 1990s, particularly due to their durability and strength. At the time, they were favored for their ability to handle high-pressure water flow and resistance to wear and tear. However, cast iron pipes, like any metal exposed to moisture, are prone to corrosion over time. As water flows through these pipes, oxygen reacts with the iron, creating rust that can weaken the structure of the pipes.

This corrosion process often happens slowly and silently. Most people may not realize there is a problem until there’s a significant leak, a major clog, or even foundational damage caused by water seepage. The issue is compounded in homes where the pipes are buried underground or

hidden in walls, making it difficult to visually inspect them without specialized equipment.

The Life Cycle of Cast Iron Pipes

The expected lifespan of cast iron pipes can vary, but most experts agree that they begin to deteriorate after about 25 to 30 years. That means that homes built in the 1990s are reaching the critical age where problems could start surfacing. Factors like soil acidity, water quality, and the type of wastewater running through the pipes can accelerate the degradation process, leading to cracks, leaks, and even total pipe failure.

Andrew Dobbins, owner of Intelligent Design Air Conditioning, Plumbing, Solar, & Electric, emphasizes the importance of timely inspections: "Many don't realize the risk that cast iron pipes pose until it's too late. By the time visible signs of damage appear, the corrosion may already be extensive. That's why we recommend getting ahead of the problem with regular video inspections and preventive maintenance."

How to Tell If a Home Has Cast Iron Pipes

Many may not know the type of pipes installed, especially if the home was purchased secondhand. Here's how to check if cast iron pipes are in place:

Check the Year of Construction: Homes built before 1990 likely have cast iron pipes. Homes built in the 1970s or earlier almost always have cast iron plumbing unless replaced.

Inspect Exposed Pipes: Check exposed plumbing, such as in basements, crawl spaces, or utility areas. Cast iron pipes are dark, heavy, and metallic in appearance. They may also show signs of rust over time.



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Intelligent Design Air Conditioning, Plumbing, Solar, & Electric Fully Stocked Van

Consult Inspection Reports: If the home was purchased in the past few years, the inspection report may contain information on the types of pipes used. If unclear, consider having a professional plumber assess the system to confirm.

Common Signs of Cast Iron Pipe Damage

If a home has cast iron pipes, there are several signs that could indicate they are corroding or failing. Recognizing these warning signs early can help take action before minor problems turn into major, expensive repairs.

Recurring Drain Backups or Clogs

One common indicator of corroding cast iron pipes is frequent backups in drains. As cast iron pipes deteriorate, rust and other debris can accumulate inside the pipes, restricting water flow and leading to blockages. Over time, these blockages can become more frequent and harder to clear with traditional drain cleaning methods.

Slow Drainage Throughout the Home

Corrosion can cause slow drainage across multiple areas. If sinks, tubs, and showers are all draining slower than usual, it's a strong indicator that there is a buildup inside the pipes that needs to be addressed. Slow drainage can also signal a larger issue with the integrity of the pipes themselves.

Rusty or Discolored Water

Discolored water coming from taps is another common sign of cast iron pipe corrosion. A brown or rusty tint to the water often indicates the pipes are corroding from the inside. While the water may still be safe to use, it's a warning sign that the pipes are beginning to fail and should be inspected immediately.

Unpleasant Odors from Drains

Corroded pipes can develop small leaks that allow sewage gases to escape, resulting in unpleasant odors from the drains. If a persistent sewer smell is noticed inside the home, it's important to have the plumbing system inspected as soon as possible.

Visible Signs of Water Damage

Cracks in walls, ceilings, or the foundation can sometimes be linked to leaking cast iron pipes. When pipes fail and water seeps into structural elements, it can cause significant damage over time. Additionally, signs of water damage or mold around the base of walls may indicate a plumbing leak.

Proactive Solutions to Avoid Expensive Repairs

Taking a proactive approach to inspecting and maintaining cast iron pipes can save thousands of dollars in repair costs. At Intelligent Design Air Conditioning, Plumbing, Solar, & Electric, several services are offered to help avoid expensive plumbing disasters, including video inspections, [cable cleaning](#), descaling, pipe lining, and more.

Video Inspection of Sewer Lines

A video inspection is one of the most effective ways to determine the condition of cast iron pipes. Using advanced camera technology, technicians can get a close-up view inside the pipes to identify signs of corrosion, rust, buildup, and cracks. Video inspections allow pinpointing the exact location of any problem areas, giving the information needed to recommend the right course of action.

The video inspection process is non-invasive and doesn't require any digging or disruption. It provides real-time insights into the condition of the pipes, making it easier to address issues before they escalate into larger problems.

Cable Cleaning for Light Blockages

In cases where there are minor blockages caused by rust or debris buildup, cable cleaning is an effective solution. A cable cleaning machine can break through blockages and restore proper flow to drains, preventing further damage. This process is particularly beneficial for those experiencing recurring clogs or slow drainage.

Cable cleaning is an affordable way to keep plumbing systems running smoothly and is recommended as part of a regular maintenance schedule for homes with cast iron pipes.

Descaling Cast Iron Pipes

For pipes showing early to moderate signs of corrosion, descaling may be the best option. Descaling involves using specialized tools to remove rust and debris buildup from the interior walls of the cast iron pipes. This process not only extends the life of the pipes but also improves water flow and reduces the risk of clogs.

Descaling can be particularly useful when pipes are still structurally sound but beginning to show the effects of long-term corrosion. It's a cost-effective way to keep the plumbing system in good working condition without needing a full replacement.

Pipe Lining for Long-Term Solutions

If the video inspection reveals more extensive damage, pipe lining might be recommended. This process involves inserting a flexible, resin-coated liner into the existing pipes. Once the liner is in place, it hardens to create a new, smooth surface inside the old pipe, effectively sealing any leaks and stopping further corrosion.

Pipe lining is a minimally invasive solution that avoids the need for major excavation or demolition. It's an excellent option for those looking to extend the life of cast iron pipes without the disruption of a full pipe replacement.

Full Pipe Replacement for Severe Corrosion

In cases where the cast iron pipes are too damaged for descaling or pipe lining to be effective, full pipe replacement may be necessary. While this is a more intensive repair, it's often the most practical solution for homes with pipes that have been extensively corroded over time.

At Intelligent Design, outdated cast iron pipes are replaced with modern, durable materials like PVC or copper, which are resistant to corrosion and offer improved water flow. The team will assess the condition of the pipes and work to determine the most cost-effective solution.

How to Work with Insurance to Minimize Repair Costs

One concern for those facing cast iron pipe repairs is the cost involved. Fortunately, depending on the circumstances, repairs related to damaged cast iron pipes may be covered by homeowner's insurance, especially if water damage has occurred.

At Intelligent Design Air Conditioning, Plumbing, Solar, & Electric, assistance is offered in navigating the insurance claims process. Detailed documentation, including video inspection footage and repair estimates, is provided to support claims. By working closely with insurance providers, out-of-pocket expenses can be reduced, ensuring necessary repairs with minimal financial strain.

Schedule a Regular Inspection to Avoid Expensive Repairs

Preventative maintenance is the key to avoiding costly repairs in the future. Intelligent Design recommends scheduling an annual video inspection of sewer lines, particularly if cast iron pipes are present. These inspections help catch potential issues early, providing peace of mind and saving from more extensive damage down the road.

Andrew Dobbins, the owner of Intelligent Design, encourages a proactive approach: "Regular inspections and early detection can save thousands of dollars in repair costs. Our goal is to help maintain plumbing systems before small problems become major issues."

Contact Intelligent Design for Expert Cast Iron Pipe Inspection and Repair Services

Homes built before 1990 should have plumbing inspected for signs of cast iron pipe damage. Intelligent Design Air Conditioning, Plumbing, Solar, & Electric offers comprehensive video inspections, drain cleaning, and expert repair solutions to keep plumbing systems in top condition. Stay ahead of costly repairs and ensure the longevity of a plumbing system by scheduling an inspection today.

About Intelligent Design Air Conditioning, Plumbing, Solar, & Electric

Intelligent Design Air Conditioning, Plumbing, Solar, & Electric is a leading provider of HVAC, plumbing, solar, and electrical services in Tucson, AZ. With a commitment to quality, efficiency, and customer satisfaction, the company offers a wide range of services designed to meet the diverse needs of residential and commercial clients. Their team of licensed professionals is dedicated to delivering exceptional service and innovative solutions.

Intelligent Design, under the leadership of Andrew Dobbins, a Marine Veteran renowned for his extensive expertise, has become synonymous with reliability, cutting-edge innovation, and unparalleled excellence in the HVAC sector. Established in Tucson, AZ, the company has flourished as a symbol of exceptional service, unwavering customer satisfaction, and a steadfast

commitment to environmental stewardship. It remains the top choice for homeowners in search of efficient, affordable, and outstanding AC Tune Up solutions.

The team is rich in experience, bringing an average of 12 years per technician to every project, whether it involves AC repair in Tucson, HVAC, plumbing, solar, roofing, electrical services, or a combination of these. This depth of experience enables Intelligent Design to provide a comprehensive range of vital services, including air conditioning repair and installation, emergency heating services, and solutions for indoor air quality, catering to both residential and commercial clients in the Tucson area.

Proudly recognized as the highest-rated AC Tune-up company in Southern Arizona, Intelligent Design is constantly striving to enhance and expand service offerings. The recent foray into roofing services has further cemented its status as not just the leading HVAC provider in Tucson but also as the top roofing company in the region. The extensive array of services now includes HVAC, Plumbing, Solar, Electrical, and Roofing, making Intelligent Design a comprehensive solution provider for all home service requirements.

Before searching "[AC Repair Near Me](#)", search Intelligent Design—the AC Tune-Up Specialists in Tucson, AZ.

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