

Westchester Commons Townhome Association

Residential Water Heaters

WCHOA townhome water heaters are, for the most part, ten years old. Recently I spoke with a water heater serviceman about installing a replacement unit for my townhome. He answered the following questions:

Q: How long can I expect my water heater which was installed in 2000 to last?	A: Yours is essentially a builder's grade heater made prior to 2004. We cannot predict its reliability beyond 10 years. Heaters manufactured after 2004 have federally mandated improved construction and safety standards. They tend to last longer – but cost more than older models.
Q: What is the most common failure?	A: The seams and weld joints eventually crack allowing for water seepage outside the tank.
Q: I have a drip pan with a drain pipe running outside my house. Won't that protect me from floor and ceiling damage?	A: If you catch it in time, yes. But, the seal around the drain pan should be periodically tightened (snuggly but not overly) and the entire "O" ring (both sides) should be caulked with a silicone sealer.
Q: What do you mean "catch it in time"?	A: A rapid flowing leak could exceed the flow speed in the drain pipe and water can overflow onto the floor/ceiling below.
Q: Is there a time when I should be extra observant?	A: Yes, when the outside air temperature changes dramatically – e.g. fall to winter; winter to spring. The resultant temperature changes in the water coming into the tank will cause compression issues which tend to adversely affect otherwise weakened welds and joints; might cause them to crack and leak. The period between November and January is known as, "Water Heater Problem Season".
Q: Are there any observable symptoms that my tank is failing?	A: <u>Don't rely on these:</u> Of course, if there is water in the drain pan, get help right away. If you hear noises, especially clicking, popping or cracking noises in your water system, call an expert.
Q: Do you know an expert?	A. Yes. Contact Jamie McPherson with R.S. Andrews Services at 678-300-6687 . Tell him Randy LeGrand, referred you. You can receive a <u>Westchester Commons group customer discount</u> on a replacement heater. Also certain systems are eligible for the Federal Energy Tax Credit.

Randy LeGrand (103):

For additional maintenance information try: www.novellahomes.com/homeowners.cfm (go to Section I) Plumbing)