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We have no relationship with any advertisers or products. We have no paid links, no paid content, and therefore no conflicts of interest. We are supported entirely by ads placed on our pages by Google and by sales of the BuildingAdvisor Estimating Spreadsheet. WHO WE SERVE Whether you are an owner-builder who wants to do it all, or plan to use the services of an architect, general contractor, subcontractors, or a construction manager (or aren't sure which way to go), we can help make your project go more smoothly – and save you money and gray hairs in the process. Who we are GET INVOLVED If you've read this far, you're probably the kind of person that wants to play an active role in your building project, maybe designing and contracting it yourself, and maybe even swinging a hammer. It's great to be actively involved. You're much more likely to end up with the project you want in terms of design, cost, energy efficiency, comfort, and durability. It's not that the other people on your building team don't want to do a good job. But no one understands your goals, or cares as much about your project, as you. WHERE TO BEGIN Maybe you've been thinking about this project for years, or maybe you just got started yesterday. In either case, you should begin at the beginning — assessing your needs, capabilities, time constraints, and budget, and deciding what responsibilities to take on yourself and which to outsource to others. HOW TO USE THIS SITE The site is organized roughly in the order of a typical project, although in reality, you'll often be jumping back and forth between sections. Your three biggest assets going forward will be knowledge, planning, and communication: Knowledge – The more you bring to your project, the better the outcome. Learn as much as you can about design, materials, building systems, contracts and contractors, costs, and risks before proceeding. Take advantage of the vast amount of information available today on the Web and elsewhere. Without knowledge you are shooting in the dark! Planning – The more time you spend planning, the faster, better, and cheaper your project will be — with the fewest headaches. Construction on the building site may be the most exciting phase, but the planning is the most important. Surprises on the job site always cause headaches and cost money, so don't be surprised — plan ahead! Communication – Remember, it's your project. If you don't clearly communicate your desires to all members of your building team, don't expect things to come out the way you want. They won't! Your contract, plans, specifications,and budget are your primary tools for communication. Learn how to use these effectively to keep everyone working together, on track, to meet your goals. So don't skimp on any of these. Remember that this is a marathon, not a sprint. Take the time necessary to learn the ropes, to formulate a good plan and realistic budget, and to communicate clearly with everyone on your team. Invest your time in good planning, the building will almost build itself. Ask a question and we'll get you an answer as soon possible. Let us know what you think. Email your feedback and suggestions for how we can improve our site. Share your experiences with others by posting a comment at the end of any article. View our Privacy Policy. Reader Interactions Navigating the Path to Clean Water Published: Water softeners are a popular choice for homeowners looking to improve the quality of their water supply. These systems are designed to remove hard minerals, such as calcium and magnesium, from the water, making it softer and cleaner for everyday use. However, like any other appliance, water softeners can develop problems over time that can affect their performance and efficiency. Fortunately, troubleshooting these issues is not as complicated as it may seem. With a basic understanding of how water softeners work and some practical solutions, homeowners can easily diagnose and fix many common problems. In this article, we will explore 17 of the most common issues that can arise with water softeners and provide practical solutions to get the system back up and running. We will also discuss manufacturer-specific problems, preventative maintenance, and replacement considerations to help homeowners make informed decisions about their water softener. Key Takeaways – Regular maintenance is crucial to prevent water softener problems.– Practical solutions are provided for 17 of the most common issues that can arise with water softeners.– Manufacturer-specific problems are discussed for Whirlpool, Culligan, GE, and SpringWell water softeners.– Using high-purity salt and sanitizing agents can help prevent issues with the brine tank and disinfect the system. 17 Common Issues Seventeen common issues that can affect the performance and efficiency of water softeners are explored in this article. These issues range from simple problems like salt bridge and excessive salt usage to more complex ones like low water pressure and leaks. Water hardness can cause many of these issues, as it can lead to brine tank blockages, clogs, and other problems that can affect the overall functioning of the water softener. One of the most common problems is salt bridge, which occurs when a hard crust forms in the brine tank, preventing the salt from dissolving properly. This can lead to a lack of soft water and reduced efficiency of the water softener. Excessive salt usage can also be caused by incorrect salt dose settings or clogs in the brine tank. Regular cleaning and inspection of the brine tank can help prevent these problems and keep the system running smoothly. Manufacturer-Specific Problems The article also provides information on specific problems that may arise with water softeners from manufacturers such as Whirlpool, Culligan, GE, and SpringWell. Whirlpool water softeners may have excessive water in the brine tank, which can be caused by a malfunctioning float valve or a clogged nozzle and venturi. To fix this issue, the article suggests cleaning the nozzle and venturi or replacing the float valve. On the other hand, Culligan water softeners may have low water pressure, which can be caused by a clogged or damaged resin tank, malfunctioning valve, or inadequate water flow. To address this issue, the article suggests checking the resin tank for blockages, inspecting the valve for damage, and ensuring proper water flow into the softener. Overall, the article provides practical solutions to manufacturer-specific problems, highlighting the importance of regular maintenance to prevent issues. Additionally, the article emphasizes the need to consult manufacturer manuals or seek professional help if necessary. Furthermore, the article addresses GE water softener error codes, which can indicate issues with the control board, valve motor, or sensor. The article suggests resetting the control board, checking the valve motor for damage, and examining the sensor for blockages or defects. If these solutions do not fix the problem, the article recommends contacting GE customer service for further assistance. By discussing these specific problems, the article provides a comprehensive guide on how to troubleshoot water softener issues and maintain optimal system performance. Preventative Maintenance Regular preventative maintenance is crucial for ensuring optimal performance and longevity of water softeners. Neglecting to properly maintain the system can lead to a host of problems, including clogs, leaks, and reduced efficiency. As such, it is important to take a proactive approach to water softener maintenance, including regular cleaning and inspection of components, monitoring salt levels, and replacing worn-out parts. By doing so, homeowners can avoid costly repairs and ensure that their water softener continues to function properly. One important aspect of preventative maintenance for water softeners is monitoring salt levels. The brine tank should be checked regularly to ensure that there is an adequate amount of salt for the system to function properly. Too much or too little salt can lead to issues such as salt bridge and mushing, which can cause blockages and reduce efficiency. Additionally, using high-purity salt in the water softener can prevent issues with the brine tank. Regular cleaning of the brine tank every 6-12 months is also recommended to prevent blockages and keep the system running smoothly. By taking these simple preventative measures, homeowners can avoid common water softener problems and ensure that their system continues to provide clean and soft water for years to come. Considering replacement options for a water softener may be necessary if the system frequently breaks down, is over 10 years old, or requires frequent repairs. While regular maintenance can extend the lifespan of a water softener, it is important to weigh the costs and benefits of replacement versus repair. When making this decision, cost analysis and environmental impact should be taken into account. When it comes to cost analysis, homeowners should consider the upfront cost of a new water softener versus the cost of repairing an existing one. While a new system may seem expensive, investing in a more efficient model can lead to long-term savings on energy and salt usage. Additionally, a new system may come with a warranty or maintenance plan that can provide peace of mind and further savings. In terms of environmental impact, newer models may be more efficient and use less energy and water, leading to a lower carbon footprint. Ultimately, the decision to replace a water softener should be based on a careful evaluation of all factors, including cost and environmental impact. Conclusion In conclusion, water softeners are a valuable addition to any household, but they can develop issues over time. This article has provided practical solutions to 17 common problems that can arise with water softeners, regardless of the manufacturer. It is essential to perform regular maintenance to prevent these problems from occurring in the first place, such as checking the salt levels and cleaning the resin tank. Additionally, if the water softener is beyond repair, replacement may be necessary. Overall, troubleshooting water softener issues can be a straightforward process with the right knowledge and tools. By following the preventative measures outlined in this article and addressing any problems promptly, homeowners can ensure that their water softening system continues to provide clean and soft water for daily use. Discover the top 5 best pitcher water filters of 2024, ensuring your water is pure and clean with every sip; find out which made the list.Read more Are you concerned about lead contamination in your drinking water? With the increasing awareness of the harmful effects of lead on human health, it's important to invest in a high-quality water pitcher filter. In this article, we will explore the top water pitcher filter brands for lead removal and provide you with the information you…Read more As we approach 2023, concerns over the safety of New York City's tap water persist. Reports of lead leaching, chlorine byproducts, and other contaminants have raised questions about the long-term safety of the city's water supply. Despite meeting federal drinking water standards, some residents remain skeptical about the quality of their tap water. Understanding the…Read more As an affiliate, we may earn a commission from qualifying purchases. We get commissions for purchases made through links on this website from Amazon and other third parties. HydroJourney is a blog dedicated to raising awareness about the global water crisis and providing practical solutions for clean water. We aim to be a trusted resource, sharing insights on water purification techniques, conservation strategies, and the latest advancements in water technology. We are passionate and committed to empowering readers to make informed decisions and take meaningful actions towards achieving clean water for all. Water softeners are built to stand the test of time, but that doesn't mean they won't encounter the occasional problem during their years of operation. Like all appliances, water softeners are prone to malfunctioning from time to time. Luckily, in most cases, you'll be able to resolve the issue yourself, saving the expensive fee for professional maintenance. In this water softener troubleshooting guide, we'll be sharing some of the most common water softener problems and how you can solve them yourself. Let's jump into the water softener problems you're likely to encounter, starting with the most common. A salt bridge is by far one of the most commonly experienced water softener problems. A salt bridge is a hard, crusty formation on the surface of the salt level. Salt bridges form when the brine tank is stored in a high-humidity area, or the salt levels are too high for the tank. Once you've identified a salt bridge, it's easy enough to remove. Simply use a broom handle to knock the salt bridge into pieces, then fish the pieces out of the water using a net or a cup. You can avoid salt bridge formation altogether by making sure the water softener is stored in a non-humid location and only adding salt to the fill line in the tank. Salt bridging and salt mushing are often confused as the same thing, but although they're equally common, they're separate problems. Salt mushing occurs in the bottom of the tank, and is caused by salt recrystallizing and forming sludge. Salt mush blocks the base of the tank and prevents the brine solution from passing into the resin tank. This affects both the softening and regeneration processes. If you seem to no longer have soft water, salt mushing is one of the first problems to look for. To fix a salt mushing issue, empty the water out of the brine tank entirely and remove the salt. Scrub the inside of the tank to remove leftover salt crystals, then add a fresh batch of salt. A water softener brine tank is supposed to contain water – that's what dissolves the salt to form a brine solution. However, one of the most common water softener problems is too much water in the brine tank. If your tank's water is alarmingly high, or – even worse – overflowing, here are the likely reasons why: This is the easiest and least threatening problem to resolve. The brine tank's float valve controls how much water is in the tank at any time. To amend a float tank that's too high, follow the instructions in your user manual to set the float valve to a lower level. An old water softener system may degrade to such a point that its components can't do their jobs properly. This could cause too much water to enter the tank. If your softener is more than 8 years old, you might need to buy a new one altogether. A broken water entry valve is the worst cause of water in a brine tank, as it often leads to flooding. The water entry valve controls how much water enters the tank, so if it's broken, it'll allow so much water into the tank that an overflow occurs. Replace the valve to solve the issue. Related: Why is my water softener overflowing? Perhaps too much water isn't one of the water softener problems you're dealing with – perhaps your brine tank doesn't have enough water. This might not actually be a problem for you. It's normal not to notice the water in the brine tank at all. But if your tank is only about half full of salt, and you still can't see any water, here's what might have happened: The brine line is a tube connected to the brine tank, which refills the tank with water during the regeneration process. If this line becomes clogged or damaged, it may not send water into the tank as intended. Replace the brine line if the issue can't be resolved by flushing the line. Just as the float valve can be set too high, it can also be set too low, preventing enough water from getting into the tank. In this case, follow the instructions in the user manual to raise the float valve to a higher setting. Again, the water entry valve might be to blame here. Just as a broken valve can let too much water into the brine tank, it could also prevent water from entering the tank altogether. Replace the entry valve if necessary. If your water softener isn't using salt, you might have a problem with the entry valve motor. This motor is supposed to control the amount of water that enters the brine tank. If not enough water is getting into the tank, the salt won't be able to dissolve in the water, and no brine will be formed. Fix this issue by replacing the entry valve motor. Note: A lot of people assume that their water softener isn't using salt when it actually is. Remember it's common for brine tanks to form salt bridges. A salt bridge occurs on the top of the existing salt, so you won't notice when the salt beneath this layer is being used. Remove the bridge to reveal the true salt level in your brine tank. Floating particles in your soft water are a likely sign that your water softener's resin beads are reaching the end of their lifespan. Old resin beads are likely to break off from the resin bed and pass into the softened water itself. They're not dangerous to drink in small quantities, but they're a sign they need to take action and replace your resin. New resin beads usually cost around $170 for a full tank's worth. You can replace the resin beads yourself – just tip the old ones out and pour the new ones in their place. Although traditional water softeners do add salt to water, you shouldn't be able to taste this salt. Salty water is a sign of a problem with your water softener. One of the most simple-to-resolve causes of salty water is incorrect settings. Your water softener adds a measured amount of salt to your water based on your inputted water hardness. If you've inputted a number that's too high, the system might add too much salt to your water. A pinched drain hose presents another way for too much salt to get into your soft water. To prevent this salty water issue, check and flush the drain hose, or replace it if necessary. This is one of the most worrying water softener problems to have. You want your water softener to improve your water quality – so why is your soft water brown? Luckily, brown water is very rarely caused by a water softener itself. Most likely, the brown water leaving your faucets is caused by high sediment levels in your water source or by old, corroded plumbing in your home. Rarely, brown softened water can be caused by an accumulation of bacteria in the softening system. If you're not sure of the cause of your brown water, it won't hurt to sterilize your softener to eliminate any potential bacteria buildup. You can safely use bleach in a water softener brine tank – just add 2 ounces of bleach to every 3 gallons of water. Run several regeneration cycles, then allow water to flush out of your faucets for five minutes. If your water is still brown, test your water for sediment or call a plumber to inspect your pipes. Another of the most common water softener problems relates to regeneration. A correctly functioning softener performs a regeneration cycle at least once every two weeks. If your system isn't regenerating, it won't be long before your access to soft water cuts off entirely – so you need to troubleshoot the problem ASAP. One of the simplest (and thankfully easiest-to-fix) causes of a water softener that won't regenerate is a broken regeneration timer. The regeneration timer programs the system to perform a regeneration cycle on a recurring basis. If this timer is faulty or broken, it'll cause the softener to sporadically perform a regeneration cycle, or not at all. To check for a broken regeneration timer, set the timer to a specific time, then listen for the softener to perform a regeneration cycle at this time. If it doesn't, the timer is likely at fault, and you should replace it. Clogging in the tubes is another common issue in water softeners that can affect the frequency of regenerations. In this case, you may hear noises to suggest that your softener is performing a regeneration cycle, but your water might not taste soft – or it might taste too salty. Remove the tubes and flush them, then replace them and set your softener to perform a manual regeneration cycle to see if the issue is resolved. It's right to be concerned if your water softener is making unusual noises, as this can be a sign that the system isn't operating properly. Loud clunking or whirring sounds indicate that one or several of the components in your softener are clogged, worn, or broken. Examine the valves and water lines, and check the timer, motors, and air valves. If any of these parts are clogged, broken, or damaged, flush or replace them as necessary. Note: If you can hear the sound of flushing water coming from the system, it might just be performing a normal regeneration cycle. In this case, it's all fine! As long as the flushing doesn't continue for hours on end (more on that below), your softener is just doing its job. The average length of a water softener regeneration cycle is two hours. If your water softener is performing regeneration cycles that are much longer than this, or it's performing too-frequent regeneration cycles, it's a sign of a problem with the system. If the pipe connecting the salt tank to the resin tank is clogged, brine won't be able to pass into the resin bed. The softener will constantly try to draw brine from the tank, but will be unable to, resulting in a never ending regeneration cycle. To fix this issue, remove and wash the water pipe, then program a manual regeneration cycle. Water softeners are smart machines, but because they're computer-based, the smallest issue can prevent them from operating properly. Check that the system's settings are still correct and that there are no broken switches. Amend the settings and fix or replace the switches as necessary. This issue isn't so much to do with the water softener, but with your own water supply. If your water pressure is too low, it could prevent the softener from being able to properly regenerate, resulting in a stuck regeneration cycle. In this case, install a booster pump upstream of the softener to increase water flow into the system. Related: Can a water softener cause low water pressure? Of all the problems to have with water softeners, leaking is one of the worst – and potentially the most catastrophic. If you notice a puddle of water beneath your water softener, your first step is to find out where the leak is coming from. Check all the connections between the tanks, water pipes, and other parts. You're most likely to detect a leak immediately after installing a water softener or performing water softener maintenance. In this case, the problem is caused by incorrect installation. Tightening the fittings should help. Leaking may also be caused by worn parts. Replacing the parts should resolve the issue. If you're dealing with a major leak, shut off your water supply as soon as you can and call a plumber to help you detect the problem. There's a lot that goes into setting up a water softener for the first time, and a lot of potential mistakes to make. Your user manual should clearly outline exactly what you need to do to correctly set up your water softener, but this isn't always the case. Or, your user manual might be clear enough, but you're still confused by the setup process. If you're not sure how to set up your water softener, it's worth calling the manufacturer and asking a customer service specialist to talk you through the process. If you're still uncertain, contact your local plumber for professional assistance. A dead water softener sounds dramatic – but don't worry, it isn't the end for the entire system. If your softener doesn't appear to be doing much at all, first check that it's plugged in and switched on. If it is, but it's still not working, it's likely due to motor failure. A failed motor means that the system can't regenerate or perform any of the essential processes to keep operating. If your cables and water lines are still intact but the motor won't start, motor failure is the most likely cause. You may be able to replace the motor for free if you're still within the warranty period. Otherwise, you'll need to pay out of pocket for a new motor. Repairing or replacing the motor is one of the most expensive jobs, so consider whether it may be time for a new water softener altogether. Reduced water pressure in your plumbing system may be caused by your water softener for one of the following reasons: If your water softener is too small, it won't be designed to provide the water flow that your plumbing system needs. There's nothing you can do about this – if your water softener's maximum pressure output is too low for your home, you'll have to replace it with a correctly-sized system. The resin bed itself can be the cause of reduced water pressure. As the resin ages, resin beads that are flushed down the drain line may cause a blockage, reducing the flow of water out of the system. Iron, sediment, and scaling in any part of the water softener can reduce water pressure. As water flows through the unit, it meets resistance from the built-up contaminants. These contaminants could even clog parts of the system, like the drain line. Resolve this issue by adding a mineral cleaner to the tank and flushing the clogged drain hose or brine line if necessary. The purpose of a water softener is to prevent hardness minerals from getting into your plumbing system. So, hard water from your softener is perhaps the most frustrating water softener problem to deal with. A salt build-up in the salt tank is one of the main causes of water that isn't soft. Clogging and blockages can also prevent the system from doing its job of softening water. Another potential problem is that the bypass valve is turned to divert water away from the system. In this case, you just need to turn the bypass valve so water is sent into the softener. Your demand for softened water might be too high for the system's capacity, resulting in improper regeneration of the beads in the resin tank. This would mean that only some of your water was being softened. Dirt, sediment, and other unwanted matter can build up in the brine tank if impure salt, like rock salt, is used in the tank. You'll need to clean out the tank every 6-12 months to prevent dirt and sediment from causing a blockage. Follow our instructions on how to clean a water softener salt tank here. The best way to prevent dirt in the salt tank is to not use dirty salt. Instead, use high-purity salt, like evaporated salt pellets. Related: Now you have a manual of potential problems to access, the next step is to figure out which of these problems is affecting your softener. Here's the step-by-step process for diagnosing and fixing problems in most water softeners: A bucket A water-safe vacuum cleaner A 4-in-1 screwdriver Check the Water Softener's Power – Unplugging a water softener is easily done. Most water softeners need electricity to perform regenerations between softening cycles, and they won't work if the power is off. Check the Softener's Bypass Switch or Valve – Before you blame your water softener itself, problems with your water supply might be because water isn't running through the softener in the first place. Check the bypass switch or valve on the top of the water softener to make sure that water is flowing through the system correctly. Consult the User Manual – The user manual will tell you all the important information you need to know about maintaining the softener, including when the resin beads need replacing and cleaning. Follow the instructions to replace or clean the resin bed. Check the Regeneration Timer – If the softener isn't regenerating as normal, check the regeneration timer. Replace the timer if it's faulty. Check for Broken Air Valves – A broken air valve causes air discharge after the softener has regenerated. Check the valves and replace them if they're broken. Unclog Clogged Valves and Water Feed Lines – Check that the drain flow line, the brine tube, and the brine tank itself aren't clogged, and flush them if they are. Replace the Salt – If a salt crust or a salt mush has formed in the brine tank, replacing the salt is the smartest solution. Reprogram or replace the control valve – In the case of a faulty control valve, reprogram or replace the valve. Your softener's control valve should be covered by a warranty, so check to see if you're still in the warranty period before paying out of pocket. Check salt dose setting – Excessive salt usage is likely caused by an incorrect salt done setting or clogs in the brine tank. Check for these issues and amend them as necessary. Disinfect the system – Finally, clean out the system following the manufacturer's instructions. Got a popular branded water softener that's experiencing a problem? More than likely, other people have experienced this exact issue too. Even the best water softeners are known to have their flaws. Here, we'll be looking at some of the most common problems experienced by popular water softener brands, and how to fix them. The most common Whirlpool water softener problem is too much water in the brine tank. This is usually caused by a faulty or damaged rubber gasket. To resolve the issue, follow these steps: Order a new rubber gasket and wait for it to arrive. Switch off and unplug your water softener, set the system to bypass mode, and remove all the salt from the brine tank. Disassemble the nozzle on the top of the water softener tank, then remove the damaged gasket and replace it with the new one. Reassemble the nozzle. Plug in and switch on the system. Program the softener to run a cycle – but don't add salt to the tank yet. You need to see that the brine tank is no longer excessively filling with salt. If only about 2.5 inches of water has entered the tank, the problem is solved. Pour out the water and refill the brine tank with salt as normal. Low water pressure and constantly draining water are two of the most common issues you'll experience with a Culligan water softener. To fix low water pressure: Put the softener in bypass mode to see what your water pressure is like when it isn't flowing through the system. You might have an issue with your water pressure that has nothing to do with your water softener. If so, consider installing a booster pump. If your water pressure is normal, check that the water softener is correctly sized for your water usage. If it is, check that the sediment filter isn't clogged and ready for a replacement. Finally, check whether the resin beads are clogged. If they are, use a resin cleaner to clean them out, and replace them if necessary. To fix constantly draining water: If you can hear trickling water that doesn't stop, it's a sign that your water softener is stuck in regeneration mode. Switch on the bypass valve and consult our above guide on how to fix a water softener that's constantly regenerating. Otherwise, call Culligan customer support. source: Culligan.com You're likely to come across two common issues with GE water softeners: error codes and control panel buttons not working. To fix error codes: Bring out your user manual. This will tell you what all the error codes mean and how to resolve them. If you've lost your user manual or you just want more information, call GE's customer service team for direct support. To fix control panel buttons not working: Make sure the water softener is plugged in and switched on. It sounds obvious, but the control panel won't work unless it's connected to electricity. If the softener is switched on, but the buttons are unresponsive, you likely need a new clip for the touchpad. Order a new clip from the manufacturer. Replace the clip and try the buttons. If they're still not working, replace the nozzle and the gasket. Seek help from GE's customer support if the system's control panel is still unresponsive. Low water pressure and leaking are two common problems experienced by SpringWell water softener owners. To fix low water pressure: Put the softener in bypass mode and check your own water pressure. If it's low when water isn't running through the softener, you might need to adjust your home's pressure gauge or install a booster pump. If your water pressure is fine except for when water flows through the softener, check the sediment filter to see if it's clogged and needs to be replaced. Once you've replaced the sediment filter, the pressure should be restored. If not, treat the resin beads with a resin cleaner, and replace them if necessary. To fix leaking: Check the o-rings and connections in the system. Most leaking issues occur from incorrect installation or worn o-rings. Replace the o-rings if necessary. Hand-tighten connections and fittings if necessary. SpringWell's softeners use high-quality components, so this should resolve the leaking issue. If not, call SpringWell customer support. Water softeners don't last forever, but there are things you can do to maintain your softener and prevent it from dying an early death: Use high-quality salt – Highly pure salt like dissolved salt pellets are much cleaner for your water softener than impure salt like rock salt. This will reduce the cleaning involved in owning a water softener. Keep an eye out for clogging and salt bridges – You should quickly get into a routine of adding salt to your water softener, and get a good understanding of how much should be added, when. If your salt isn't emptying as it usually does, check for a salt bridge or a clog at the bottom of the tank. Clean the resin tank when recommended – Your manufacturer should recommend a frequency for cleaning the resin tank, and which products to use. Resin bed cleaners are more potent than the water that's used to flush the resin tank during regeneration, which helps to extend the resin's lifespan. Don't forget about the Venturi valve – Your water softener's venturi valve sends the brine solution from the salt tank to the resin bed when the system regenerates. Regularly clean and inspect the Venturi valve for damage and replace it if necessary to prevent a loss of water pressure. The best way to tell that you have a clogged softener is if your water's hardness level changes. If you start to notice hard water issues again, you might have a clog in the system. The most common things to go wrong with a water softening system are constant draining, too much water in the brine tank, salt bridges and mushing, sediment build up in the salt tank, and clogged resin. Yes, but you should be able to see the water unless the tank is less than half full of salt. If you can see the water, you probably have a stuck float or a similar issue that's causing too much water to enter the tank. Depending on the issue, you could end up with hard water or water with a salty taste as a result of your softener not working. If your water softening system is working, you'll no longer have hard water in your home. You should also hear the softener regenerating when it's scheduled to do so, and the softener's output pressure should be the same as your usual water pressure. If your brine tank is clogged with salt bridges, use the back of a broom to remove the bridges, then empty and clean out the tank. Refill the salt and set the system to manually regenerate to ensure it's working properly. In-Stock Speciality Plumbing & Filtration Comprehensive online catalog of filters, fittings, and filtration systems over 18,000 Items in-stock certified experts on-hand and eager to help all of your filtration & treatment needs, all in one place. Our warehouse locations in South Carolina and Utah allow for rapid nationwide delivery Expedited Orders Ship Same Day Most in-stock items arrive in 2 -5 days! With warehouses in both South Carolina and Utah, we are able to reach all of the USA. Thousands of Products In Stock We have over 18,000 products stocked and ready to ship when you need them! Technical Support & Solutions Need a little bit of help or an entire solution designed? We have you covered. Call us toll-free at (877) 930-7295. 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Our experts explain how.Learn MoreThe Motorsport Images Collections captures events from 1895 to today's most recent coverage.Discover The CollectionCurated, compelling, and worth your time. Explore our latest gallery of Editors' Picks.Browse Editors' Favorites Although water softeners are made to last, they will nevertheless occasionally have issues over the course of their years of use. Like other equipment, water softeners occasionally experience the common water softener problems. Fortunately, you can usually fix the softener problems yourself without having to pay a costly professional maintenance fee. We'll discuss some of the most typical water softener issues in this troubleshooting guide, along with solutions you may try on your own. Let's start with the most frequent water softener issues you're likely to have. Water Softener Issues, Causes & Fixes Most Common Water Softener Problems Salt Bridging One of the most frequent issues with a water softener is a salt bridge. On the surface of the salt level, there is a hard, crusty structure known as a salt bridge. When the brine tank is kept in a humid environment or when the salt content is too high for the tank, salt bridges can occur. It's simple to get rid of a salt bridge once you've found it. Simply break the salt bridge in pieces with a broom handle, then use a cup or a net to fish the fragments out of the water. By ensuring that the water softener is stored in a dry area and only adding salt to the fill line in the tank, you may completely prevent salt bridge construction. Salt Mushing Although they are both equally prevalent, salt bridging and salt mushing are distinct issues that are frequently mistaken for one another. Salt recrystallizes and becomes sludge, which leads to salt mushing at the tank's bottom. The base of the tank is blocked by salt mush, which stops the brine solution from entering the resin tank. Both the softening and regeneration processes are impacted by this. One of the first issues to look for is salt mushing if your water seems to have lost its softness. Salt mushing softener problems can be resolved by completely draining the brine tank of water and removing the salt. After cleaning the tank's inside of any remaining salt crystals, add some new salt. Too Much Water in the Brine Tank Since water dissolves salt to create a brine solution, a water softener's brine tank should be filled with water. However, having too much water in the brine tank is one of the most typical water softener issues. The following are the most common causes of an alarmingly high or, worse still, overflowing water level in your tank: You have a high float valve setting The solution to this issue is the most straightforward and non-threatening. The float valve in the brine tank regulates how much water is kept in the tank at any given moment. Follow the directions in your user handbook to lower the float valve in order to correct a too-high float tank. Your Water Softener is Old An outdated water softener system may deteriorate to the point that its parts are unable to perform their functions adequately. As a result, the tank can fill up with too much water. You might need to completely replace your softener if it is older than 8 years. You don't have a functioning water entry valve The worst source of water in a brine tank is a damaged water entry valve since it frequently causes flooding. If the water entrance valve breaks, too much water will be allowed to enter the tank, causing an overflow. The water entry valve regulates how much water enters the tank. To fix the problem, replace the valve. Not Enough Water in the Brine Tank Your brine tank could not have enough water in it, which would suggest that one of your water softener issues isn't related to too much water. You may not genuinely have an issue with this. It's typical to not even notice the brine tank's water. However, if your tank is only halfway full with salt and you still cannot see any water, the following may have occurred: The Brine Line is Clogged During the regeneration process, water is added to the brine tank through a conduit known as the brine line. This tube might not properly transfer water into the tank if it is blocked or broken. If flushing the line doesn't cure the problem, replace the brine line. Your Float Valve is Set Too Low In the same way that the float valve may be set too high, it can also be set too low, which will prohibit the tank from holding enough water. To adjust the float valve to a higher setting in this situation, according to the user manual's instructions. You don't have a functioning water entry valve Once more, the water entrance valve may be at fault. A malfunctioning valve can both allow too much water to enter the brine tank and prevent any water from entering at all. If required, replace the entrance valve. The Water Softener Isn't Using Salt If your water softener isn't using salt, the entrance valve motor may be malfunctioning. The amount of water pumped into the brine tank is expected to be managed by this motor. The salt won't be able to dissolve in the water and no brine will develop if not enough water is entering the tank. To solve this problem, swap out the entrance valve motor. Many individuals mistakenly believe that their water softener doesn't use salt when in fact it does. Keep in mind that salt bridges frequently occur in brine tanks. You won't realize when the salt underneath this layer is being consumed since a salt bridge forms on top of the salt that is already present. To see the real salt level in your brine tank, remove the bridge. Your Soft Water Contains Floating Particles Floating particles in your soft water are probably an indication that the resin beads in your water softener are nearing the end of their useful life. It is conceivable that old resin beads will separate from the resin bed and fall into the softened water. They are safe to consume in moderation, but they are a warning that your resin beads need to be replaced. A full tank of brand-new resin beads normally costs roughly $170. You may change the resin beads on your own; simply pour the new resin beads in their place after removing the old ones. Your Soft Water Tastes Salty You shouldn't be able to taste the salt that standard water softeners add to the water, despite the fact that they do. Your water softener may be having issues if your soft water is too salty. Incorrect settings are one of the easiest softener problems to fix when it comes to salty water. Based on the water hardness that you enter, your water softener will add a certain amount of salt to your water. The system can salt your water too much if you enter a figure that is too high. An additional way for too much salt to enter your soft water is through a constricted drain hose. Check the drain hose, flush it, or replace it if required to avoid the problem with the salty water. Your Soft Water is Brown One of the most concerning issues with a water softener is this one. Why is your soft water brown when you want your water softener to increase the quality of your water? Fortunately, a water softener alone very seldom causes brown water. The most likely causes of the brown water coming out of your faucets are either old, corroded plumbing within your home or excessive sediment levels in your water supply. Rarely, a buildup of bacteria in the softening system might be the source of dark softened water. If you're unsure of what's causing your dark water, sterilizing your softener will help get rid of any potential bacterial accumulation. Add 2 ounces of bleach for every 3 gallons of water in the brine tank of a water softener to use it properly. Run numerous regeneration cycles before allowing your faucets to run dry for five minutes. If the water in your home is still brown, check it for sediment or hire a plumber to look at your drain hose. Your Water Softener Won't Regenerate Regeneration is one of the most frequent issues with water softeners. At least once every two weeks, a softener that is operating properly will go through a regeneration cycle. You must address the issue as soon as possible since if your system isn't regenerating, it won't be long until you can no longer obtain soft water at all. Broken Regeneration Timer A faulty regeneration timer is one of the most straightforward and, luckily, quickest fixes for a water softener that won't regenerate. The regeneration timer sets the system up to run a regeneration cycle repeatedly. The softener will only sometimes or not at all execute a cycle of regeneration if this timer is malfunctioning or damaged. Set the timer to a certain time and wait for the softener to go through a regeneration cycle to see whether the regeneration timer is malfunctioning. If it doesn't, the timer probably has to be replaced since it's broken. Clogging in the Tubes Another frequent problem in water softeners that can limit how frequently they regenerate is clogging in the tubes. If this is the case, your water may not taste soft or may taste overly salty, even though you may hear noises that indicate your softener is going through a regeneration cycle. To check if the problem is fixed, remove the tubes, cleanse them, then reinstall them and configure your softener to run a manual regeneration cycle. Unusual Noises are Being Made by Your Water Softener If your water softener is producing strange noises, you should be worried since this might mean that something is wrong with the system. Loud clunking or whirring noises are a sign that one or more of your softener's parts are blocked, worn out, or damaged. Check the timer, motors, and air valves, as well as the valves and water lines. Replace or flush any of these components that are clogged, broken, or otherwise damaged. If you hear water flushing from the system, it may just be going through a typical regeneration cycle. It's okay in this instance. Your softener is just doing its job as long as the flushing doesn't last for hours on end (more on that below). Your Water Softener is Stuck in Regeneration Cycles A water softener regeneration cycle lasts, on average, two hours. There may be a problem with the system if your water softener is undertaking regeneration cycles that are significantly longer than this or that occur far too frequently. Clogged Water Line Brine won't be able to enter the resin bed if the pipe that connects the salt tank and resin tank is blocked. The softener will attempt to take brine from the tank repeatedly but will be unsuccessful, leading to an endless cycle of regeneration. Remove and clean the water pipe, then set up a manual regeneration cycle to solve the problem. Switches with incorrect settings or damage Although water softeners are intelligent equipment, they are computer-based, so even the tiniest problem can prevent them from working effectively. Verify that the system's settings are still accurate and that no switches are damaged. If required, adjust the settings and repair or replace the switches. Low Water Pressure This problem more closely relates to your own water source than to the water softener. The softener could be unable to renew correctly if your water pressure is too low, which could lead to a stalled regeneration cycle. To improve water flow into the system in this situation, add a booster pump upstream of the softener. Your Water Softener is Leaking Leaking is one of the worst and perhaps most disastrous issues that water softeners may have. The first thing to do if you see a pool of water next to your water softener is to determine where the leak is coming from. Verify all of the connections made by the water pipes, tanks, and other components. The most probable time to find a leak is just after a water softener has been installed or serviced. In this instance, improper installation is to blame for the issue. Adjusting the fittings should be beneficial. Wearing down components might also create leaks. The problem should be solved by changing the components. If you have a significant leak, turn off the water as soon as you can and call a plumber to assist you find the source of the issue. Your water softener is configured improperly There are several steps involved in installing a water softener for the first time, and there are many mistakes that might be made. That should be quite apparent in your user manual on how to properly set up your water softener, but it isn't always the case. Or perhaps your user manual is sufficiently clear, but you're still baffled by the setup procedure. It's recommended to phone the manufacturer and request a customer service representative to walk you through the procedure if you're unsure how to set up your water softener. If you're still unsure, get expert advice from your neighborhood plumber. Your Water Softener has Died It may sound dramatic, but the system is not doomed if the water softener dies. Check sure your softener is connected in and turned on first if it doesn't seem to be doing anything at all. If it still doesn't function, the motor is probably broken. When a motor fails, the system is unable to renew or carry out any other necessary functions. The most likely reason for a motor failure is if your wires and water pipes are still in good condition yet the motor won't start. If you are still covered by the warranty, you could be eligible for a free motor replacement. If not, you'll have to buy a new motor on your own own. One of the most expensive tasks is to fix or replace the motor, so think about if a new water softener would be necessary instead. Your water softener is lowering the pressure in your water Your water softener may be to blame for low water pressure in your plumbing system for one of the following reasons: Incorrectly Sized System Your plumbing system's water flow requirements won't be met if your water softener is too small. You will need to replace your water softener with a system that is the proper size if the maximum pressure output is too low for your home. Iron or Sediment Buildup Water pressure can be lowered by iron, sediment, and scaling in any area of the water softener. The impurities that have accumulated inside the unit present resistance to the passage of water. These impurities may even cause the system's drain hose to block. Add a mineral cleanser to the tank to alleviate this problem, and if required, flush out the clogged drain hose and brine. Clogged Resin Reduced water pressure may be caused by the resin bed itself. Resin beads discharged down the drain line may clog

installation or worn o-rings. In case the o-rings need to be changed. If required, manually tighten fittings and connections. The high-quality parts used in SpringWell’s softeners should fix the leak problem. Contact SpringWell customer service if not. How to Prevent Water Softener Problems and Prolong your System’s Lifespan Although water softeners don’t last forever, there are things you can do to keep them in good condition and stop them from breaking down too soon. Use high-quality salt; impure salt, such as rock salt, is significantly worse for your water softener than highly pure salt, such as dissolved salt pellets. This will lessen the amount of cleaning required to maintain a water softener. Additionally, keep an eye out for salt bridges and clogging. You should rapidly establish a pattern for adding salt to your water softener and get a solid grasp of when and how much to apply. Look for a salt bridge or a blockage at the bottom of the tank if your salt isn’t draining as it typically does. Additionally, you should clean the resin tank as often as advised by the manufacturer. The manufacturer should also provide product recommendations. The longevity of the resin is aided by the fact that resin bed cleaners are more effective than the water used to cleanse the resin tank during regeneration. Do not overlook the venturi valve. When the system regenerates, the venturi valve in your water softener transports the brine solution from the salt tank to the resin bed. To avoid a drop in water pressure, the Venturi valve should be regularly cleaned, checked for damage, and replaced as necessary. FAQs How can you tell if your water softener is clogged? If the hardness of your water fluctuates, that is the surest sign that your softener is clogged. You can have a clog in the system if you start to have hard water problems once more. What can go wrong with a water softener? A water softening system’s most frequent softener problems are continually draining, an excessive amount of water in the brine tank, salt bridges and mushing, sediment buildup in the salt tank, and blocked resin. Should a water softener’s salt tank be filled with water? Yes, however until the salt tank is less than half filled, you should be able to see the water. If the water is visible, there is possibly a trapped float or some softener problems that is allowing too much water to enter the tank. What happens when water softener stops working? If your softener isn’t working, you can wind up with hard water or water that tastes salty, depending on the problem. How can the effectiveness of water softener be determined? You won’t have hard water in your house if your water softening system is functioning. Additionally, the softener’s output pressure should be equal to your regular water pressure, and you should hear it regenerate when it is supposed to. How do you unclog a brine tank? Use the back of a broom to scrape away any salt bridges from your brine tank, then empty and clean it out. To make sure the system is operating properly, refill the salt and set it to manually renew. Please note: This item is not available for same day shipping. Use the chat feature or give us a call at 864-284-1801 for further information.