



EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SLAB LEAKS



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Slab Leaks

Many homes in Orange County do not have basements and were built upon concrete slab foundations. Due to this, the plumbing pipes (both water, drainage, and sewer) are buried beneath the slab. When these pipes crack due to **ground shifting, pipe abrasion, or corrosion**, they create a slab leak. Slab leaks can be dangerous and very expensive when not identified early. Below we discuss the signs of a slab leak and what you can do to prevent one.

What Is A Slab Leak?

A slab leak is a condition in which water leaks from the ground under a concrete slab foundation. Many homes in warmer climates are built upon concrete slab foundations and do not have basements. When plumbing pipes below the concrete slab burst, they create slab leaks. There are basically two types of slab leaks: pinhole or seepage slab leaks and cracks slab leaks. This article mainly talks about pinhole slab leaks, which often result from decaying sewer lines. It also touches on some other causes for slab leaks.

A slab leak can be caused by many different problems, but it usually results from deteriorating pipes or improperly sealed exterior penetrations that allow groundwater into your home's footing (footing water). If you suspect that you have a slab leak, contact your local plumbing inspector to take care of the problem right away; otherwise, it could cause severe damage to your property's foundation—and its overall structural integrity.

Slab leaks are not only frustrating because of the water damage they cause, but slab leaks can also be bad for your home's health. Sewer gas is typically the result of a slab leak, which often makes living in your home miserable—as well as potentially dangerous to its inhabitants. This includes carbon monoxide poisoning from sewer gases being vented into your home's interior. There are many different ways that slab leaks can occur under the slab foundation of your home. Below are some examples:

Pinhole Slab Leak

This type of slab leak occurs when decaying sewer lines release gases that gradually wear away at their protective coating and then perforate (or "pinhole") the inner pipe wall. The pinhole slab leak is the most common slab leak, especially in older homes whose sewer lines are made of cast iron.

Crack Slab Leak

A crack slab leak occurs when the compression ring inside your home's toilet does not grip the porcelain well enough to create a secure seal that prevents water from passing through. These types of slab leaks can often be difficult to detect until damage is done (i.e., until there's already water on your bathroom floor). The compression rings also wear down over time and need to be replaced every 3-5 years for this reason. Sometimes when there are ground shifts, it can cause your plumbing pipes below your home's foundation to crack.

Direction Slab Leak

This type of slab leak results when an exterior pipe breaks or deteriorates, allowing groundwater into the footing (slab foundation). If you go outside at low tide, you can sometimes see the slab being sucked down by the water. This type of slab leak is more difficult to detect because there's no specific area where it occurs. Once an exterior line breaks or deteriorates, water begins pooling in your slab's footing until enough pressure builds up that it enters your home through any crack or hole—no matter how small. **Pipe abrasion** can also cause a direction slab leak or a slab leak in general.

Flood Slab Leak

A flood slab leak results when a drainpipe becomes clogged with dirt, debris or other sediments. It's typically caused by collapsed or crushed sewer lines, which are often installed below driveways and patios. The blockage causes polluted runoff to flow toward the lowest point on the property—which is usually at another building (like a garage or shop) or at your slab foundation.

Edge Slab Leak

An edge slab leak occurs when the slab's footing becomes eroded, allowing water to seep in. It can be caused by factors such as roof leaks, poor grading around the slab's perimeter, inadequate drainage, and downspout problems that prevent water from being carried away from them effectively.

Tree Slab Leak

A tree slab leak results when an obstructed sewer line allows polluted runoff into the slab footing. Larger trees often have wider root systems, which spread beneath your home's foundation—especially when they are planted close enough to make roots grow beneath it. This typically happens when you plant a tree too close to your home—which makes it easier for its roots to encroach on your slab's footing. If you see roots pushing up through your slab or surrounding slab, call an expert to take care of the problem before it becomes too severe (i.e., more costly).

Temperature Slab Leak

A temperature slab leak results when groundwater freezes and expands, exerting enough pressure to buckle the slab foundation. This type of crack slab leak typically happens in warmer climates where homes are built on slabs that are placed directly onto dirt or clay. The freeze/thaw cycle slowly damages the edges of the concrete slab foundation until it finally buckles. It can also happen in colder climates if there is a direct line of cold airflow beneath the slab, which restricts thawing in the winter months.

How Is A Slab Leak Repaired?

There are many ways to repair a slab leak. The first step a professional slab leak plumber in Orange County should take is to properly identify the leak. There are several methods of **water leak detection** including the use of a **plumbing inspection camera** to pinpoint the slab leak and its location. Hiring a plumber who truly understands the interworkings of your **plumbing system** is critical to successfully repairing your slab leak. Here are some methods we take when preparing slab leaks:

Repiping or Pipe Re-Routing

The best option when repairing a slab leak is to re-route the pipe above ground. If your leak warrants a re-routing, this will be your least expensive option. During this process, we will cap the broken pipe and run new piping on the outside of your home. This involves getting our **repiping plumbers** into the mix whoa re experts are re-routing pipes.

Tunneling Beneath The Slab

The next best option is to use tunneling equipment to tunnel beneath the slab in order to repair the pipe. If you have a **corroded pipe** or a pipe with abrasion, it can be as simple as replacing that part of the pipe section. Tunneling is a great option when the ground around your home permits it and the leak is not that serious.

Breaking Through The Slab

The last resort is to break through the concrete slab using a jackhammer in order to get to the leak. This is the most expensive option as concrete needs to be reported after the pipes are repaired. This option, however, will give you the best results long term. Installing brand new piping will increase your water pressure and prevent poor water quality. It will also ensure that your plumbing system is running properly.

How Much Does It Cost To Repair A Slab Leak?

When it comes to slab leak repair costs, they vary based on the extent of damage done to your home's slab, foundation, and internal structure, as well as how long you go without making repairs on slab leak issues for your property. For example, slab leaks left untreated for multiple years will lead to rotting floorboards underneath the slab that need replacement or repair. According to HomeAdvisor, the national average of a slab leak repair job is about \$2,280. On the other hand, the average cost of a simple pipe repair is about \$630. On the high end, slab leaks could be \$10,000+ if other elements are involved such as mold removal, complete repiping, or even asbestos removal.

How Do I Know If I Have A Slab Leak?

There are many tell-tale signs of a slab leak. However, just because you have one of these signs doesn't necessarily mean that you have a slab leak either. It is best to be careful if you have a symptom of a leak and to contact a slab leak plumber immediately so they can **detect the leak**. Here are the most common signs that you might have a slab leak in Orange County:

High Water Bills

If you are noticing that your water bills are increasing, it could be a sign that you have a slab leak. This could also just simply mean more household usage as well. Water consumption is measured by your home's water meter. The meter spins as you use water and measures the total gallons being used. Typically, most water utilities will charge you for the total water consumed in your household over a certain billing period. When you have a hidden leak in the slab, the excess water leaking from the pipe can cause your meter to record more usage which will later be reflected on your billing statement. If you are experiencing high water bills, call a slab leak plumber for a diagnosis.

Floor Hot Spots

Another common indicator of a slab leak is hot spots on the floor of your home. When water pipes burst below your home's slab foundation, the hot water pouring out of the pipe can heat your floors. Ever walk barefoot around your home and notice a hot spot on the floor? This could mean that you have a leak below the hot spot. Call a plumber immediately before it becomes a bigger problem!

Low Water Pressure

Water pressure is another great indicator of a water leak in Orange County! If you suddenly notice a decrease in water pressure in your showers or sinks, it could mean that you have a leak! Because excess water spills out of the plumbing system in the case of a leak, this decrease in supply could cause a drop in water pressure in your home.

Excess Mold Growth

Notice mold growth on your walls or around your floorboards? This could be an indication that you have a slab leak beneath your home's foundation! In a slab leak situation, the excess water will cause moisture build-up below your floorboards and the recess moisture will lead to mold growth. Mold can be dangerous to your health as well so it is imperative that you have a plumber check it for you! The plumber might need to open your drywall to identify the source of the mold.

How Can I Avoid A Slab Leak?

There are few things more frightening to a homeowner than waking up in the middle of the night to hear gushing water coming from their bathroom. When leaks happen, people often think it's their slab leak detector going off and calling for help. However, slab leak detectors don't just go off when there's a slab leak; they can also be triggered by high water pressure and high usage rates. Slab leaks occur throughout the plumbing system and cause damage not only to your home but also its value. Here are six ways to avoid slab leaks:

Avoid Using Too Much Water Pressure

While high water pressure is nice in the shower, excessive water pressure can cause pipes to weaken and rupture. Some plumbing pipes are not built to handle high water pressures and can lead to leaks.

Check The Water Meter

If you think your slab leak might be caused by high water pressure, check the water meter for abnormally high readings.

Take Action Against Hard Water

Hard water can also have a negative impact on the pipes. Installing a water softener system is a great way to combat hard water impacts on your plumbing system.

Avoid Chemical Drain Cleaners

Chemical drain cleaners can be very harsh on the insides of your plumbing pipes and cause them to corrode. It is always best to use a drain cleaning plumber rather than chemical drain cleaners to clear your clog.

Use Backflow Prevention Protectors On Valves And Faucets

When using certain fixtures in your home, such as lavatories or sinks with spray heads, be sure to install backflow prevention protectors on the valve and faucets.

Examine Pipes For Discoloration

Discoloration may be an indication of a slab leak. Pay close attention to slab leaks around the water meter, which will typically appear as brown or green patches. If you notice discoloration near your slab leak detector switch, it's likely that you have a slab leak.

Pipe Replacement

Pipe Replacement Can Stop A Slab Leak Before It Starts. Replacing old pipes with new ones made out of copper or plastic can help stop slab leaks before they happen by taking care of weak points in the plumbing system where slab leaks commonly occur.