

Washing Machine Hoses

Why are the hoses a concern?

The leading cause of water damage in most residences is failure of the flexible rubber hoses that connect the washing machine to the hot and cold water supply valves. The hoses that typically come with new washing machines are inexpensive and of a low quality, usually having a life span of 4 to 5 years.

Why do these hoses fail?

The hoses usually fail at a specific location – the area near the coupling. This is due to the manufacturing process as the metal compresses the rubber and the sharp edges can cut into the rubber hose over time



resulting in failure of the hose. Secondly, the rubber degrades over time and

becomes brittle resulting in cracking. This coupled with the sudden surge of pressure or water hammer that occurs when the washing machine turns off can cause the hose to rupture or develop a blister type aneurism that will eventually fail.

What are the implications?

Water to the washing machine is almost always on even when the appliance is not in use. This means that the lines are under pressure and should a leak develop or

worse rupture then free flowing water will result.

Short of a fire, nothing causes more damage to a property then leaking water. One estimate puts damage from leaking pipes, fixtures, hoses and appliances at 65% of all claims.

Worse yet is that for reasons unknown the hoses will fail at the worst possible time like when you're away for an extended time. This will compound the problem as the water could run for days until discovered causing even more damage to the home.



Can I just turn off the water?

Yes, this is a very effective method to avoid problems should the hoses fail. The problem with this approach is you need to turn the water off at the hot and cold supply valve after every time you do laundry. Most people won't do this on a regular basis and all it takes is to forget one time.

Additionally, the valves are not usually conveniently located and some can be difficult to operate requiring multiple turns of the knobs to fully close the valve. Plus, since these valves are may not designed to be used regularly with frequent use they may fail and start leaking or not fully shut off the water.



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We suggest that you only turn off the supply valves when you're going to be away for an extended period.



Another option is to have a plumbing contractor install a single handle shut

off valve that will turn off both valves simultaneously in one easy motion.

What about braided stainless steel hoses?



A lot of online forums and other "experts"

promote the benefits of braided stainless steel hoses as being burst and leak proof. The reality is that while they are somewhat better than the plain rubber hoses but, they are still made from inexpensive rubber with the same manufacturing process and thus prone to leaking and failure. So while they may give you peace of mind they really are not the best solution either.

What other options are available?

Investing in a set of high quality washing machine hoses that are made from commercial grade rubber and have heavy



duty fitting is recommended. A number of different manufacturers make this type of hose and they will cost around \$40-50 a set. At least one manufacturer "FloodChek" guarantees its hoses against leaking and bursting for up to 20 years.

Another option is installing an automatic shut off valve.



This type of device uses a sensor mounted on the floor and when water is detected it will automatically shut off the hot

and cold water supply. Some of these devices can detect the change in water pressure/flow usually associated with a leaking or burst pipe and shut off the water.

It's best to check with a licensed plumbing contractor or the local plumbing supply company for available products, options and recommendations.