

Water in Craig Bay – Friend or Foe

March 2021

Water can be beautiful - on a sunny day, walk along the beach. It is a necessity (drinking, toilets, cooking) and a convenience (dishwashers, clothes washers, refrigerator water dispensers & ice makers) but it also can be a foe.

Craig Bay, and specifically Seaside Village, have experienced numerous water leakage events over the last few years, as can be attested to by the number of restoration company trucks sometimes seen on our streets. Some water damage was caused by outside events such as clogged perimeter drains, overflowing gutters etc., but most have been caused by interior events such as leaking refrigerators, toilets, dishwashers, clothes washers, poor plumbing connections or plumbing fixtures (taps, hoses etc.).

When a water leak event occurs, it often involves the Strata insurance coverage (\$10,000 deductible), the homeowner's insurance (if applicable), the homeowner (directly affected by the inconvenience), Proline Management, a restoration damage company, a plumbing company, and possibly a number of other trades (electrical, painting, drywall repair).

The number of water leakage events has been significant and have played a major role in our Strata insurance rate increases and increase in our water-related insurance deductibles.

Our homes are aging, and plumbing components installed in the original construction can fail. Typical toilet and tap shutoffs were old style washer taps (not stainless-steel ball valves) and water line connections to toilets, taps, dishwashers, washing machines and refrigerators were plastic or rubber and not braided stainless steel hoses. It was noted by a renowned flooring company that 'a flooring company's best friend and salesman is a refrigerator with a water dispenser and icemaker'.

Council is asking SSV residents to help reduce the number of water leakage events in our homes in the hope we can reduce the inconvenience to homeowners and help minimize Strata insurance increases.

The following are some items the Council is asking you to consider - especially when you are undertaking modifications in your home that involve plumbing.

Although some specific products and companies are named, SSV Council is not specifically recommending them, but only using them as representative examples.

Consider this check list of best practices:	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of the location of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ the main household water shutoff is located in the house √ the shutoff to the outside tap (if applicable - not all SSV homes have outside tap shutoffs). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household pressure should be in the range of 65 pounds maximum. Excessive pressure can damage plumbing connections. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Have the house water pressure checked periodically to ensure the pressure regulator is functioning properly (every 2nd year or so). √ Water pressure regulators can be adjusted if necessary. √ Pressure gauges that attach to hose taps are available commercially. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When going away for an extended period: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Shut off your main water supply inside the house, if possible. √ If this is done, and if applicable, the hot water tank gas supply and/or electrical supply should be turned off including the electrical supply to small under sink hot water tanks. For gas hot water tanks this will necessitate a relight on return which may be difficult for some residents. √ Residents should also ask a trusted friend to check their home periodically. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ If specific items such as in floor heating require the main water supply to be left on, then the water supply to individual appliances such as toilets, fridges, dishwashers, washers, sinks, water filters, under sink hot water tanks and hot water tanks should be shut off. √ Often access to the refrigerator shutoff requires the refrigerator to be pulled out. √ One ingenious SSV resident had a plumber move the fridge shutoff to a more easily accessible location. √ Upon return from a trip, it is very important that the main water shutoff in the home should be turned back on slowly, so the sudden pressure does not damage plumbing connections. √ Having a sink tap open while the water is slowly turned on will also help relieve a sudden water pressure spike. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water tanks typically have about an 8 to 12 years life: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Have the stand-alone water tank checked periodically. √ A small amount of water should be drained off annually to minimize sediment build up. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For those less handy, this may involve calling a plumber: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Consider replacing older style gate shutoff taps (commonly having a scalloped round handle) with stainless steel ball valves (usually having a lever handle). √ Shutoffs should be closed and opened about once a year to prevent them “freezing up” from lack of use. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ At the same time, the shutoff should be checked for leakage around the tap and connection. √ The washers in taps should be replaced after several years, especially the hot water tap, where the washer softens and deteriorates more often than the cold-water tap. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The clear plastic supply lines on some refrigerator models are notorious for causing major water damage. Where possible: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Replace older style plastic/rubber water supply line hoses to the refrigerator with braided stainless-steel hoses. √ When purchasing a new refrigerator, make sure it does not have this type of water supply line, and if does have them, whether they are attached to a brass fitting that will accept a replacement braided stainless steel supply line. √ If the plastic line cannot be replaced, reject buying that model. • Consider also replacing the supply lines with braided stainless-steel hoses to other appliances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ toilets, washers, and sinks. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small battery-operated water alarms are available from numerous hardware stores. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ They cost about \$20 and are placed under shutoffs. They offer some peace of mind but require that someone be home to respond if the alarm goes off. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other products for peace of mind: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Floodstop Automatic Water Shut Off Valves (available online through Aartech Canada and perhaps others) can be installed in a number of locations. 	

<p>√ Specific products are available for refrigerators, dishwashers, washing machines, sinks and toilets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ They cost approximately \$150 - \$250 Cdn per application. ○ They have a control module, shutoff valve and sensor(s), that require a power supply and have a battery backup. ○ They are extremely quick to react to even the smallest amount of water leakage. ○ They can be installed by anyone reasonably handy or a plumber. ○ Possible drawback on dishwasher and washing machine installations is a leak will shut off the water supply, but the machine will keep working through their normal cycle without water. It is recommended to only run these machines when someone is home. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar products to the Floodstop Automatic Water Shut Off Valves can be installed on the main house water supply. <p>√ Wireless sensors are located near water supplies/shutoffs and will shutoff the water to the house if a leak is detected,</p> <p>√ They cost upwards of \$1000 dollars and require a plumber to install. A possible drawback is that the entire house water supply is shutoff even for minor leaks.</p>	

We ask residents to be vigilant and to do what they can to prevent water leak damage. The hope is we can reduce the number of water leakage events in SSV to prevent great personal inconvenience and future insurance increases for all.

