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Troubleshooting Toilet: Flush Tank Problems

Like any other mechanism with a number of moving parts, the flush tank is subject to a variety of disorders. Most of the common maladies, however, are simple to correct. And part of the simplicity of the work is due to the easy accessibility of the malfunctioning parts. That is one of the beauties of the flush tank - all one must do to diagnose a problem is to raise the tank cover and look inside.

But because "looking" does not always constitute "seeing" - particularly for the inexperienced eye - we have included a Diagnostic Chart listing the most common flush tank disorders. Here's how to read it: first establish what seems to be going wrong with your own flush tank; then proceed to the "symptom" column of the chart and match your flush tank's disorder symptoms with the ones which most resemble them in the chart. Now read across to the "diagnosis" column, and, finally, to the "cure". In most instances, we have provided a detailed recipe - in the pages which follow the chart - for the speedy repair of the disorder.

FLUSH TANK DIAGNOSTIC CHART

Symptom	Diagnosis	Recipe Cure
Water runs and will not stop	1. Overflows through overflow tube.	a. Bend float rod down slightly. See Recipe 79. b. Replace float if it no longer floats.
	2. Water runs under stopper ball.	a. Realign stopper ball guide bracket and lift rod. b. Replace ball. c. Clean ball seat with sandpaper. d. Install new flapper stop ball.
	3. Inlet valve body leaks.	a. Replace plunger washer. b. Replace ball-cock washer. c. Replace ball-cock. d. Reset action rod. e. Regrind valve seat.
	4. Flush handle stuck.	a. Lubricate all connecting points. b. Loosen flush handle nut. c. Reset flush handle nut.
Does not flush	1. No water in tank	Open shutoff valve under tank.
	2. Flush handle loose.	a. Reconnect trip arm lever. b. Reconnect upper lift wire. c. Reconnect lower lift wire. d. Reconnect handle connection.

CONT' FLUSH TANK DIAGNOSTIC CHART

Symptom	Diagnosis	Recipe Cure
Water flushes but does not stop.	Water runs under ball stop.	a. Realign stopper ball guide. b. Clean ball seat with fine sandpaper or steel wool.
Does not flush enough water.	1. Tank does not fill to enough water proper level.	Bend float rod up slightly. See Recipe 79.
Not enough water in bowl after flush.	1. Refill tube not set into overflow pipe. OR 2. Refill tube missing or broken.	1. Reset refill tube into overflow pipe. 2. Replace refill tube.
Tank leaks under cover.	1. Refill tube leaks.	1. Repair or replace refill tube. 2. Replace all washers in ball-cock mechanism.
Tank leaks at flush handle.	1. Flush handle nut loose. OR 2. Flush handle washer is worn.	1. Tighten flush handle nut. 2. Replace flush handle washer.
Water leaks under tank.	1. Shank locknut loose. OR 2. Shank washer worn. OR 3. Ball seat locknut loose. OR 4. Ball seat tank washer worn.	1. Tighten shank locknut. 2. Replace shank washer. 3. Tighten ball seat locknut. 4. Replace ball seat tank washer.
Tank sweats	1. Cold water in tank.	1. Insulate inside of tank with 1/2 inch sheet styrofoam. See Recipe 82.