SENTINEL HOME · AI HOME HEALTH PLATFORM

AC Condensate Drain Clogged — Homeowner Guide

Educational reference. HVAC systems vary. Consult a qualified HVAC professional when appropriate.

WHAT A CONDENSATE DRAIN DOES

Your air conditioner removes moisture from indoor air while it runs. That water collects on the cold evaporator coil, drips into the drain pan, and leaves the house through the condensate drain line. Indoor humidity > evaporator coil > condensation > drain pan > condensate line > drain. If any part of that path restricts, water backs up and can reach ceilings, drywall, flooring, or equipment.

SEVEN WARNING SIGNS

- [ ] Water around the indoor air handler
- [ ] AC unexpectedly shuts off
- [ ] Musty or damp odor near the equipment
- [ ] New moisture staining on ceilings, walls, or floors
- [ ] Water in the auxiliary or emergency drain pan
- [ ] Float switch has activated
- [ ] Standing water where it normally drains

Lower concern: slow drainage with no surrounding water. Investigate soon: water collecting in the drain pan. Higher concern: water reaching ceilings, drywall, flooring, or electrical areas.

WHAT YOU CAN SAFELY CHECK

- [ ] Locate the indoor HVAC equipment (air handler or furnace)
- [ ] Look for visible water on the floor and in the drain pan
- [ ] Check whether the float / safety switch has tripped — never bypass it
- [ ] Locate the condensate drain line leaving the equipment
- [ ] Look for obvious blockage, disconnection, or standing water at the termination
- [ ] If water is actively leaking, turn cooling off at the thermostat and protect materials

WHEN TO CALL AN HVAC PROFESSIONAL

- Water near electrical equipment, or entering ceilings and walls
- The source of the water cannot be identified
- The evaporator coil appears frozen, or the drain clogs repeatedly
- The condensate pump is malfunctioning or the system repeatedly shuts down
- Significant water damage has occurred, or you are uncomfortable accessing the equipment

Water near an indoor unit is not always a clogged drain. A frozen coil, damaged pan, failed condensate pump, improper drainage, nearby plumbing leak, or poorly insulated components can look the same. Persistent or unexplained water should be properly diagnosed.

PREVENTION CHECKLIST

- [ ] Routine professional HVAC maintenance scheduled
- [ ] Condensate system included in that maintenance
- [ ] Filter replaced on a schedule suited to this home
- [ ] Periodic visual check of the equipment area in cooling season
- [ ] Indoor humidity monitored
- [ ] Leak detection in place where equipment sits above finished space
- [ ] Recurring drain problems professionally evaluated

HELPFUL MONITORING TOOLS

- Water leak detector — early notification of water near the equipment.
- Smart leak sensor — phone alerts when the equipment is somewhere you rarely visit.
- Moisture meter — checking whether nearby materials actually absorbed moisture.
- Indoor humidity monitor — tracking how well the system dehumidifies.

If the system drains normally and there is no sign of water accumulation, you may not need to buy anything.

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MY HVAC INFORMATION

Keep this page with your home records. Having these details on hand shortens every service call.

Manufacturer: _____ Model: _____

Serial number: _____ Installation year: _____

Filter size: _____ Last HVAC service: _____

Last condensate inspection: _____ HVAC company: _____

Phone: _____ Next recommended service: _____

NOTES

Full guide: www.mysentinelhome.com/resources/hvac/ac-condensate-drain-clogged