

Plumbing Terminology

We get many calls about doo-flinkies, gizmo's and thing-a-ma-bobs. Here are the correct names of some common plumbing parts and fixtures.

Aerator: A part at the end of a faucet spout that mixes air into the dropping water thereby aerating the water.

Angle Stop/Straight Stop: An emergency stop valve that is usually installed before the water supply line to toilets and faucets. They are to be used in case of an emergency and are generally not designed for daily on-and-off usage.

Centerset: A style of bathroom lavatory faucet having combined spout and handles. Handles are 4" from center of handle-to-handle.

Diverter: Valves which direct water to various outlets. They are used in showers, tub & shower combinations, bidets, Roman tub fillers and kitchen faucet sprayers.

Escutcheon: A flange or shield beneath a faucet handle or the part that covers the hole in the wall where your plumbing comes through.

Finishes: Faucet finishes come in and out of fashion. Antique Brass was very popular 15 years ago but is now nearly impossible to find. The most common finish for faucets is chrome. Faucet manufacturers offer a wide variety of choices. The nickel or pewter finishes are the most popular right now.

Fixture: Broad term that could be a water closet, sink, tub, shower or faucet.

Handshower: A showerhead designed with a handle that is connected to a water supply via a flexible hose.

Lavatory: (AKA "Lav") A fixed bowl or basin with running water and drainage for washing. Many use the word "Lavatory" as meaning a bathroom.

Main shut-off valve: Located near the water meter or where water comes into the house. It's a good idea to know where this valve is located and if it works properly. If you have an old valve with a wheel-style handle you want to consider replacing it with a ball valve that has a lever handle. Ball valves are more reliable and easier to operate. This is important in the event of a water leak.

Pop-up Assembly: The drain mechanism of a faucet installed on a lavatory. The drain stopper "pops" up and down.

Pressure Balance Valve: A shower mixing valve that automatically maintains balance between hot and cold water supplies by immediately regulating fluctuations in pressure. As a result the outlet temperature remains constant.

Riser: A vertical assembly of pipe and fittings that generally distribute water upwards.

Trap: A curved section of drain line that prevents sewer odors from escaping into the atmosphere. All "Fixtures" that have drains must have a trap installed.

Waste & Overflow: The drain assembly for a bathtub. The outlet at the top removes the "overflow" water during tub filling and the tub drain at the bottom removes "waste" water when the tub is drained.

Water Closet: Toilet **Water Closet Parts:** The flapper is the rubber part that covers the flush hole, it raises when you push the handle down to let the water in the tank into the bowl. The fill valve or ballcock facilitates the filling of the tank. The flush valve activates the flapper. The flange is installed on the drain pipe. A wax ring is placed between the flange and the water closet to seal it then the water closet is bolted to the flange so it is secure to the floor and doesn't leak.

Widespread: A style of bathroom lavatory faucet having separate spout and handles. Usually 8" from center of handle-to-handle.