

Emergency Leads to a Boost in Efficiency

Plumbing shop restores hot water, prevents further damage and preserves customer's memories *By Paul Nicolaus*

It's not uncommon for memories to be tucked away in closets or basements, seemingly safe and sound within their storage environment. Sometimes all it takes is one surprise to put them at risk, though, and that's what happened when a repeat customer called 128 Plumbing, Heating, Cooling & Electric regarding a leaking hot-water heater.

"Cardboard boxes on the floor and memories that were made 40 years ago were down there," says Ryan Williams, general manager. The inconvenience of being without hot water and the need to deal with the mess left behind only add to the headaches. "Our office is pretty well trained to know what to put into the emergency category, and they know that hot water definitely falls into that category."

Quick arrival

Williams was already familiar with this residential townhome community and knew the heating equipment was also located within the utility closet right next to the hot-water heater. Making sure that this equipment wouldn't be compromised by the leak was yet another reason to hustle.

"To get over there in under an hour's time was pretty key for us," he says.

Once on the scene, the service technician made sure the hot-water heater was shut down in order to mitigate any additional damage, and fortunately the water that had already leaked did not impact the heating system.

Upon inspection, it was determined that the source of the issue was due to age and typical wear and tear. Any sort of system that is internally combusting water with minerals in it is going to extract those minerals when heating, Williams explained, and over time that corrosion eventually leads to this sort of leak.



COMPANY 128 Plumbing, Heating, Cooling & Electric

LOCATION Wakefield, Massachusetts

SERVICE AREA Greater Boston area

FOUNDED 1992

SPECIALTY High-efficiency heating, cooling, hot-water & cooling systems

WEBSITE www.128plumbing.com



BEFORE



AFTER



▲ Father, son and daughter are pictured together. From left to right, the photo includes Kathryn Williams Dowsett, operations manager, David Williams, president, and Ryan Williams, general manager.

The old-school mentality was to pull out the old unit and slide in a replacement, but approaches have shifted as the National Appliance Energy Conservation Act's new efficiency standards have amended energy codes for appliances, including hot-water heaters. According to Williams, this has become a true game-changer in terms of the solutions offered to customers.

Enhancing efficiency

That same day, the existing 80-gallon electric hot-water heater was cut out, but the customer didn't want that same type installed because of the high cost of running it, so an electric 30-gallon hot-water heater was offered as a temporary solution.

It allowed her access to hot water right away and also provided the time needed to make an educated decision about her next unit. Once that decision was made, a lead installer and apprentice handled the installation of the new wall-mounted system — a Navien NPE-240 with an on-demand, tankless unit — that saves on water, fuel and space.

This particular unit has set itself apart from the competition for a number of reasons, according to Williams: it is 96 percent efficient, it does not superheat the water, and the gas pressure is forgiving.

Beyond that, one common complaint about on-demand hot-water heaters is the so-called cold-water sandwich, but this particular system has a buffer tank that allows for the recirculation of hot water and helps avoid that unpleasant chilly blast.

Facebook feedback

The customer's gratitude for a job well done was apparent based on her five-star Facebook review. In it, she wrote that the technicians were "polite, accommodating and neat."

And she appreciated the long day of hard work that went into the installation of her new unit, noting that "(They) were here at 8 a.m. and still had a smile on their faces when they finally finished the job 12 hours later." 📸