

Pronto Inc.

An Environmental Company



Things you should know about Kitchen Sink Stack Maintenance before hiring the right contractor for the job.

- 1) **Reaching the destination.** A professional sewer services company recognizes the importance of reaching the end of the kitchen sink stack all the way to the parkade overhead sewer main. This is important because lots of debris and grease will be knocked loose and released during the cleanup process and it all has to flow somewhere. For example: the sink stack is usually 1.5 to 2 inches diameter pipe coming down vertically from the top floor to the basement where it will take a series of bends to turn horizontal and then connect into the parkade overhead sewer main which is a larger pipe 3 to 4 inches. It is absolutely crucial to reach the larger pipe otherwise debris could wedge at one of the bottom bends and will plug the pipe eventually and cause water damage to a bottom floor unit by sink overflow. (This is the reason why we position one team member in the parkade to listen for the auger cable reach its necessary destination). Total distance can be anywhere from 20 feet to 75 feet.
- 2) **Using the right equipment for the job.** Because distance needing to be covered varies, a good sewer contractor uses Sectional Augering machines instead of the commonly used Drum Machines used by most of the plumbers. A sectional auger machine is much more labour intensive to use however it is much more effective at clearing the pipes because the RPM is high, and if longer distance is required we simply add more sections. So, be aware of the Drum machines, although they are very easy to use they are low RPM and are limited in how far they can reach. The commonly used drill pack type drum machine is the worst-case scenario because it can only cover 25 feet. *Refer to illustration #1 on last page.*
- 3) **Potential problems to overcome such as straight Ts, and double Ys.** A very common problem is when the auger cable does not go down with gravity as it should. Instead it can hit a straight T connection to the stack and it will go up towards the roof. Another similar issue can be a Double Y connecting two kitchen sinks together into the stack; in this case the auger cable just skips across the Double Y and literally tries to come up the neighbour's sink instead of going down the stack. An experienced Drain Tech will feel the skipping by the way the cable reacts, and by the rattling sounds coming from inside the pipes. In most cases it is possible to navigate through these bad fittings by feel, and by using special Drop Head cutter attachments. Also, a good sewer contractor keeps small specialised sewer cameras on hand to help get through the hard ones. *Refer to illustration #2 on last page.*

- 4) **Running Water.** It's surprising how many Service Men in the industry do not take the time to make the extra effort to run water during the Augering procedure. When there is no c/o installed under the sink the P trap has to be taken off to be able to gain access to the pipe. So taking off the P trap takes away the ability to run the faucet so almost all plumbers and drain techs will just auger it dry. This is a problem because hot water is required to be flowing through the pipe in order to wash away the grease and debris that is being knocked loose. Pronto Inc. has a strict policy to make sure water is always being used and the technicians use a little hose bypass device to hook up from the faucet to the drain while running the proper auger machine through the stack and once the job is done we always install a cleanout between the P trap and the wall (if fits) for future proper access.
- 5) **Having the cupboard under the sink counter top cleared.** The home owner is required to remove all clutter from under the kitchen sink cabinets and place them in an area where it's out of the way of the service technicians. For thorough and time-efficient service we need a 2 meter radius clear space around the work object (the sink)
- 6) **Drop sheet from the door to the kitchen.** A good sewer contractor covers the floor with drop sheets from the front door of the unit all the way to the kitchen sink work area. We use a small pickup truck full of clean drop sheets for this purpose.
- 7) **Making sure to leave the work area clean, it's a dirty procedure.** The auger cable comes back wet and covered in black muck. This black muck sprays around due to the auger cable spinning, and there is no way around it because clean pipes result in dirty cables. Luckily the water flow does help to clean much of it off while the cable is being pulled back however a good contractor is well prepared to disinfect and cleanup inside the cabinet.
- 8) **There is a certain sequence to follow.** A lot of people have the misconception that starting from the top floor is a good way to go about it. Going from the top floor first could flood out the bottom floor easily because the kitchen sink stacks are more restricted at the bottom by grease that has caked on the sides of the pipes in layers therefore a 2-inch stack probably is restricted down to about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch pathway for the water flow specially at the last few elbows before entering the main. Releasing a bunch of debris from the top floor could mean disaster for the bottom floor. Therefore, an experienced contractor has specific ways of doing it. For example, a 4 stories building would first be serviced from the second floor to parkade, and then from the 4th floor to the second floor. Taller buildings often require the bottom to be done several times to make sure the debris can freely flow out.
- 9) **Fixing leaks.** Sometimes the P trap or sink basket can develop a leak from it being worked on. You would be surprised to know how many drain servicing companies do not have the parts or the ability to fix these leaks, they do a good job at clearing the drain and then leave a slightly dripping P trap under the sink. Plumbers on the other hand might do an excellent job at sealing up the pipes yet a lot of gunk might be left behind in the stacks. Pronto Inc. shines best in both worlds and our trucks are well stocked and technicians trained for this type of work.

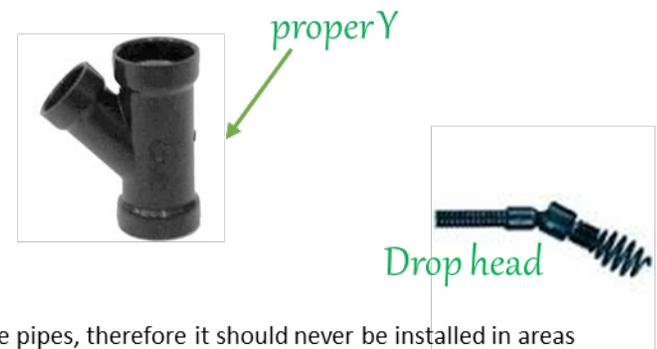
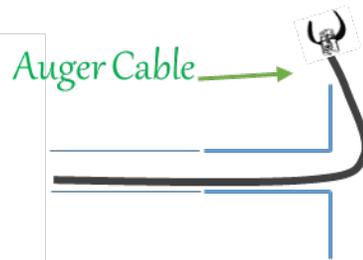
Refer to illustration #1



“Drum machines are low RPM, limited in the distance they can reach, and leave much of the grease build up and other debris in the pipe. They are great for an emergency situation where speed is important, however they perform very poorly when it comes to clean pipes. Be aware of the fact that most companies use them for everything”

Refer to illustration #2

Straight Ts



Straight T fittings are manufactured to be used for Sewer Venting in areas where only air goes through the pipes, therefore it should never be installed in areas where water flows because if an auger cable ever has to be fed through the pipes to clear a drain the cable hits the T and naturally turns up instead of down. This is caused by gravity because the cable lays in the bottom of the pipe and when the end of the cable hits the back of the T it will turn up because is less of an angle for it to take the bend. **In this case an unexperienced service man could literally feed the cable up to the roof top and think he did his job right.** An experienced guy who does drains every day can tell the difference by the rattling it the wall and the feel of the cable. A drop head cutter can be attached to the auger cable to help navigate the turn down into the basement, however drop head cutter use must be kept to a minimum because they can often break in half at the knuckle, and part of it gets stuck in the pipe causing repetitive backups. A professional contractor uses drop head cutters with caution

Double Y



A proper way two sinks should be plumbed into the stack

Mini Camera

Double Ys are sometimes used to connect 2 kitchen sinks together into a stack. these fittings cause problems when it comes to clearing drains simply because the auger cable skips across and tries to come up through the neighbour's sink. A professional contractor carries a small specialised sewer camera that can fit into these pipes and with the combination of the mini camera and drop head cutter it is possible to navigate these turns and properly service the drain.