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## How do you replace an anode rod in a water heater

There are all kinds of reasons to have your water heater professionally inspected once a year. But ultimately, it comes down to two simple benefits: with regular preventative maintenance, your water heater will operate with increased efficiency and greater safety. For purposes of this blog, let's focus on one simple yet critical aspect of our inspection: your system's anode rod. It's a steel wire wrapped in magnesium, zinc, or aluminum. Its purpose is to protect the inside walls of your water heater tank by attracting corrosive elements in the water supply to itself. For that reason, it's also referred to as a sacrificial anode rod. "How do I Know if My Anode Rod Needs Attention?" When the anode rod has depleted to the point that it needs to be replaced, you may notice a brown tint in your hot water supply, the result of internal rusting that the anode rod can no longer absorb. You might also notice a clanging sound coming from inside your system's storage tank. As the anode rod corrodes (particularly aluminum models), it can crumble or break off and settle in the bottom of the tank. When the tank fills with water, pieces of the rod may bang against the sides of the tank and create a pretty unwelcome noise. Worse, that kind of banging is harmful to the tank since, over time, it can lead to a crack in the interior walls and, ultimately, water leakage. Checking and replacing an anode rod, if needed, is such a simple step, but it's also one that's frequently ignored until the damage is already done. To help keep your water heater in peak operating condition, contact Burton today and request our performance and safety inspection. Like all of our plumbing work, you'll receive a guaranteed upfront price quote and our 100% customer satisfaction guarantee. Water heaters raise the temperature of water for use in bathing, cooking, irrigation, industry and other hot-water applications. Here's how the three basic types of water heaters work. Electric Tank-Style Water Heaters The standard water heater found in most households is a tank-style heater powered with electricity. The water heater resembles a large cylinder made of metal and is insulated. At the top of the electric tank-style heater is a connection to a cold-water dip tube that's inserted into the tank. The dip tube is long enough to supply cold water below the electric heating elements in the water heater. The heating elements or burners heat the cold water, which rises to the top of the water heater. A heat-out pipe is connected to the top of the water heater and delivers hot water from the top section of the tank. Gas-fueled tank-style water heaters work similarly to electric tank-style water heaters. A dip tube brings cold water into the tank, and a heat-out pipe delivers hot water to hot water plumbing fixtures from the top of the tank. However, gas-fueled heaters work by heating the water in the tank via an internal metal chimney. A gas burner supplies a flame that raises the temperature of the metal chimney. The fumes and hot air from the gas combustion rise up in the chimney and flow outside via the chimney vent system. Both gas and electric tank-style water heaters heat and store water, so hot water is always available. Tankless Water Heaters Tankless water heaters are also called demand-type water heaters. While tank-style heaters act as storage units for hot water, tankless water heaters only heat water as needed. You turn on the hot water tap, cold water begins flowing into the tankless appliance, and the appliance begins heating the water immediately with a heat exchanger. Tankless water heaters are available in gas-fired and electric versions. Tankless water heaters save money because they aren't constantly heating stored water. Hot water continues flowing as long as you need it, and the appliance shuts off as soon as hot water taps are closed. However, tankless water heaters have a limited ability to provide continuous hot water. Gas-fired water heaters offer higher flow rates of hot water than electric tankless water heaters. If a home or business needs a large quantity of hot water for simultaneous uses, several tankless water heaters can be installed. Water Heater Thermostats All types of water heaters include thermostats that the user sets to their preferred temperature. Lowering the water-heater thermostat can help save energy and protect small children from scalding. Higher water-heater thermostat settings can ensure that there is ample hot water for a large family, a busy restaurant or a business that uses a large quantity of heated water. Water Heater Safety Tank-style water heaters include anode rods and temperature-pressure relief valves. Anode rods are sacrificial devices that protect the tank from corrosion. Temperature-pressure relief valves let pressurized hot water out of the tank to reduce risks of water-heater explosions. Both anode rods and temperature-pressure valves must be maintained and tested periodically. MORE FROM QUESTIONSANSWERED.NET Home House & Components Systems Plumbing System Water Heaters Updated: Nov. 28, 2019 Family Handyman Replacing the anode rod in a water heater before it fails can slow down corrosion inside the tank and significantly extend the life of the water heater, sometimes even doubling it. By the DIY experts of The Family Handyman Magazine You might also like: TBD Remove the old anode rod Photo 1: Remove the old water heater anode rod Loosen the hex head with a short burst from your impact wrench. Unscrew it by hand once it's loose. Photo 2: Install the new water heater anode rod Coat the threads with pipe dope and slide the new rod into the tank. Tighten with a socket and ratchet by hand. Most water heater tanks are steel with a thin glass lining to protect the metal from corrosion. Since the lining eventually cracks, tanks have a second line of defense against rust: a long metal "anode rod" that attracts corrosive elements in the water. When the rod itself becomes so corroded that it can no longer do its job, the tank soon rusts out, leaks and needs replacement. However, if you replace your water heater anode rod before it fails, about every five years, you can double the life of your water heater. Rods are made from magnesium, aluminum or aluminum/zinc alloy. Aluminum replacement rods are sold at home centers. In most cases, the hexagonal head of the rod is visible on the top of the water heater. If you don't see the hex head, check your owner's manual. The rod may be under the water heater's sheet metal top or connected to the hot water outlet nipple. (A few newer plastic-lined tanks have no anode rods to replace.) Before you get started, close the shutoff valve, turn on the hot water at a faucet to relieve pressure, and turn off the electricity or gas to the heater. Open the drain valve near the bottom of the tank and drain out several gallons of water. Caution: The water is hot! Drain some water from the tank to check for rust. It's time for a new water heater if you see rusty flakes (not just orange water, which can come from corroded pipes or well water). If the water is clean, remove the rod to check its condition. To loosen the rod, you'll need an air compressor, a 1/2-in.-drive impact wrench and a 1-1/16-in. socket. If you don't have an impact wrench, go buy a cheap one for about \$30. Even with a breaker bar, it can be nearly impossible to break the anode rod free. Turn off the power or gas. Then close the cold-water valve at the top of the tank and drain off several gallons. Loosen the hex head with the impact wrench, but unscrew it the rest of the way by hand. Hint: The hex head may be under a plastic cap. Uncover it, then pull it up and out to check its condition (Photo 1). Buy a new anode rod at a home center or online (see sources below). Install a flexible rod if you have less than 44 in. of clearance above your heater (Photo 2). Turn on the water, the power or gas, and burp the air from the system. Check the condition of your anode rod every three years. If the hex head is set below the top of the heater, you'll need a 1-1/16-in. socket to reach it. If it protrudes above the top, you can use any type of wrench. Chances are your old anode rod will be frozen in place by corrosion. Douse the head with a spray lubricant such as WD-40 and give it a few minutes to penetrate. You may also have to slip a "cheater" pipe over the wrench handle to increase your torque. The weight of the water in the tank is usually enough to keep the entire heater from turning. But if it begins to move, have a helper (or two) hold it in place. When the threads break free, stop turning and look for water around the hex head. If you see leakage, drain the tank further. If you don't have enough overhead clearance to pull the rod out of the tank, bend it as you remove it. Then when you buy a new rod, choose a flexible, "segmented" version. Smear Teflon pipe thread sealant on the threads of the new rod before you install it. Don't use tape, since it can reduce the effectiveness of the rod. Before you turn on the water and electricity or gas, drain another gallon out of the tank to flush out any remaining debris. Tips for buying an anode rod New vs. used Anode rods are designed to attract corrosive elements in the water, thereby diminishing corrosion in the vulnerable steel liner. A magnesium water heater anode rod protects your tank better but doesn't last as long as an aluminum/zinc rod. Aluminum/zinc rods anode are cheaper and are recommended if you have smelly water. But consult a water treatment specialist before switching to an aluminum rod. Required Tools for this Project Have the necessary tools for this DIY project lined up before you start—you'll save time and frustration. Air compressor Bucket Impact Wench Rags Socket/ratchet set Required Materials for this Project Avoid last-minute shopping trips by having all your materials ready ahead of time. Here's a list. Anode rod Cheater pipe (steel pipe that fits over socket wrench handle to increase torque) Spray lubricant Teflon pipe thread sealant Originally Published: November 28, 2019



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