

I live in an end-unit, 3/2, one floor. Last summer (July 2005) I discovered water on the floor of my utility room. I mopped it up and then checked the connections to my washing machine. They were fine, no leaks. A few days later the utility room floor was covered with water again. I had not used the washing machine in the intervening period. I went through the mop-up drill and a more detailed inspection of the connections revealed that everything was good -- no leaks.

The next day there was more water on the floor. I went through the drill once again -- hoses and drain were fine. I suspected that there must be a leak in the plumbing inside the wall. I shut off all the water shut-offs in the house and periodically checked the water meter to my unit over the period of about 12 hours. When I got home from work and checked there was no change in the meter reading. That proved that there were no leaks in the plumbing. The floor became wet again and I noticed that it was coming out from under the cove trim molding at the base of the wall under the area of the wall that contained the dryer vent but no plumbing.

I then suspected the air-conditioner condenser/air handler unit that was in the attic located generally over the utility room area. When I climbed up there I discovered the problem. There is a large tray, or pan, suspended under the unit that contains the excess condensation from the unit. It can hold several gallons of water. There is a float switch in the tray that shuts down the unit if the tray becomes full. Apparently this switch was not working on my unit because the tray was overflowing. The insulation under the unit was soaked. When I removed the wet insulation I discovered that the water was seeping down through a small gap where the dryer vent pierced the ceiling drywall. This of course was coming out on my utility room floor.

I always assumed that there was a drain that drained any excess water outside, from the overflow pan, and I assumed that the drain must have been clogged up or obstructed in some way and that was why the tray was overflowing. WRONG! To my great surprise there was no drain from the pan connected to the outside. I believed that this had to be a sub-contractor oversight but when I researched I discovered (WRONG AGAIN!) that (unbelievably) there are NO outside overflow drains installed in ANY of the overflow pans in the VWS units. The excess water overflow control depends on evaporation to remove the water. In my opinion, there are several other serious problems with this method, which I won't get into here for the sake of brevity.

I discovered much later that there is a drain, to the outside, from straight inside the A/C. The drain begins from just under the coils at the end of the air-handler and ends in the vicinity of the compressor outside the house. Mine was not working for whatever reason and the water was dripping into the overflow pan, under the unit.

As it turned out there were two failures on my unit:

1. The outside drain from the A/C unit failed.
2. The overflow shutoff switch failed allowing the pan to overflow.

There is a connection on one end of the tray to hook up a drain. It is a 1" PVC "L". It was

turned so the opening was facing up so that no water could escape. I discovered that it could easily be turned so that the tray could be manually drained. I climbed back down and got several utility buckets and with a great amount of labor drained the tray into the buckets, carried them down the ladder and dumped the water in the sink. This was in the summer and the temperature in the attic must have been over 115 degrees. I did get physically ill.

I decided I was going to have a drain installed. I contacted several A/C companies (including Arnold) and not one of them was interested in doing the job. I decided that I was going to have to do it myself. I went to Home Depot and purchased the materials. I attached a flexible pipe to the drain on the tray. I ran the hose down through the wall of the utility room and into the washing machine drain fixture behind the unit. This works great and I've had no problems since.

I also made an opening in the wall where the water was seeping and sprayed Clorox inside the cavity to kill any bacteria or mold. I also purchased a small container of granulated chlorine and left it in the attic near the a/c and whenever I go up there I sprinkle a few granules of pool chlorinate in the tray to kill any bacteria or other nasty stuff.

This posting is getting entirely too long. If you would like to know more about this situation please contact me and I'll be happy to discuss it with you.

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