Softener Owner Rescue Kit

The one sheet to have before your softener leaks, runs all night, or leaves you guessing. Print this. Put it at the unit.

In 6 to 7 years of servicing softeners around Pinellas County, roughly 9 out of 10 owners we meet were never shown their bypass. That is not an industry statistic — it is what we keep finding in real garages. This sheet fixes the first move.

1. Find your bypass — match your setup

The bypass is normally on the back of the control head, where the pipes connect. Work from behind the unit. Do not force anything. If yours does not match one of these, use the house main shutoff and get help.

What you see	Your setup	Service (normal)	Bypass (unit isolated)
Two small red arrow handles	Clack WS1 — bypass V3006	Arrows point the way water flows through the valve.	Turn BOTH handles until the arrow tips point at each other, toward the center. One handle alone is not bypass.
One long flat lever on a metal block	Fleck 5600 — metal bypass	Lever grip points up; follow the SERVICE stamp around the pivot.	Turn the lever one quarter-turn until its arrow points to BYPASS. From behind the unit, the grip ends toward your left.
Two flat bars on two round discs	Autotrol 255 with Series 256 bypass	Both bars stand vertical — “Not in Bypass.”	Turn both bars horizontal — “In Bypass.” They are bars, not knobs.
One round handwheel on top of the bypass body	Hankscraft REV4 — ceramic bypass 41206	Pointer/marks at SERVICE.	Turn the wheel slowly to BYPASS. Same bypass as the REV 2.5.
One round handwheel — smaller Hankscraft head	Hankscraft REV 2.5 — ceramic bypass 41206	Pointer/marks at SERVICE.	Turn the wheel slowly to BYPASS. Hankscraft changed the head, not this bypass.
One flanged knob that slides straight in or out	Hankscraft push-pull 41204 — older units	Read the labels on your own unit.	Read the labels on your own unit. The printed sources for this older part disagree about which slide direction is service. Do not guess from memory. If the unit is not clearly labeled, use the main shutoff instead.

Still not sure? Take one wide photo and one close photo of the back of the head. A clear photo identifies most valves faster than a long description.

2. If it is leaking or running right now — use this order

1. CHECK FOR ELECTRICAL DANGER. If water is spraying near an outlet, power strip, panel, or anything plugged in — or you smell burning — stay clear. Shut off the house main if you can do it safely and call for help.
2. BYPASS FIRST. Put the softener in bypass using the matching row above. Bypass stops water from feeding the softener while the house still gets water.
3. WAIT TWO MINUTES AND WATCH. A drip that fades can be pressure leaving the head. A spray that keeps spraying is still being fed.
4. IF IT DOES NOT STOP, SHUT OFF THE MAIN. Bypass did not isolate it, the tank is cracked, or nothing will move with steady pressure? Turn off the main water to the house.
5. TAKE TWO PHOTOS AND WRITE THREE THINGS DOWN. One wide photo of the whole unit; one close photo of where the water is coming from. Did you leave it in bypass or turn the main off? Where was it leaking — head, fitting, drain line, or tank? Did bypass make it stop?
6. GET IT LOOKED AT. Bypass is a tourniquet, not a repair. In bypass, your house gets hard, unsoftened water. Do not leave it there for weeks and forget it.

> **Never do this in an emergency**
> Do not take the valve head apart, do not tighten every fitting you can reach, and do not unplug and replug things hoping a water leak will stop.

3. What normal looks and sounds like

- Most of the time: quiet, in service, with no water continuously running to drain.
- At regeneration: motor and water sounds are normal during the cleaning cycle. Most units are set to regenerate when nobody is using water — often around 2 a.m.
- In the salt tank: some water can be normal. Check monthly that pellets are present and have not formed a hard crust — a salt bridge — with empty space hidden underneath.
- At the faucets: soft water should feel consistent. Water that feels fine right after regeneration, then goes flat a day or two before the next one, may be breaking through because the resin ran out too early.
- After a power outage: if the clock is wrong, the unit may regenerate during your morning shower. Resetting the time of day is often the whole fix.

4. Five warning signs — do not wait for a flood

1. It will not stop running to drain, or seems stuck in regeneration.
2. A leak keeps coming back, even if it is only a slow drip or a damp patch.
3. The salt never seems to go down, or a hard salt bridge is hiding an empty tank.
4. The clock is wrong, the display is erratic, or it regenerates at the wrong time after an outage.
5. Hard-water breakthrough returns: spots come back, soap stops lathering, and the water feels flat before the next regeneration.

Clack WS1 owners: if yours will not stop running, the first place we look is the seal cage — the WS1 Spacer Stack Assembly, part V3005 / V3005-02. In our own service calls, about 90% of the WS1 problems we see trace to that cage. Bypass and relieve pressure before touching anything. Do not

open the head if the unit is under another company's warranty, the housing is cracked, wiring looks damaged, or anything you find does not match the instructions.

5. Your settings, on paper

A fill-in settings card — sized to print on one page and stick at the unit — is in the Print & Save library with this kit (My Softener Settings Card). The hardness rule: set the valve to what your water actually tests at — not your neighbor's number and not the number it shipped with. Too high wastes salt and water. Too low lets hard water break through.

Your next three moves

- FREE WATER TEST — we test the water at your house and tell you straight what is in it and what, if anything, you actually need. No charge for the test.
- KNOW YOUR SYSTEM VISIT — $149. We walk your exact unit, teach the bypass, clock, and hardness setting, check what is worn, and leave your settings on a card at the unit. If the visit turns into a rebuild or a new install, the $149 comes off that job. It is never credited toward an ordinary service call. Booking opens when Aqua Pro's insurance is in place; ask to be put on the first-call list.
- ESSENTIAL CARE PLAN — $39 per month or $399 per year. For owners who want settings checked, wear caught early, and the annual check-and-teach visit handled. Join the interest list now; no charge starts from this sheet.