

## Clearing ICC Food Waste Disposals

1. Safety First. If you have any reservations about working on the disposal, stop and set up a time for maintenance staff to demonstrate this procedure. If you maintain positive disposal awareness (hands out, power off etc.) you will be fine.
2. Turn the wall switch that controls the disposal to OFF. Proceed to further cut off power to the disposal. The easiest way to do this is to unplug the unit from the wall. Under the sink, follow the power cord from the disposal to the outlet it plugs into. Unplug it.

As an added safety measure, you can also shut off power to the entire circuit at the circuit or fuse panel (if you're lucky enough to know which breaker/fuse it is). If the disposal is hard wired and doesn't have a plug, your best bet is to trip its appropriate fuse or breaker at the houses' electrical panel.

3. Inspect the grind chamber of the disposal. Remove any food and debris and use a flashlight to visually inspect inside. You'll be looking for something wedged between the bottom outer edge (circular serrated grind plate) and the walls of the disposal. Usually it's a mangled utensil, bottle cap, or piece of highly fibrous vegetable matter (corn husk etc). If you don't see jack, go to step 5.
4. If you spot something, get a pair of pliers and see if you can yank it out. If it doesn't budge and you're turning red go to step 5.
5. Find a good solid broom with a wooden handle (and an assistant if possible). Invert the broom and place the wooden end into the disposal. With firm (but gentle) pressure angle the broom handle slightly and wedge it against the bottom of the disposal (inside the grind chamber, try to get some leverage against a relief feature of the grind plate or one of the spinners).

Do not push directly downwards. You want more of a push sideways (laterally or centripetally). Be careful otherwise you might rip/detach the disposal from the sink or worse, deform the sink tub itself. Attempt to gently encourage the grind plate to spin with the broom handle. If you could see your culprit and you're coordinated enough (assistant comes in handy here) you can tug on that bad guy and attempt to spin the plate with the broom handle at the same time. Sometimes a little back and forth encouragement of the grind plate with continuous tugging will break the item free. In either case, keep applying increasingly gentle force with the broom stick until you are able to force the grind plate free. Again, WATCH and make sure you aren't being too forceful (the bottom of steel sinks will bend and buckle slightly etc. if you are pushing down too much).

6. If you are successful in restoring movement to the grind plate your pretty much in the clear. Remove the debris and with the broom stick and flashlight,

check to make sure that the grind plate is actually free and spinning (the whole bottom of the inner disposal grind chamber that makes contact with the inner walls of the disposal should spin- NOT to be confused with the small individual spinners that are found on some models mounted on top of the grind plate). These are pieces of metal that spin 360 degrees and help to break stuff up as the grind plate itself spins.

7. Once you are confident that the grind plate is spinning (whether or not you've managed to remove any foreign objects or not) make sure all tools and body parts are out and away from the disposal. Restore power to the unit and reset the disposals internal breaker. This is usually a small red button on the bottom (or sometimes side) of the disposal itself. This breaker trips in the event of a jam to prevent the motor from burning up. Some rare disposals may not be equipped with this feature.

8. With power on and body parts and tools clear, turn on the faucet. Wait a few seconds and let a little water enter the disposal and then flip the wall switch to turn it on. If you were able to yank the jammed item it should hum away like a happy disposal. If you didn't remove the jammed item you may hear (hopefully) this item being grinded up and disposed of. Allow the water to run while the disposal is spinning and for about 15 seconds afterwards to assist the grinded pulp in being flushed down the drain line. If it continues to jam then contact me and set up a time for me to take a look at it with you.

9. Educate your members on the following at your next house meeting:

Tips to successful garbage disposing:

1. The disposal isn't a substitute for the garbage. Clear food left on plates etc. in your compost bucket or garbage first. The disposal should only be used to grind up very small amounts of incidental and residual food matter.

2. Avoid foreign debris. Don't place silverware in the sink. Set up a separate container for utensils to soak in away from the sink. Be particularly aware of bottle caps, metal tabs from cans, tough fibrous vegetable matter (potato skins, corn husks, peels) etc.

3. When grinding, run the water continuously. Attempt to create a wet slurry before turning on the disposal. Run the disposal during and for 15 seconds after shutting off the disposal to flush the grinded pulp down the drain line. Do this even if your disposal is equipped with an automatic water feed. The more water the better.