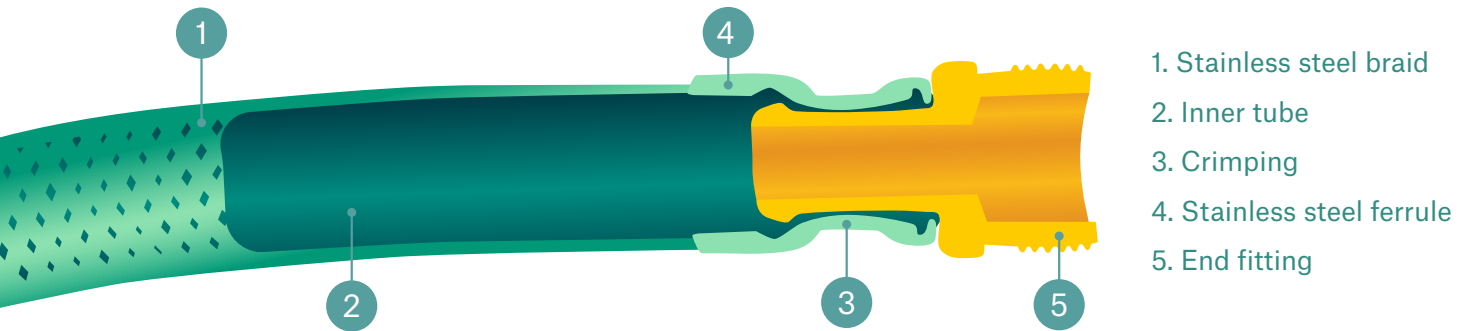


Flexi-hoses: The Facts

Suncorp Insurance 'flushes the facts' on what flexi-hoses are, where you can find them, and how you can avoid becoming another burst flexi-hose casualty.

What is a flexi-hose, and where can I find them?

Flexi-hoses – also known as flexible braided hoses or flexible plumbing hoses – are a common style of plumbing fitting. They are a rubber hose reinforced externally with stainless steel webbing, fitted with clamped stainless-steel fittings on either end. Flexi-hoses are made up of five components:



Flexi-hoses are used to connect water to taps and fixtures – where their flexibility, low cost and ease of installation make them a popular choice for plumbers. They are especially common in:



Kitchen

- Under the sink
- Dishwasher
- Refrigerator
- Water filter



Bathrooms/Toilets

- Vanity
- Inside the cistern
- Basin



Laundry

- Laundry tub/trough
- Washing machine



If you've had some plumbing work done to your home in the last 20 years, it is highly likely you have a flexi-hose (or two) under your sink.

How do they burst?

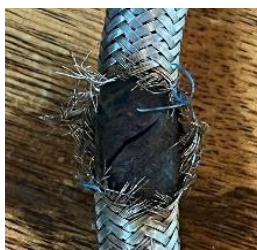
In most cases, a burst flexi-hose is due to the breakdown of the external braiding material due to rust and corrosion or the effects of twisting, kinking or stretching.

Some flexi-hoses can work without an issue for 20 years, while others corrode, rust and fail faster.

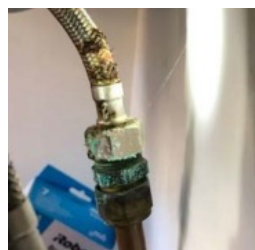
Damage to a flexi-hose can come in many forms, including:



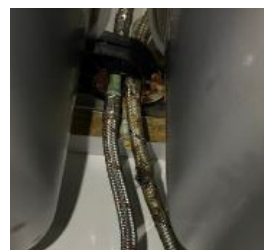
Example of failed flexi-hose due to rust and corrosion.



Broken fibres visible



Calcification (green or white staining) evident on the fitting or the hose itself.



Calcification noted to fitting and rust noted to braiding.

Damage and destruction – what a burst flexi-hose is capable of

It can take as little as 24 hours for an entire house to be flooded and significant water damage to occur as a result of a burst flexi-hose – if left unattended.

This can be costly. In addition to any major repairs or replacement that may be required due to flooding or water damage, you could find yourself with a higher than usual water bill (from the escape of water from the burst flexi-hose), as well as higher electricity bills from dryers and dehumidifiers to reduce/remove moisture after the event.

Common damage seen by our assessors as a result of burst flexi-hoses include:

- Swollen skirting boards and architraves.
- Swollen cabinetry – water damaged kickers will swell and pull away from cabinetry.
- Mould throughout internals of the house and contents i.e. furniture, soft toys.
- Water -logged power points in cabinetry/ wall.
- Ceiling damage to the first floor if a flexi-hose has burst on the second floor.
- Potential for drummy tiles if grout or silicone is damaged and water can get under if left for a while.



Warped floors



Water damage to ceilings, walls and contents



Structural damage



Water-logged carpet and underlay which may be unrestorable

What can YOU do?

Burst flexi-hoses are unfortunately a common issue – but they don't have to be.

It is easy to keep on top of flexi-hose maintenance and reduce the likelihood of your home being flooded or damaged by water as a result of a burst flexi-hose.

Suncorp Insurance's top tips for flexi-hose maintenance include:

- Check the condition of your flexi-hose every six months. If there are any signs of deterioration present in the hose, it should be checked and replaced by a licensed plumber asap.
- Turn off water mains properly and appliances at the water stop before heading off on vacation.
- Any household chemicals that are stored under the sink near flexi-hoses should be kept sealed and in their original containers.
- Check that flexi-hoses are not twisted, kinking or stretched – if you notice any of this behaviour, contact a licensed plumber asap.
- Check that flexi-hoses are not loose or too tight at the connection point to ensure hose longevity (Suncorp recommends use of a licensed plumber for correct fitment).



Not maintained? Not covered.

While most Aussies purchase insurance to protect themselves and their belongings in the event of an accident at home, many aren't aware that 'wear and tear' is not covered.

That is why it is so important to ensure you do regular maintenance checks on your flexi-hoses – and contact a licensed plumber if you notice something is not right.