



# plumbing guide

## Canberra

How to find a good plumber

How to hire a plumber

Things to look for in a qualified plumber

Plumbers in Canberra and the ACT

# Find a Plumber in Canberra



So you have decided it is time to bring in a professional to fix your plumbing problem. Whether you are doing the inside or outside there are many things to consider when making this important decision.

## Steps To Finding A Good Plumber:

1. Check to make sure that they have a contractor's license
2. Get two or more references
3. Ask how long they have been in business.
4. Get at least one other bid for the job to make sure they are not ripping you off
5. Find a Plumber that will give you pricing for small jobs over the phone
6. Get flat rate estimates so you know the total you will pay beforehand.

## Getting Referrals

The best place to start asking about plumbers is your family and friends.

Other good sources of referrals include contractors, real estate agents and your local hardware store.

Your city may even be able to provide a list of recommended plumbers who are familiar with the codes in your area.

When asking for referrals, be sure to check the type of job the plumber was called in to accomplish.

Also, determine if the plumber specializes in residential or commercial work.

## Some Good Questions To Ask

Were you happy with the quality provided by the Plumber?

Everybody has their own ideas of quality, but you should look out for those contractors who try to take the 'easy way out' and leave you ongoing problems.

Did the Plumber maintain current codes and standards?

If you own an older home and you are looking to modify parts of the plumbing system, you may need your current system to be updated to current standards. Always ask for an plumbing system audit before you start the project.

Were they courteous and polite?

This is a very important consideration. The entire experience, from beginning to end, needs to be as stress free as possible. Plus if the plumber enjoys their job, the quality and attention to details will be better. The contractors attitude can and will affect the entire job.

Is a warranty included?

If a warranty was included, find out if it has a reasonable amount of time before expiring (3 years is enough), and if the warranty has any real value.

Simply stating a warranty isn't enough. Get it in writing and understand its limitations! A good Plumber is happy to stand behind his warranty.



# How to hire a Plumber

It's always good to ask a lot of questions. If your Plumber doesn't want to take the time to answer them, you need to find another professional fast.

The key question to ask is.... Are you licensed in the ACT?

In the ACT, you must be licensed for plumbing and draining work which includes:

- a sanitary plumber/water plumber's licence or
- an advanced sanitary drainer's licence.

Qualifications required for the different types of licences include tertiary qualifications and work experience.

Plumbers and drainers have several responsibilities for ensuring work is professional.

## Advertising

When a licensed corporation, partnership or individual advertises their construction service, they need to include in the advertisement their name as recorded on their licence, their licence number and, for a corporation, its ABN or ACN number.

## Insurance

The plumber needs to show evidence of the insurance they hold to a client before providing a service. This includes advising the person if they do not have insurance.

Your plumber may ask you to sign an acknowledgment that you have been told about the contractor's insurance status. The acknowledgment must state the time and date it was given. If you choose to sign the acknowledgement, you must get a copy from the plumber for your records.

Are there any hidden costs for the work?

The Plumber should do a thorough preliminary inspection and provide you with a firm, accurate estimate of the work involved along with the cost of fixtures that will be installed. If additional work is necessary, it can be negotiated and billed separately.

## Safety Commitment

Accidents can happen with almost any home improvement project. So ask your prospective candidate what steps he or she will take to prevent injuries and property damage. Again if a plumber is good at his work he or she will be able to answer this question with ease. You want to engage someone who has a 'safety ethic' in all aspects of their work.

## Ask For A Quote

Invite plumbers to look at the job and ask for a quote in writing. In the quote, also ask for a completion date for the job.

## Execute a Contract

Execute a contract specifying the work to be done, total cost, payment schedule, start date and estimated completion date. Make sure the contract includes all specific details about materials needed.

## Tips

- Small business plumbers will be much more affordable because their overhead is lower.
- If it's a big job, get quotes from a number of plumbers and discard the cheapest and most expensive options. The cheapest will have underestimated and may sting you for it later and the most expensive doesn't really want your business.

# Do it yourself plumbing?

Plumbers earn their income. Most are skilled professionals who spent years learning a trade. They come to rescue us in times of crisis or for important projects.

But there are a whole range of plumbing projects around the home that are well within the reach of the ambitious do-it-yourselfer.

Installing plumbing under tile is at the outer limit of what most will want to attempt. But with patience and the right tools, it's certainly possible, even common. Like any project it requires planning and care, but nearly anyone can do it.

Other tasks are even easier.

Replacing a garbage disposal unit, or installing an under-the-sink water purifier takes some reading and a bit of patience. It will take an hour or two for most, provided they take care not to break anything. Strong hands to loosen stuck nuts and careful ones to lay Teflon tape correctly are the only major requirements.

Repairing or replacing a toilet might take a bit of muscle, even an assistant or two. But they're simple mechanisms and - once you know how it's done - the job is well within reach of the average do-it-yourselfer. Ditto for installing an under-the-sink or on-the-spot water heater. Putting them in the circuit with the existing hot water line can often be done in less than an hour.

No matter what plumbing job you tackle, knowing how and when to use sealants of different types is vital. Knowing the difference between PVC pipe glue and plumber's putty is essential. Knowing when to use one or the other is mandatory. A facility with plumber's tape will help prevent the need to re-do a simple job over and over again.

Fortunately, that's all pretty simple. In many cases, it's just a matter of following the directions on a package or reading a short tutorial.

Mundane tasks like unclogging a toilet or drain is something practiced by millions of homeowners who never even tackle a home project. Doing it for those rare times when the clog is a little more stubborn takes only a bit of homework.

Some specialty projects take only a small amount more study. Fixing a leaky outdoor spigot is simple. Replacing one with an anti-siphon sillcock is only slightly more difficult.

Knowing a little more about how water can leak or damage your plumbing moves you closer to the realm of the professional plumber. But not everyone has to be a Rembrandt to profit from doing a little art now and again.



# Guidelines for tile use near plumbing

Tile and plumbing are natural neighbors. Bathrooms, kitchens and other areas that use water are often laid with tile because homeowners expect to splash it around from time to time. But those two can be good neighbors or bitter enemies.

Properly laid and sealed tile will keep water from getting into unwanted areas for decades. But sometimes caulking isn't perfect and it can dry out and crack. Taking the time to make a good seal the first time around can prevent expensive repairs later.

One way to do that is to get tile to fit well during initial installation.

In the shower, the spout and shower head pipe often have to come through tile. Measure carefully and ensure that the hole is no larger than necessary. That will make final caulking easier and more secure.

One good way to do that is to take one or two pieces of tile and lay the pipe onto the tile, then score the tile around it. It's possible to simply take the stated pipe size as a guideline. But people often get confused between inner and outer diameter. Stated pipe sizes are of the outer diameter and, for threaded pipes, of the threads not the pipe body.

Measuring the actual outer pipe diameter gives an exact answer. It also prevents any errors introduced from using the measurement of the threads rather than the pipe itself. These should be the same, since the threads are created by grooving the pipe, but small differences can occur.

It may be easiest to use a single tile, score it and break it in half, then use a tile saw to carve out a perfect half-circle on each half. The two pieces should fit back together very closely with only a very small gap between the pipe and tile. Using one piece broken in half helps ensure the edges will fit together accurately. Leaving only a very small gap helps reduce any caulking errors.

After fitting everything in place, seal the gap with a thin bead of caulk using a caulking gun. Before it has time to dry fully, take a very slightly damp sponge and wipe away any excess from the tile to leave a nice clean result. A wooden cuticle tool or ice cream stick makes for a handy device to ensure that the bead is even around the entire circumference of the pipe.

After it dries, inspect the results carefully to ensure there are no small gaps anywhere. This is the time when you make the difference between a well-sealed pipe or virtually guarantee a later repair job.



# The question of water damage

Water damage is the enemy of all homeowners. It rots wood, producing mold and weakened support. It leads to foul odors and potential electrical hazards. Combating it can be time consuming and expensive. But the alternative is worse.

Tackle any sign of a leak at the first opportunity.

A leak doesn't have to be an active drip. It can be something as simple as a crack or hole in caulk around the plate that backs a shower control. Water will inevitably move into that hole, where it then gets trapped. Some will evaporate. But some will remain behind, leading to weakened drywall and mildew build up.

Eventually, the damage will spread. When that happens, what could have been a minor caulking job now requires removing the shower control and maybe part of the wall in order to repair the damage. In most cases, procrastination does lead to larger expenses.

One common place for water leaks or drips is at the joints or bottom of pipes under the bathroom and kitchen sinks. Improperly applied compound or plumber's tape leaves a small hole. Water seeps out anywhere it can. It oozes out of the joint and gravity carries it down to the bottom of the U-shaped pipe, where it drips onto the cabinet floor.

From there, the mildew starts to develop. The cabinetry, usually some form of press-board or treated plywood, starts to rot and weaken. Over time the surface will bow. Eventually the wood fibers develop a hole, allowing the water to seep down to even more critical areas.

Feel your pipes from time to time. Make sure they're dry around the joints and at the bottom of the 'U'. That's especially important right after any small plumbing job. That's the time - when pipes have been newly installed or freshly cleaned - when the evidence of your plumber's tape application skills are tested.

Look for water leaks that start higher up, too.

Kitchen faucets are notorious for having cracks or small holes in the caulking or sealant. Water tends to sit behind the plate that attaches to the sink at the base of the faucet. When homeowners clean behind there it's common to use the hard metal surface of a steel wool pad or layered sponge. The caulking gets scraped.

A couple of years go by and little by little that caulking is scraped off, dries out and gets accidentally removed by repeated water exposure and cleaning. Temperature changes near the window speed up the process. Winter temperatures keep the surface cooler than the rest of the room. Summer sun coming through the window bakes the caulk. That causes small contractions and expansions that help weaken the seal.

Give your plumbing a good inspection, the way a home inspector would when you buy or sell the house. Find any drips, leaks or just holes where plumbing attaches. Fix them now before you have to tear out a floor or wall. A little maintenance now is a lot less costly than a huge repair later.



# Unclogging drains

There are as many methods for unclogging drains as there are recipes for chocolate cake. And it's a good thing, too, because a clogged drain isn't just an inconvenience. Clogged drains can contribute to a burst pipe in winter by giving no route to relieve the pressure. They smell, they're unsightly and - not least, of course - they prevent use of the place the drain was installed to service.

One easy and ultra-low cost method is simply to run hot water. If the drain is only partially clogged it may be due to grease, small bits of food or other soft material. Hot water will often melt or dissolve enough of it to get the rest to flow all the way out.

That won't work, of course, on drains that are completely clogged. But other remedies can sometimes still be just as cheap, or nearly so.

The old-fashioned plunger still plays a useful role in the modern home. By increasing the pressure inside the pipe, it may force the clogging material to flush out of the system. Take care, though, about using this in winter. If the clog is the result of ice blockage produced from low temperatures it's possible to tip the scales and burst a pipe.

For those common clogs in the U-shaped section of the kitchen sink, removing the section of pipe can be the way to go. It takes only a few minutes to remove the two large metal or plastic retaining nuts. Then the pipe can easily be cleared of dropped earrings or spoons, grease plugs or anything else that made its way in.

Take care when replacing the pipe, though, to do it properly. Don't be tempted to seal it with PVC glue or other adhesive or sealant. Simple Teflon plumber's tape is the right solution. Wind it in a direction that will cause it to get further stretched when winding the nut back on. You don't want tightening the nut to undo the tape. That encourages leaks.

Chemical drain openers are safe and effective, if properly used. They dissolve grease, hair and other common materials to open up the passageway again. Then, when hot water flushes everything down, they degrade rapidly to produce no harm to the environment. They can be used on all modern plumbing pipes without fear.

One home recipe uses baking soda and vinegar. For simple clogs produced by calcium carbonate build up (hard water), this works great. Others will require commercial products to clear the clog.

The plumber's snake is a handy thing to have for those larger jobs. Sometimes it's a clogged toilet that the plunger won't fix. In other cases, the kitchen sink just won't flow freely after all other methods have been exhausted.

Before you call an expensive professional, try using a plumber's snake to clear the clog. That's the first thing the professional will do, anyway. Just run the wire cable into the pipe as far as possible and twist the handle on the cable feeder.

It grinds away at any material inside and can also be used to recover small cloths, sponges or other items that fell in. Many have small metal 'fingers' that can be clamped to pull items back out easily.

If all else fails, call your local plumbing professional. Better an expensive house call than a damaged or clogged pipe.



# ACT Plumbers

A Aaaba Plumbing Northside Mitchell ACT 2911 6293 8430  
Edwards Valley Plumbing 74 Gouger Street, Torrens ACT 2607 6286 2320  
Twin City Plumbing Service 6 Gleeson Pl, Kambah ACT 2902 0415 624 656  
Macquarie Plumbing Service 6 Jarvis Pl, Macquarie ACT 2614 0414 592 300  
A & N Rundle Plumbing 14 Fewtrell Pl, Monash ACT 2904 0408 626 392  
Hillman Plumbing Curtin ACT 2605 0402 903 095  
Around Town Plumbing Lawrence Crescent, Kambah ACT 2902 6161 8232  
Canberra Hot Water Service 1/9 Page Place Page Shopng Cntr, Page ACT 2614 6254 9822  
CSC Plumbing 39 Abercorn Crs, Isabella Plains ACT 2905 6292 1061  
J P Verdon 26 Anderson St, Chifley ACT 2606 6281 5695  
Plumbing Enterprises 17 Warramoo Crs, Narrabundah ACT 2604 6295 1778  
Reece Plumbing Centres 22 Mort St, Braddon ACT 2612 6247 3180  
Regional Plumbing & Drainage 8 Laidley Pl, Florey ACT 2615 6258 7295  
Tradelink Plumbing Centres 9-11 Dundas Ct, Phillip ACT 2606 6282 2275  
Advantage Plumbing 64 Bayldon Rd, Letchworth NSW 2620 6299 9045  
Tradelink Plumbing Centres 9-11 Darling St, Mitchell ACT 2911 6242 8499  
Sillis Plumbing Kambah ACT 2902 0407 431 235  
A.B. Plumbing 75 Jemalong St, Duffy ACT 2611 6288 9015  
6 Star Hot Water & Plumbing 24 Bisdee St, Hughes ACT 2605 0448 844 911  
Turbo Plumbing Drainage & Gas Fitting 24 Wearing St, Higgins ACT 2615 1800 995 599  
Tradelink Plumbing Centres 66 Barrier St, Fyshwick ACT 2609 6280 6888  
Eveready Plumbing 3 Moseley Pl, Kambah ACT 2902 6260 2766  
Chester's Plumbing Ngunnawal ACT 2913 0418 608 201  
O'Dowd Micks Plumbing 12 Flegg Crescent, Gordon ACT 2906 0428 693 339  
Joe Lore Plumber 10 Bemm Pl, Amaroo ACT 2914 6242 4341  
Capital Hotwater 157 Newcastle St, Fyshwick ACT 2609 6239 1588  
Taurus Plumbing & Gasfitting Services Ngunnawal ACT 2913 0437 747 545  
Hicksy The Handyman 61 Darling St, Barton ACT 2600 0407 112 345  
Around The Bend Plumbing 10 Brockway Circuit, Banks ACT 2906 0412 001 325  
Phil Quinnell Plumbing Queanbeyan NSW 2620 0417 214 914  
RK Plumbing 49 Burdekin St, Duffy ACT 2611 0413 014 499  
Get Tanked 16 Mildura St, Fyshwick ACT 2609 6280 8265  
Pipe King 20 Faunce St, Queanbeyan East NSW 2620 6299 0833  
Southwell Plumbing Service 5 Lyndon St, Kaleen ACT 2617 6241 1310  
Southern Innovations 46 Hoskins St, Mitchell ACT 2911 6241 4877  
ABS Plumbing Services Higgins ACT 2615 0419 416 897  
Reece Plumbing Centres 56 Dundas Ct, Phillip ACT 2606 6285 2608  
Reece Plumbing Centres 13-17 Grimwade St, Mitchell ACT 2911 6242 9166  
Marzano Plumbing 11 McKinlay St, Narrabundah ACT 2604 0405 314 352  
General Plumbing & Draining 13 Donnan St, Nicholls ACT 2913 0418 630 268  
Abbey Plumbing Drainage & Gasfitting 45 Batchelor St, Torrens ACT 2607 0400 007 171  
Pro-Plumbing Act 20 Axon St, Monash ACT 2904 0418 482 529  
Mick Shannon Plumbing & Gasfitting Flynn ACT 2615 0418 295 877  
J & B Plumbing 8 Moonbi Crescent, Isabella Plains ACT 2905 6292 6457  
A Team Plumbing Isabella Plains ACT 2905 0411 638 164  
The Plumbing Doctor 1/ 51 Raws Crs, Hume ACT 2620 6260 2999  
Aardvark Plumbing Fadden ACT 2904 6292 2997  
Ready 4 Plumbing 9/8 Luxton St, Belconnen ACT 2617 6251 5558  
Speedy Maintenance Gilmore ACT 2905 0423 771 917  
Drains 'R' Us Plumbing Maintenance Fraser ACT 2615 0418 433 767  
Brooks Marchant Ind 19 Aurora Ave, Queanbeyan East NSW 2620 6297 6044  
Original Water Tanks 93 Scrivener St, O'Connor ACT 2602 6247 9487

# ACT Plumbers

PLUMBTECH PLUMBING Canberra ACT 0427 879 600  
Axis Drainage & Civil Services Harrison ACT 2914 6255 6338  
J-TEP 1/10 McEacharn Pl, Mitchell ACT 2911 6253 9946  
Reece Plumbing Centres Gilmore Rd, Queanbeyan NSW 2620 6299 4059  
B & G Plumbing 68 Comur St, Yass NSW 2582 6226 1151  
Cappello Plumbing & Gas 31 Rich St, Higgins ACT 2615 0407 419 405  
Duncan's Plumbing Service 1/9 Page Pl, Page ACT 2614 6254 9822  
Just Fix It 4a/16 Kembla St, Fyshwick ACT 2609 6239 1900  
Woden Valley Plumbing & Gasfitting Weston ACT 2611 0407 212 565  
ABD Plumbing Services 48 Sproule Circuit, Evatt ACT 2617 6259 2257  
Greaney & Sweeney Queanbeyan NSW 2620 6297 1432  
Hays Trades & Labour 5/54 Marcus Clarke St, City ACT 2601 6230 5142  
McReynolds David 98 Rivett St, Hackett ACT 2602 6247 8464  
Southern Plumbing Plus 21 Lyell St, Fyshwick ACT 2609 6126 1155  
Help Plumbing Services 5 Isa St, Fyshwick ACT 2609 6280 5910  
1800 Tap Fix Chisholm ACT 2905 1800 827 349  
Alltech Plumbing 53 Kitchener St, Hughes ACT 2605 6281 5374  
A.C.T. Irrigation & Plumbing 51 Erlunda Circuit, Hawker ACT 2614 6255 3404  
Master Gasfitters 155 Gladstone St, Fyshwick ACT 2609 6280 4669  
Alan Cook Plumbing & Maintenance 19 Duffus Pl, Wanniasa ACT 2903 6231 7501  
Aussie Plumbing Services Lyons ACT 2606 6260 5300  
Australia Five Star Trades Moore St, Canberra ACT 2601 1300 667 678  
Reece Irrigation 13-17 Grimwade St, Mitchell ACT 2911 6241 5088  
Carson Plumbing & Gas 6 Barrett St, Macgregor ACT 2615 0416 703 770  
Craig McGregor 30 Mataranka St, Hawker ACT 2614 0411 550 939  
Boss Plumbing Higgins ACT 2615 0408 161 094  
Apex Plumbing Corporation Unit 1/ 48 Brooks St, Mitchell ACT 2911 0417 299 175  
Peter J Hay Plumbing Higgins ACT 2615 0419 691 748  
Ramsland Plumbing 829 Urila rd, Canberra ACT 2620 0450 403 385  
Thorpes Prestige Plumbing Services 27 Walker Crs, Jerrabomberra ACT 2619 6299 8866  
Bill Guy & Partners 6A Thesiger Ct, Deakin ACT 2600 6285 1022  
Vogue Bathrooms 4/23 Buckland St, Mitchell ACT 2911 6162 1727  
Smart Bathrooms Canberra ACT 2601 6255 8373  
Speedy Maintenance Gilmore ACT 2905 0423 771 917  
Drains 'R' Us Plumbing Maintenance Fraser ACT 2615 0418 433 767  
Brooks Marchant Ind 19 Aurora Ave, Queanbeyan East NSW 2620 6297 6044  
Mals Refrigeration 28 The Crescent, Queanbeyan NSW 2620 6297 2926  
Original Water Tanks 93 Scrivener St, O'Connor ACT 2602 6247 9487  
PLUMBTECH PLUMBING Canberra ACT 0427 879 600  
Axis Drainage & Civil Services Harrison ACT 2914 6255 6338  
J-TEP 1/10 McEacharn Pl, Mitchell ACT 2911 6253 9946