

9 Questions to Ask a Plumber Before You Hire Them

There are few things as stressful as upgrading or renovating your home, especially when the work requires changes to the main systems in your house, like your plumbing. When choosing the right professionals to assist you in making your renovation dreams a reality, there is no such thing as being too picky. While you can easily do an online search to see what your options are, there are various aspects you need to consider before handing over your hard-earned money. Here are some questions you should be asking before you let a single contractor onto your property.



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Do You Have Any References?

Any tradesman worth their salt should be able to provide you with at least a few references from clients, preferably from people in your area. Many businesses have realised the importance of having an online presence in an increasingly digital world, and websites and social media pages that have an easy-to-find references section should give you a good indication of the quality of their work. If their references are hidden or look fake, you should cross them off your list of potential contractors.

You can also find 'plumbers near me' via sites like [MyBuilder.com](https://www.mybuilder.com), which specialises in connecting customers with vetted and reviewed local tradesmen and contractors. These kinds of websites allow customers to post their jobs on their platform so that registered contractors can apply for the jobs and submit quotes, taking some of the hassles out of requesting quotes from individual businesses.

Are You Fully Qualified?

Ensuring the plumber you choose has the right qualifications for the job is important to ensure the work is done to a decent standard, and that it will pass any inspections that may be needed. Before the advent of [National Vocational Qualifications \(NVQs\)](#) credentials, the major certifications and tests that plumbers took were City and Guilds qualifications. While older plumbers may hold these City and Guilds qualifications, younger professionals would most likely hold an NVQ. Most household plumbers should be qualified to NVQ level 2, which is roughly equivalent to an A level, but many go on to complete the level 3 tests as well. The type of qualifications they hold should therefore give you an idea of how much experience they have, which brings us to the next question you should be asking.

How Long Have You Been in Business?

While there is nothing wrong with choosing a young professional, as everyone has to start somewhere, tradesmen with more experience typically take less time to complete jobs and the quality of their work is generally higher. If the job you need them to do is a simple one, you won't necessarily need to hire the professional with the most experience, and the higher price. However, be aware of the risks you take hiring a green plumber for more challenging jobs. A contractor with a long history of doing business in the region will also have a reputation to uphold in the neighbourhood and recognises that a large portion of their future business is based on recommendations from previous work. They have more to lose by doing a terrible job, and more to gain by doing a good job.

Do You Have Insurance?

Plumbing can be complicated, and there is always the chance of the unexpected happening when you have a contractor performing any work on your home. You must check what [insurance your plumber](#) has before you let them start any work on your property. At the very least, a reputable plumber should have Public Liability Insurance, considered a must-have for any service-related business. They should also have Product Liability Insurance as well as Employer's Liability Insurance, if they have more than one employee.

Do You Do the Work Yourself or Subcontract?

While family-run plumbing businesses typically do all their work themselves, larger companies tend to outsource a lot of the work they quote for. This is especially true for large jobs that need more manpower than their usual team can offer.

Before you sign off on a quote, ask if the plumber will be subcontracting any aspect of the job out. If they are, ask if you can have references for their third-party supplier so you can check them out too.

Do You Have a Speciality?

Plumbers frequently [specialise in a particular aspect of their trade](#). Having a plumber complete a job in which they have experience and potentially additional training ensures a job is done properly the first time. In many cases, a specialist may even be able to charge a lower rate because they buy specific materials from their suppliers more often than general plumbers. While a generic plumber may be fine for basic work, if you need particular work done, make sure to select someone with the necessary skills.

Do You Offer a Warranty on Work Done?

Getting a warranty on the work done to your house is the only way to entirely guarantee that the task is done correctly, even if it takes numerous attempts. What better warranty of work can you get than a plumber offering to return to fix an issue for free if it occurs again? It provides an incentive for the professional to complete the job properly the first time, sparing them the inconvenience of having to come back at their own cost. If there is a reason why a guarantee cannot be offered, a good plumber will be able to tell you. If it's a simple fix and they won't back it up or give you a plausible explanation, find another plumber to deal with who will guarantee their services. Also be sure to get clarity on what your warranty covers, and how you go about redeeming it should there be an issue.

If Permits Are Required, Can You Obtain Them?

Any construction work that has the potential to affect either public infrastructure or residents if done incorrectly would need a permit and an inspection to verify that the work is done correctly. A professional plumber should be aware of the [situations in which a permit and inspection are necessary](#), and he or she should make certain that a permit is obtained and an inspection is arranged. If they

What Are Your Fees and Payment Terms?

Once you have a better idea of what services you need, whether you need a specialist or if a general plumber will suffice, and if they are certified to do the job, your next question should be about their fees and payment terms. Do they require a deposit before any work can commence? Does their quote include material costs and labour? What is their labour rate? Do they charge a travel fee? How long is the quote valid? Are there any additional fees involved? Once the work is complete, how long do you have to pay the final invoice?

Finding the best plumber for the job might be more challenging than you expect, but the time you take to do your research beforehand is well worth the hassle. By keeping these easy questions in mind when vetting your options, you will have a greater understanding of who you are working with, their experience, and what they are capable of so you can make the best choice for your home renovation or upgrade.