

Mike's 2019 Homeowner Plumbing Guide



YOUR MOST TRUSTED AND RECOMMENDED FAMILY-RUN PLUMBING SERVICE IN RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

For over 30 years, Mike Wilson Plumbing has been the household name for residential, light commercial and emergency plumbing services for hundreds of homes in the Richmond Metro area including Goochland, Chesterfield, Petersburg and Henrico.

Mike Wilson Plumbing can assist with water heater installation and repair, pipe replacement and repair, bathroom renovations and projects, new toilet installations and existing toilet repair, and more! [Contact us](#) today for all your plumbing needs!

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Pouring Grease Down the Drain with Hot Water is Okay (and 3 Other Myths)

Between cooking your Thanksgiving turkey, bacon-wrapped asparagus, casseroles and other yummy dishes, the holidays give you a lot of grease to dispose of.

With a more grease than usual to get rid of, you may not be prepared for how to deal with the slimy mess. Thanksgiving only comes once a year. Maybe just this once you'll dump it all down the kitchen sink and forget about it.

Is pouring grease down the drain really all that bad? What if you run hot water while you do it to keep it from congealing? Maybe a dash of dish soap can chase it down and be just enough for the grease to not get stuck. After all, once it's gone, you'll have nothing to worry about, right?

Let's be Clear, Never Pour Grease Down a Drain

What tricks many people about grease is that, while you're cooking with it, it's a liquid. At higher than room temperatures, grease liquefies. And what do you do with liquid waste? Well, you pour it down the drain of course!

The problem is that as soon as the grease cools, it congeals and plugs up your pipes. Over time, your drains will run slower and slower until they get clogged enough to wreak havoc. So, let's debunk these four greasy myths about how to deal with grease.

Myth #1: It's okay with hot water:

False. The problem with fatty waste is that it will eventually congeal at room temperature. Even the hottest water will not be able to keep the grease warm forever and fatty residue will still coat the inside of your pipes, trapping other food particles.

What's worse, fats are less dense than water and hydrophobic (meaning grease and water don't mix). Between floating to the top of any liquid and refusing to dissolve, fats effectually do everything they can to fight being flushed down the drain.

Myth #2: Dish soap will do the trick:

False. While it is true that dish soaps can break down fats temporarily, it's not going to be enough to counteract the ill effects of grease forever. The companies who formulate dish soap intend for their products to clean your dishes not your drains. Otherwise, we can assume they would be smart enough to slap a new label on it and sell it as an easy solution to your grease disposal needs. If they know and are willing to admit it can't do that, we shouldn't kid ourselves either.

Myth #3: Cooking oils that are liquid at room temperature are okay:

False. While fats that are solid at room temperature pose the largest risk to the health of your pipes, canola and olive oil still cause issues. They are also hydrophobic, making it difficult to wash them out. As they coat the inside of your plumbing, food particles stick to the walls and gum up the whole operation.

Myth #4: But I have a garbage disposal:

False. The garbage disposal will not change the how grease behaves once it finds its home in your pipes. Furthermore, it made it onto the top of our list of [foods to avoid putting in your garbage disposal](#) and #5 on our list of [don'ts for your garbage disposal](#).

How to Properly Dispose of Grease

Pour all of the grease, fats, and cooking oils in a disposable container; from the Thanksgiving or Christmas turkey, from the fried green beans, or from sautéed red skin potatoes. An empty margarine container works great for this. Then, wipe down all oily dishes with a paper towel and throw it away.

Once all of the cooking, eating, and cleaning has been done for the day, tuck the grease container in the freezer. Maybe include a note that says “not ice cream” just to be safe. The following day, you can place the container in the trash. You won't have to worry about making a mess in your trash bin or clogging up your pipes.

Here at Mike Wilson Plumbing, we want you to keep your drains running smoothly. We hope you take these tips and properly dispose of your fatty waste. But if you have any questions or a plumbing emergency this holiday season, call Mike Wilson Plumbing at (804) 641-6570.

Five Tips to Prepare Your Plumbing for a Hurricane

Preparing your home for a hurricane can be quite overwhelming. Everyone knows to buy food, water, and batteries but there's a lot more that goes into hurricane preparation that isn't necessarily common knowledge—especially when it comes to your home's plumbing. The plumbing of your home is essential for your everyday life, so don't neglect preparing it for a hurricane.

Not sure how to prepare? Don't worry. We've got a list of five big tips to help you prepare your home's plumbing for a hurricane:

Clear sump pump and drains of debris

Flooding is a very common disaster that occurs with hurricanes (especially in Richmond) so maintaining your sump pump before hurricane season is the most ideal way to prevent flooding in your home. Sump pumps help prevent flooding by clearing water from around your home, so if it isn't working properly during the hurricane then your home is at risk for flooding.

It is also a great idea to ensure that your drains and gutters are also free of debris. Because hurricanes bring along heavy rain, you want to be sure that the water has some place to go other than your roof or sewage. These kinds of preparations could save you a lot in plumbing repairs later.

Survey the sump pump

Not only do you want to clear your sump pump and drainage of debris, but you want to ensure that the sump pump and drainage is working properly before the storm comes. When checking, you'll want to ensure that it automatically comes on and begins pumping. The sump pump will be a vital part of keeping your home free from flooding, so be sure to check on it before the storm starts and have any repairs or maintenance completed early.

Check plumbing throughout the storm

While you should never go outside during a hurricane or storm, you can still check on the plumbing inside your home. As long as the power is still on, the sump pump should still be working, but excessive water use or debris around the drains inside your home could cause it to not pump effectively. You should definitely be mindful of your water usage throughout the storm.

If you evacuate, turn off main water valve

If flooding begins or you evacuate your home for any reason, be sure to turn the main water valve off. By doing this, you'll help prevent flood water from contaminating your water supply. Flood water can contain very dangerous substances, such as chemicals, feces, and other gross

matters that you don't want your family drinking. Protect your family by shutting the main water valve off if flooding begins or if you evacuate.

After the storm, be sure to inspect

Whether you evacuate or stay put for the storm, you always want to be sure you inspect your home's plumbing once the storm is over. If there is debris around the sewer drains, gutters, or other drains, be sure to clear those out to help your system pump properly. When checking your plumbing after a storm, you'll want to look out for leaks, cracks, or discolored water.

If you stumble across any plumbing issues after a hurricane, you will need a certified plumber to inspect and repair your system and ensure that your family's water supply is safe. With Mike Wilson Plumbing, you can trust that your plumbing is in good hands. We offer expert plumbing services at honest prices.

[Contact us](#) today!

What Are the Risks of Hiring an Unlicensed Plumber?

Your [toilet is draining slowing](#) or you can't figure out how to remove a stuck angle valve, so you decide to quickly hire someone who knows a bit about plumbing but doesn't have a license because they're available and cheap.

You think, "*What's the worst thing that could happen?*"

Actually, a lot of terrible things can result from this hasty decision. Hiring an unlicensed plumber is incredibly risky for several reasons. In this blog, we'll dive into the **three main dangers** when you choose not to [call a professional](#) for your plumbing needs.

You won't be protected by insurances

[According to Angie's List](#), contractors (including plumbers) should have two kinds of insurance -- [liability and worker's compensation](#).

These two types of insurance protect homeowners from paying for any damages the plumber might accidentally cause. For example, if the unlicensed plumber unsuccessfully drains the toilet and instead clogs it more so that it floods the house, you'll have to pay for the costly repairs if they don't have liability insurance.

Unfortunately, your [homeowner's policy](#) won't usually cover the costs of those damages.

Worker's compensation will protect you from your insurance rates going up if the plumber gets injured while working in your home. While your homeowner's insurance policy may pay for some of the worker's claim, **your insurance rates will mostly likely increase.**

Your house can be damaged

Not only will you have to pay for the damages to your home if the plumber doesn't have liability insurance, the list of possible things that could go wrong is endless.

Maybe a [rattling pipe](#) or poorly installed [water heater](#) don't sound too bad, but they can turn into very serious issues. For example, if the plumber messes up while working on pipes, *your house can flood*. Likewise, if they're dealing with wires and something goes wrong, they can unintentionally *start a fire*.

It puts lives in danger

From floods to fires, an unlicensed plumber can accidentally cause catastrophes through a simple slip-up.

A few other [major dangers](#) include:

- **Gas leaks**
- **Electrocution**
- **Chemical poisoning**
- **Sewer leaks**

If any one of these problems occur, it can threaten your safety as well as your family's and the plumber's safety. Hiring a plumber who doesn't have licenses simply isn't worth the possibility of putting your home, not to mention your life, at risk.

All [staff at Mike Wilson Plumbing](#) are fully licensed, so you can rest assured that your property and family will be protected. Don't take any chances -- think again and [reach out to the experts](#) today!

When to Call a Professional Plumber vs. DIY Projects

Although [“do-it-yourself” projects](#) are all the craze now and can sometimes be effective, there are some jobs that should only be handled by a professional plumber.

In the plumbing world, DIY projects gone wrong can lead to leaks, frozen pipes, flooded homes, and worse. While there are some tasks that can be tackled by the average homeowner, it's crucial to know what should be taken care of by contractors.

Trying to solve a plumbing problem yourself can end up being more expensive than hiring a professional, because you can accidentally make the issue worse and have to get emergency plumbing, which is costlier.

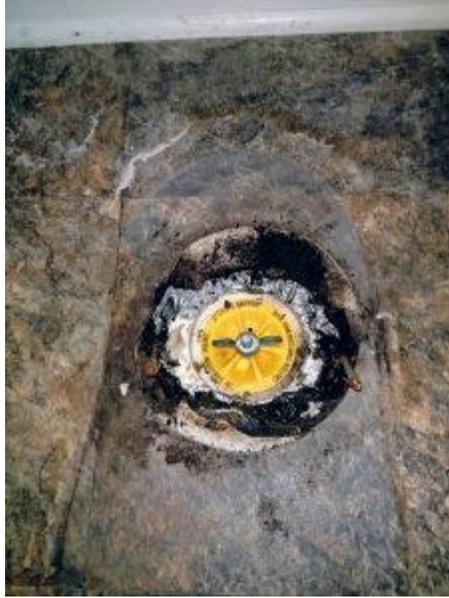
Here are some examples of situations where the homeowner took on a project themselves when they should have called a contractor. These outcomes resulted in more hassle and money for the homeowner than if they had just called a plumber in the first place.

This person installed some pipes themselves, which wouldn't drain and ended up leaking into the wall:



The following pictures show how a homeowner installed a toilet flange over two inches below the concrete floor.

However, we were able to jackhammer the floor, extend the pipe up, and install a toilet flange at the proper height while still saving the linoleum floor.





While it's better to be safe than sorry and just call a professional, there are some tasks that are simple enough to be taken care of by homeowners. **Below, are a few examples of DIY projects that are typically safe to undertake.**

Common toilet leaks

There may be some toilet leaks that are complicated and part of a larger problem, but most [toilet leaks have common causes](#) and have simple solutions.

One typical toilet leak is called the **phantom flush** and “happens when a toilet cuts on and off by itself, causing you to hear the toilet refill as if it was recently flushed.”

This problem is easily addressed by draining the tank and bowl then looking at the flapper seat to see if it's worn out. If it does seem old, go ahead and replace it, which usually solves the phantom flush.

Another issue that can be a DIY project with toilets is **leaking seals**. There are five seals that can possibly leak, and the solution is to drain and remove the tank then replace or tighten the seal. However, if this job is too physical or overwhelming, go ahead and [call a plumber](#).

Outside spigot leak

The next [plumbing problem it's okay to handle yourself](#) is leaky faucets. For example, one faucet that's simple to fix is an [outside spigot](#). If tightening the nut behind the handle doesn't work, you might have to get a new packing gasket.

First, close the valve inside the house or main water valve to turn off the water. After buying a new packing gasket that matches the current brand, follow the [steps provided by Today's Homeowner](#) to install a new washer:

1. Turn the water off at the water meter using a cut-off key.
2. Unscrew the packing nut beneath the handle of the facet.
3. Grasp the faucet handle and pull the valve stem out of the hose bibb.
4. Remove the screw on the valve stem holding the faucet washer.
5. Replace the washer with one of the same size and thickness.
6. Push the valve stem back into the hose bibb housing.
7. Tighten the packing nut on the hose bibb until snug.
8. Use the cut-off key to turn the water back on at the meter.
9. Turn the spigot back on to remove any air from the line.
10. Check for leaks around the packing nut on the valve stem.
11. Turn the faucet off and check the spigot for leaks.

However, before undertaking any recommended DIY plumbing projects, it's important to make sure you have the [right tools every homeowner should have](#), which include a water meter key, a heavy pipe wrench, a toilet auger, an adjustable wrench, and most importantly the [contact information of a professional plumber](#) to get help from.

At the end of the day, it's better to hire a contractor than risk flooding your home or putting your family in danger. [Reach out to us](#) today with all of your plumbing needs and avoid spending more money on messed up DIY projects!

How long does it take to re-pipe my plumbing?

Depending on different factors, it could take anywhere from two days to a week to repipe one bathroom. Having over 30 years of plumbing experience, you can trust we will do the job right and in a timely fashion. Be prepared to answer the following questions: what story is the bathroom located? What types of flooring and walls do you have in the bathroom? What would be the length of the new pipe in the bathroom? Is it easy to access where the new pipe will be installed? What type of pipe do you want to put in? Is there drywall or paint that will need fixing after we repipe?

The way we repipe will depend on how your home was built. We recommend having a free estimate done by Mike Wilson Plumbing to determine how long the project will take. The first step is calling us to find out exactly what is wrong with your pipes. If it turns out to be something relatively simple, we charge a flat hourly rate with free estimates. We will inspect the pipe and look inside the piping to determine if corrosion is happening. We want to ensure we determine the problem before you spend the money on re-piping.

If you are experiencing pipe issues, contact us today at 804.641.6570 to schedule your free estimate.

Toilet Plumbing Tips

If you experience a major toilet plumbing problem like a flooded bathroom, call Mike Wilson Plumbing at 804-641-6570 or visit online at our [website](#) for all your plumbing needs. However, if you experience minor plumbing troubles, a common household item will probably do the trick. Here are 2 easy toilet plumbing tips for minor toilet troubles:

Toilet Plumbing Tips

Coca-Cola Stain Remover

Use a 12-ounce can of Coca-Cola to remove stubborn toilet stains. Pour the can around the rim of your toilet and let sit for one hour. The acid in the drink will break down stains. After an hour, scrub the bowl with a brush and flush the remains.

Remove Mineral Deposits with Vinegar

Ugly mineral deposits can make any toilet look horrible! Soak toilet paper in white vinegar and then set the wet paper directly on top of the mineral hard water stain. Let the paper sit on the stain overnight. Then just flush! The hard water stains should be removed.

Plumbing Innovation

Plumbing Innovation Technology

Plumbing innovation has developed tremendously over the last 100 years especially in the environmentally and eco-friendly department. Environmental products are not only affordable, but they also save money by reducing water over time without compromising homeowner's day-to-day water usage. Also, several new plumbing products might help homeowners maintain a more hygienic living space. If you are interested in the installing a new plumbing product below in the Midlothian, Chester or Richmond area, contact Mike Wilson Plumbing at **804.641.6570** or our [website contact form](#) to schedule your appointment.

Dishwashers

Dishwashers are an example of a plumbing innovation and appliance that combines both the technology and eco-friendly functions that manufacturers keep developing to meet higher energy-efficiency standards and conserve water. Some dishwashers even reuse water from the rinse cycle for the next wash. The use of these smart dishwashers saves the average family who washes dishes four times a week up to 700 gallons of water each year!

Tankless Water Heaters

Another plumbing innovation growing in popularity eco-friendly product is tankless water heaters. A conventional water heater is insulated storing 20 to 80 gallons of water. Tankless water heaters provide homeowners with [constant hot water flow](#) as well as overall energy savings. Experts believe that tankless water heaters consume about 22% less energy than conventional water heaters. Overall tankless water heaters are more expensive but do over greater energy savings.

Touch-Free Faucets

A plumbing innovation that is a growing trend for many homeowners is touch-free faucets. It allows homeowners to enjoy a hands-free experience while avoiding a spread of germs and other contaminants. Touch-free faucets also come in many designs and tend to be visually appealing verses touch faucets.

Touchless Toilets

This trend of touchless toilets is becoming popular in restaurants and public restrooms. It works by flushing when you wave your hand above the toilet. After it flushes, the toilet lid automatically shuts without slamming. As far as homeowners installing touchless toilets, the technology is not as popular as one would expect.

How Plumbing Impacts Insurance Premiums

Purchasing your home is expensive-mortgage, utilities, improvements, and insurance can stretch your budget to the limit. Homeowner's insurance is a necessity due to protecting against and limiting your exposure to disasters, and protecting your assets, but can be expensive upfront. There are certain factors that increase the cost of insurance, including your household plumbing fixtures and features. Let's see how plumbing impacts insurance premiums

Outdated plumbing installations and expensive features that make potential repairs more expensive can drive up insurance costs. The exact amount will depend on your specific issue and insurance company.

“Some insurers will not insure you at all, some will require an inspection, and some will classify you as high-risk,” CEO of insurance-services company InsurEye Alexey Saltykov told the Financial Post.

You may end up paying more in insurance costs if your home features any of these elements:

Finished Basements:

Carpeting and furniture in your basement mean greater liability in the event of a plumbing leak. Floods and sewer leaks or backups, will hit basements first and ruin your belongings. Finished basements can cause your insurance premiums to increase up to 20 percent.

Outdated Pipe Material:

Insurance companies care about what pipe material is used in your home because of pipe material like lead and galvanized steel are prone to corrosion and buildup, which decreases the quality and pressure of your water supply. Pipes made of copper or insurance companies prefer more modern materials like PVC or PEX piping.

Backyard Pool:

A pool will increase the estimated cost to rebuild your home by six percent. It will also classify your home into a higher building limit. It can increase liability because of the risk of drowning, particularly if there is no fence around the pool.

Improve Your Insurance Premiums

The convenience of a finished basement and the luxury of a swimming pool may be worth the higher premiums. However, outdated pipes, pose a problem you can correct to improve your water quality and lower your insurance and water bills. If you are interested in replacing your plumbing pipes, contact Mike Wilson Plumbing, your trusted Midlothian and Richmond plumber at (804) 641-6570 today!

Basement Plumbing - What You Should Know

Believe it or not, modern home plumbing works a lot like the plumbing of the olden days. With the exception of electric pumps moving water up to water towers, the water flows into our homes the same way it always has- gravity.

Basement plumbing, being underground, can have unique issues related to gravity. When it's time to install plumbing fixtures in the lowest point in the house, especially bathroom basement plumbing, be sure to consider the following:

Gravity - Effective Draining

Although gravity moves water from drainpipes on the upper levels of your home down to the main sewer line, the drainpipes in the basement are on the same level as the main sewer line.

To install a drainpipe in your basement for a sink, toilet, and shower, you'll need a trench in the vicinity of the main sewer line. Then, the new pipe should be installed with a downward slope of about a quarter inch for every foot. This is pretty easy to achieve if the connection to the main sewer line is far enough below the concrete floor. If it isn't, or it's above the floor - creating a false floor where the new drainpipe will run is another option. This method will also allow you to avoid damaging and ruining your floor, although your new toilet will be on an elevated platform, it will most likely not be the preferred solution.

Some toilet and pump systems send wastewater upwards. "Upflushing" toilets are installed above the floor, have a pump that sends wastewater to a higher connection point in the primary sewer line. These systems can also help drain sinks and showers installed in the basement, with additional fixtures. Essentially, the mechanism sends the used water up with the toilet's wastewater.

Trap Space Requirements

The trap (the U-shaped pipe beneath the drain that stops gunk and hair from making its way down the drain) prevents nasty, problematic clogs. But traps also perform another task: the water in the bottom portion of the trap creates a blockade against sewage gases progressing further into your system. Not only do these gases smell bad, they can be combustible. Hence why ALL plumbing fixtures require trap mechanisms.

Built in toilet traps can sometimes be seen in the curve of the shape of the bowl. Traps for sinks are above the floor and usually aren't too much trouble when installing in your basement. Drains for showers, on the other hand, require traps to be just below the floor, so consider the additional accommodation to the pipe.

Consider Ventilation

Ensuring effective flow and good-smelling plumbing systems also involves installing vents alongside the drains. These vents serve as outlet channels for sewer gases and allow water to flow smoothly by avoiding creating a vacuum. It's critical that toilets, showers, and sinks in the basement have ventilation as with any plumbing system.

Plumbing codes outline the distance a fixture can be from drain-waste-vent system's conduit (often referred to as the "soil stack"). When planning how to configure your piping for ventilation, and additional valves for air admittance, its best to consult with a professional plumber.

Residential plumbers, like Mike Wilson, are experienced in Richmond and Chesterfield area plumbing codes which must be strictly adhered to for safety and inspection.

Installing a basement bathroom isn't a monumental challenge. With good planning, and the help of an experienced professional residential plumber, your basement bathroom project can be a very achievable success. Your investment will add value to your home and enhance your downstairs comfort.

Want to Install Your Basement Plumbing?

For information and pricing on installing your basement plumbing project, contact Mike Wilson Plumbing today at (804) 641-6570.

Four Plumbers Professional Tools

In our line of work as professional plumbers, we need to use various specialized plumbing tools. Many plumbers' professional tools you may not have seen before. Our toolboxes are categorized according to a variety of needs. We have tools for sinks and faucets, drainage, tubing, saws and others for specialty plumbing needs.

They usually help in cleaning drains, repairing, cutting or bending pipes, and in the installation of new equipment. Some of the standard tools that professional plumbers use include pipe and tubing cutters, flaring and swaging tools, drain cleaners and tubing benders. When you call a plumbing company and they send you a plumber, it is likely that the person who shows up will have one or all of these tools.

Pipe and Tubing Cutters

These are used both in installations and repairs. There are many tools in this category; they help the plumber cut and fix pipes and tubes. The tubing cutters are many and will aid in the cutting of pipes and tubes of diverse nature. Common examples of tools in this category include the ratcheting PVC cutter, the general tube cutter and the large diameter tube cutter.

Flaring and Swaging Tools

Plumbers use these tools to flare and swag metal pipes including steel, copper, brass and aluminum. In this category, we have the heavy-duty flaring tool, the all-in-one flaring tool and the six-in-one swaging tool.

Drain Cleaners

These tools, mainly used in repairs, help in clearing blocked or clogged drains. Examples of commonly used drainage tools include a plumber's wrench and the adjustable slip nut wrench.

Tube Benders

These are tools that, as their name suggests, help in bending of tubes. These tools include the common tube bending spring and the tube bending lever style tool.

There are many other tools that plumbers use. Most of these tools are technical and require training for one to handle them efficiently. Therefore, in case you have any plumbing concerns, it is always prudent to consult a plumbing company and ask for assistance.

Plumbing Advice from Mike Wilson

Hi y'all! It's Mike Wilson. In my experience on the job, people always ask me for plumbing advice after fixing their issues. I thought I could do a quick sharing here too. Here we go!

Understand Before Getting Plumbing Advice

When it comes to plumbing, people often stress out because they didn't do all that they could to take care of their fixtures. There are some things that all homeowners can do in order to keep their plumbing in one piece, but it takes some diligence and knowledge. There are many things that people wish they knew about plumbing, because it could save some time, money and energy!

Those who want to make sure that they are in good hands should follow these tips and adhere to some of the most valuable plumbing advice that professionals have offered.

Always Stay on Top of Maintenance

Repair should always be the second resort, not the first. People who take care of their plumbing fixtures frequently will not have to deal with plumbing breakdowns as often. Those who are on top of maintenance will be pleasantly surprised with the amount of money they can save in addition to how well their plumbing fixtures will operate as a whole. Anybody that wants to make the most of their toilets, sinks, [hot water heaters](#) or any other fixtures should keep their maintenance at the forefront.

Take Note of Changes

In most cases, there are always telltale signs that a plumbing fixture is about to go bad. When that sink is dripping, it is often a precursor to an even bigger problem which will be discovered later. Likewise, if the toilet keeps clogging, or if water pressure remains low, this will typically get worse, before it gets better.

Whether this means doing the work oneself, or calling in reinforcements, in the form of high-quality plumbers, people will give themselves an excellent shot at success by taking note of the little things first. This will keep plumbing fixtures in quality condition and allow people to do all that they can in order to keep water running.

Poor Plumbing Means High Bills

When plumbing fixtures begin to give out or malfunction, you may quickly find that your water bills are getting out of hand. This is actually a sign that plumbing fixtures are experiencing problems. Homeowners who know that they haven't begun using outrageous amounts of water, yet are experiencing higher water bills, will find out that they have some problems that they weren't taken care of earlier.

The best thing that people can do is get in touch with licensed and insured plumbers that can do the work for them. This will help keep home plumbing issues intact and will prevent the worst from happening.

Yours Sincerely,

Mike Wilson

Always Ready to Serve

7 Common Plumbers Misconceptions

Not all plumbers are cut from the same cloth, and there are certainly quite a few misconceptions about our trade. Take a look at 7 of the most common plumber misconceptions and see how we stack up next time we pay you a visit!

Plumbers Misconceptions

1. Jack of all trades

Plumbers may define the term “handy”, but you can’t always expect them to be hands on with everything. A plumber likes to know what is involved with the project before they arrive, so that they can come equipped with the right tools, inventory, and time. Make sure you let them know what you’d like them to look at before the appointment, so that your plumber can help you understand what they’re ready to help with, and what needs a separate specialist.

2. Lots of free time

Many home service professionals schedule their day to be fairly full, using the information they gather from an initial inquiry to understand the time required for the job. This is another reason to fully explain what you’re really after, as early as possible. Just as how you would not want your plumber to show up late to an appointment, or even have to reschedule at the last minute, you’ll want to give them the courtesy of the right information to help them schedule their day.

3. A truck with bottomless inventory

A plumber’s truck may look big, and it may have a lot packed inside, but the plumbing world is a complicated one. Without knowledge of the brands, styles, and types of materials you have, there is little chance that your plumber will have the exact bits and pieces they need for hardware repair when they first arrive. If something’s broken, do your best to get the model information - even a cell phone photo will help. With the right planning, your plumber can anticipate your needs and work to prepare the right parts ahead of time.

4. The Pipe Whisperer

In a plumber’s perfect world, the pipes that go to and from your home or commercial property are located on the outside, in a clear box, and easy to spot. In reality, the pipes are hidden inside of walls, floors, and creepy crawly spots that are seldom recognized for their convenience. An exposed piece of pipe can sometimes point to an issue, but it doesn’t guarantee an immediate diagnosis. Sometimes, it takes several hours of lengthy discovery to identify the reality behind an issue.

5. Really good at moving things

Having a big, strong plumber at the house helping resolve your pipe and plumbing issues can be a great relief. However, it may not be the best idea to start asking for help with rearranging

furniture, carting things into the attic, or other acts of brawn. There are many wonderful handyman services you can rely on for bulky moves, and your plumber's back will thank you.

6. Not dependable

A small minority of plumbers can give the rest of us a bad name. Master plumbers, licensed professionals, and industry experts regularly serve their areas proudly. Thinking that this group can be lumped in with the no-show, no-call, always-late, fair-weather practitioners simply isn't fair. Know who you're calling before you pick up the phone by looking at social media reviews and other feedback easily available to many people for little cost.

7. An Arm, A Leg, and Your First Born

Many people hold off on contacting a plumber until the absolute Worst-Case Scenario is in effect. This is most often done because of the myth that plumbing can be expensive and project work is always incalculable at the beginning. The reality is that your plumber is the best person to tell you what budget you should work with. Getting them in the loop in the beginning of your need's analysis will ensure that you get the fastest, most economic route to your solution. The higher costs tend to show up after a DIY project has turned into a disaster, and your trusted plumber is coming in to clean up and restart.

5 Tools Every Homeowner Should Have for DIY Plumbing

When nobody is around to help, you may need to start learning the ropes for yourself. As experts in the plumbing field, we highly recommend that you have these five tools for DIY plumbing ready at home in case anything happens.

1. Water Meter Key

When your water service provider starts and stops service at a property, or even when maintenance is needed, you'll see them access the main service point to your property (typically near the street). They use a long, thin metal tool to turn on or off the water access. This special tool is referred to as a water meter key. Having your own on hand gives you peace of mind that your water can be shut off in an emergency, as well as the next time you want to upgrade your sink, swap out a toilet, or investigate a hidden drip.

2. A Heavy Pipe Wrench

Working with the pipes in and around your home can be frustrating, and having skimpy tools just makes it worse. Pipe wrenches are designed to give you the appropriate torque and momentum to access and adjust the water and waste-carrying pipes and pipe connections that you'll need to work with. A heavy, solid pipe wrench makes disconnecting pipes much easier.

3. Toilet Auger

It happens to everyone - the toilet won't flush, and the world is coming to an end. While many would think to reach for a plunger, the mighty toilet auger is your better bet. A toilet auger is different from other augers because of its protected end points. Rather than exposed metal, toilet augers have plastic or rubberized tips to ensure that the porcelain in your toilet is not damaged during the repair. A toilet auger helps to break up a clog to allow water to move through the pipe, faster and without nearly as much pumping action as a plunger.

4. Adjustable wrench (channel locks)

A good pair of adjustable channel locks can make all the difference on your next DIY project. Adjustable settings make it easy work with a variety of sizes of materials. This is a tool worth investing in, as entry-level adjustable wrenches often lack the gripping power of their higher end counterparts.

5. A great plumber's business card

When in doubt, give me a shout - that's the motto of the master plumber. If a project looks bigger than you anticipated, or if something doesn't seem right, it's better to engage a professional's assistance at that time. Waiting until after you've "given it a go" typically drives up repair bills and complicates the work. Knowing who to call will ensure that you can move on to other parts of your to do list, while a professional works on the tough stuff.

Still can't find what you want for DIY Plumbing?

Don't see a tool on the list that you think should be there? Let us know in the comments!

Signs You Need A Professional Plumber

Home ownership is an exciting and often intimidating goal to reach. Having a space to call your own and being able to paint and decorate the way you want is certainly an upgrade on the lifestyle that goes along with renting. But, with all of the advantages of owning a home comes a few disadvantages as well. For instance, when the plumbing or HVAC system is acting up, it can mean a big headache and big costs, but this time there's no landlord to foot the bill.

Luckily, if you keep an eye out for warning signs, you might be able to avoid more serious problems down the line. Here are five warning signs that something is not right with the plumbing in your home:

1. Using the Plunger Constantly

If you have the plunger out on a daily basis, something is wrong. The plunger should only be used in emergencies and never on a daily basis. If the home is on a septic tank for waste removal, the tank may be full and need to be pumped. If the services are on a city sewer there could be a clog somewhere in the sewer lines. Another common problem is the growth of tree roots in the sewer lines. If the problem is getting worse and not better, your home care should start with small business plumbing professionals.

2. Leaking Water

If you open the cabinet under the kitchen sink and there is a puddle of water, you have a problem. When there is a water leak, this is most definitely the time to call in professional reinforcements. While some people are able to identify the source of the leak and take care of it themselves, leaks may indicate a larger issue to address. Leaks can grow worse the longer they are let go and it can directly affect the other parts of the plumbing system.

3. Low Water Pressure

One of the worst fears in home ownership is turning on the faucet and no water flows except for a tiny trickle. If you have bad water pressure all the time and not just when the dishwasher or washing machine is running, it is a sign that something is awry. When the water pressure is low, it is an indication that there is a problem in the pipes. Older homes can develop buildup in the pipes and this will block the water flow. Another common reason for low water pressure in older homes are small pipes. If the pipes are too small and cannot accommodate the water flow, you're in for trouble.

4. Unpleasant Smells

If you smell anything that doesn't seem to be right, it could be signs of a big problem. Unpleasant odors in a home often come from a septic tank. The tank might be full or may have been invaded by tree roots, causing destruction. It is best to call a small business professional in as soon as you smell anything that is unpleasant to prevent further damage.

5. Slow Running Drains

Does the bathtub take hours to drain? Is the sink sitting with water for a long time after you do the dishes? When drains run slow it can be caused by a leak or a clog. When in doubt, call a plumbing professional. They can clear the slow drain, removing whatever is blocking it and allow the water to flow freely again.

By keeping an eye out for questionable plumbing in your home, you can be sure that your home will last a long time and save you money in the long run.

Need A Professional Plumber?

Mike Wilson Plumbing is ready to solve your plumbing problems. If you need a professional plumber, have a plumbing, [water heater, or repair problems](#) in Chesterfield VA – Central Virginia, we are on call to help you 24/7 at 804-641-6570.