

One Central Plumbing

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Choosing and using a plumber

There has been a rash of reports in the media recently of plumbers charging their unwary customers thousands for the simplest of jobs. How can you make sure you won't be the next to fall victim?

We've all heard the horror stories about cowboy plumbers who swan into the homes of the vulnerable and spend three minutes changing a dodgy washer (and another 57 reading the paper) before presenting them with a gargantuan bill.



While it's by no means the case that all plumbers are con artists, the sad fact is that the well-documented shortage in skilled professionals has left the market open to unscrupulous people who are all too happy to prey on unwary customers, leaving the reputation of the trade in tatters. So if your boiler's sprung a leak and you're ankle-deep in water, how can you make sure the person who comes round to fix it is capable of doing the job without charging over the odds?

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It goes without saying that recommendation is the best route, but with good plumbers so hard to come by you might not find anyone else in your area who can put you in touch with one. In that case you'll have to track one down yourself.

Assuming you have the time to search - if your toilet has begun to spew its contents everywhere in the manner of a small volcano, you may not want to hang around - your first port of call should be the internet. The Institute of Plumbing, a registered educational charity working on "improving the science, practice and engineering principles of plumbing", has a directory of registered plumbers that is searchable by postcode. On the other hand, if water levels are rising fast and you need help before the rest of the street is flooded out, pluck a handful of numbers out of the Yellow Pages or try one of the directory enquiries services.

Once you have your numbers, start calling people up. Before you even agree for them to come and see what work you need doing, however, you need to get a few things straight over the phone. The Office of Fair Trading suggests you:

- Find out how long they have been in business and whether they have premises you can visit (an established plumber is less likely to disappear halfway through a job).
- Ask them for references and find out whether you can view any similar work they may have done.
- Find out whether they have insurance to cover your property (and that of your neighbours).
- Ask whether their work is guaranteed, and if so, whether the guarantee is insurance-backed - meaning that if they go out of business the work is still covered.
- Find out whether he or she is a member of a professional trade body such as the Institute of Plumbing or the Association of Plumbers and Heating Contractors (APHC). These organisations require their members to stick to a code of practice and offer recourse if anything goes wrong. And don't take the plumber's word for it: contact the trade body in question to check that they really are registered.

Contact Details:

One Central Plumbing

Phone: (310) 222 - 8181

Website: <https://sites.google.com/site/plumbingserviceslcalifornia/>

Google Folder: <https://goo.gl/TKpp9o>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/adamray583>

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