

How to Interview a Plumber and Why You Need to DO IT NOW!

This is very important and can be very beneficial for you. I know you're busy so I'll try to make this short and to the point.

Your plumbing and heating systems are "mechanical". All "mechanical" systems eventually fail. It is just a matter of time. When it fails, you will need help. "Who you gonna call?"

It's About Education

Most people don't realize that plumbers know more about the inner workings of a home than any other tradesmen. They are the first group of tradesmen in the building process and the last ones to leave after they set the fixtures, turn on the water and light the heaters. During the building process plumbers must learn the structural layout, electrical and duct work layout and how most everything will be installed. Plumbers must know how the walls are built and what lies within them. They work directly with the building inspectors as well as coordinating their work with all the other tradesmen. Plumbers know an amazing amount of information about your home.

"Who you gonna call?"

Who are you going to choose when your mechanical systems fail? Would you rather call a "stranger" or your "local, trusted family plumber"? Wow! Imagine that, a "local, trusted family plumber". What a concept! Imagine this. You are driving to work or better yet, you're heading out of town on a "romantic weekend get-away". Everything is running smoothly and then your cell phone rings. The kids are calling with panic in their voices. Water is gushing! Sewage is oozing!

"It's all about the "Trust Factor"

Would you feel comfortable calling a stranger? No. Would you feel better calling someone you know? Yes! Having someone you know and trust taking care of your home is definitely better! Most plumbers are honest, hard working citizens, but you still don't "know" them. It is difficult to trust someone when you've never met them. How comforting it would be to have a "local, trusted family plumber" that you already

know to call when an emergency arises. It would be great to know that your kids, your home and your valuables are safe and in good hands with someone you know, someone you trust.

Choosing a "Trusted, Family Plumber"

Ok. You're convinced that I'm right about this. A "local, trusted family plumber" would be a good thing. How do you go about finding one? How do you find the right one for you? You need to have a face-to-face, heart to heart interview with a plumber in your own home. There are specific steps to take. First, ask your friends, neighbors, and co-workers if they know a plumber they could recommend. Always call your local Chamber of Commerce. They usually have good insight as to the quality of a local plumbing company. Ask the chamber person you are talking to if they have used a plumber lately. It's the Chamber's job to be aware of the integrity of the businesses they support. Next, look in the local phone book. You can often tell a lot about a business by the look and professionalism of their ads. Decide which ads you like and if the companies they represent were also referred to you by others. That would be a great place to start. It is best to have three plumbing companies to choose from. You will be interviewing all three. I know this can take some time but I believe it will be well worth your effort.

The Free Interview

You will want to do a phone interview first. When you call, you should have a list of questions to ask. Questions like; what are the hours of operation? How are "after hour calls" handled? What licenses does the business hold? Does the business belong to any associations? Is the business a member of the Chamber of Commerce or the Better Business Bureau? Does the business have a web site? Make a list of the items that are important to you.

After you have picked the three companies you would like to choose from, call back and ask to talk to the owner of the company. Tell the owner that you are interviewing three companies to find the one you would be most comfortable calling on an on-going basis or in an emergency situation.

Ask the owner the following question and when you do, listen carefully to his response. Ask if his plumber will come to your home to perform a "FREE HOME INSPECTION" of your plumbing and heating systems. If you sense any hesitation to perform the "free home inspection" this may be the wrong service company for you. A smart "customer oriented" business owner would consider that invitation a great opportunity to impress a new, potential customer.

Communication is the key

You want to interview three plumbers because every plumber is different. You want to find the best one for you and your situation. Communication is the key, so choose the plumber you feel you would get along with best.

Again, be prepared to ask a lot of questions. Make a list of questions and give the list to each plumber. If you need a list of the most important questions to ask, I have made a "free" list for you to print out at the end of this letter.

The Comfort Zone

Once you find the companies who are happy to give you the "free home inspection", set up appointments at times that are convenient for you. Make your appointments in the morning if possible. Schedule the plumbing technicians as close together as possible so that their individual interviews will be fresh in your memory. The plumbing technicians should have a form or checklist of their own to record the location of, condition of, concerns about and solutions for your plumbing and heating systems. Follow the technician on his inspection throughout your home. This will help you to get to know him and he will give you great information about your homes' mechanical systems.

The Big Decision

Now that you have spent all this time and effort, it is time to make the big decision. By now you have probably narrowed your choice to one or two technicians. Before making the final decision you need to consider a few more things. Notice that I have not yet talked about price. Price is important but it should not be your top priority. You are looking for a plumber that you can trust and feel comfortable with in your home. That is your top priority. If the technician you like is with a lower priced company, great! If the technician you like is with a more expensive company, but you feel he is genuinely trustworthy, isn't he worth the price?

It is always best to use a company that uses a "flat rate" pricing system. "Flat rate" pricing means the technician will come to your home, look at and diagnose your problem and then quote you a price from a "printed menu" price book. The "flat rate" system is fair and equitable to all concerned. Here is are some of the many reasons this system can be beneficial for both you and for the plumbing company you finally choose:

- 1.** You know the price before the work begins. It is easy to budget your finances.

2. You don't have to watch the clock worrying about the time it is taking for the technician to finish the job. And the technician can take the proper amount of time to do the job right.
3. You don't have to be concerned about the cost of the material.
4. The price should be fair to allow the plumbing company to make a profit (approximately 15% is the norm). You want your "local, trusted family plumber" to be able to afford to stay in business

How to save money on your favorite plumber!

Would you like to save money on your favorite, trusted plumber? The best way to save money on your service work is with a "Service Contract". A "service contract" usually includes an inspection of your mechanical systems, waives all trip charges, (my service company does and that is a \$39.00 savings each trip), gives discounts off the "flat-rate" book price and always gives "top priority" to it's "contract customers". Every company has different perks for their "service contracts" so you must consider this when interviewing your plumbing companies. "Service contracts" do cost the customer money, but sometimes you have to "spend money" to "save money". Most service companies charge a fee for the "service contract" to give it value and in return, you, the customer, receive an even higher value through their quality service and lower prices.

It's all very clear now!

You have your favorite grocery store, hair salon, doctor. You have your favorite auto mechanic, restaurant, and babysitter. We all have our favorite businesses and business people. Having your own favorite plumbing company and "local, trusted family plumber" makes sense! Don't wait for the "emergency" to catch you "off guard". Trust your family, home and valuables to someone you know and who will treat you right.

To download the Interview Questions to ask plumbing technicians, click this link: www.waterchoices.com/interview-questions.pdf

To search for one of WaterChoices' Registered Installers, click this link: www.waterchoices.com/find-a-plumber.asp

Do you already have a favorite, trusted plumber? You can help them by introducing them to the WaterChoices web site. They can contact us directly, at: info@waterchoices.com.