

T H E

J O B

C E N T E R

PLUMBER



Plumbers often go between the walls of homes or commercial buildings to install or repair plumbing systems, fixtures, and appliances.

When hope springs eternal, we celebrate. When a faucet springs eternal, we call a plumber. People often forget the importance of plumbers — until a faucet springs a leak. Plumbers are skilled workers who install and repair water, waste disposal, drainage, and natural gas systems in homes and commercial buildings. They also install and repair plumbing fixtures such as bathtubs, sinks, toilets, and appliances such as water heaters and dishwashers.

In the plumbing trade, there are four different areas that plumbers may specialize. Pipelayers lay sewers, water mains, oil or gas lines, concrete and clay. Pipefitters install and repair pipe systems used in manufacturing and they also install controls that are being used to regulate these systems. Steamfitters install pipes that transport liquid or gas, and plumbers work in homes and commercial buildings repairing water, waste disposal, gas, and drainage systems.

Plumbers work with a variety of materials when assembling a system. They cut, bend, and connect lengths of copper, steel, brass, lead, or plastic pipes for residential work. Plumbers might work with large, cast-iron pipes for municipal sewer systems.

Construction plumbers follow blueprints or building plans when installing piping. They measure and mark areas for pipes soon after the structure is framed. Further in the construction process, plumbers connect the fixtures to the pipes.

When plumbing problems arise in homes or commercial buildings, plumbers are called in to diagnose and repair the problem, often a broken or blocked pipe. They might have to cut holes in walls, floors, or ceilings to gain access to the pipes. Plumbers often stand for long periods, lift heavy pipes, and work in cramped positions. Construction plumbers are often exposed to extreme weather conditions.

Almost all pipelayers, plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters are trained through a four to five year apprenticeship. These apprenticeships are often provided by the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry of the United States and Canada. Local chapters of the Associated Builders and Contractors, the National Association of Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors, the Home Builders Institute of the National Association of Home Builders, and the American Fire Sprinkler Association may offer apprenticeships or nonunion training.

There are no national licensing requirements for plumbers, although local areas may require plumbers to be licensed. This may consist of a test to determine the knowledge of their trade and of the local plumbing codes. A plumber might work for a plumbing contractor, city water department, gas and electric company, school, or large company. They can also be self-employed contractors.

Profile

Joseph Yakich
Bradenton

Joseph Yakich is a Plumbing student at Manatee Technical Institute. For the past month he has been

working at Grigg's Plumbing Company as part of an internship. He likes having the internship because "if you have problems in the field you can come back and ask your teacher for help."

Yakich will graduate this month from the MTI plumbing program. He became interested in the plumbing field because his grandfather was a master plumber. "It is good money, a good trade to learn and you can go anywhere,"

Yakich said. "Learning different stuff everyday" is what Yakich likes most about his future career in plumbing.

He attributes his success to Ron Travis, his Big Brother, who made him sign up for classes and read the book *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*. "He made me think and I appreciate him a lot." The best advice Yakich has for anyone wanting to go into the plumbing field is: "Work hard, pay attention and learn as much as you can while in class."

SKILLS REQUIRED

Plumbers must be able to work with many different tools and materials. They must be able to read blueprints and enjoy working with their hands.

WHERE/HOW TO GET TRAINING

Schooling

Most plumbers learn their trade through apprenticeship training programs administered by local union-management committees or by non-union building or plumbing associations.

Apprentice plumbers are at least 18 years old and usually have a high school diploma or the equivalent. Apprentices and employers enter into an agreement that specifies the type and length of study as well as the hours and wages.

Apprenticeships typically last four or five years, and apprentices initially earn half of what an experienced plumber makes. Wages increase along with the apprentice's skill level.

Classroom study is an important part of an apprenticeship. For at least 144 hours each year, apprentice plumbers take classes in mathematics, blueprint reading, and applied physics and chemistry.

On-the-job learning includes the use of plumbing tools and different types of pipes, and the safe handling of materials. Apprentices learn from journey worker plumbers, often working for different employers to gain knowledge about a variety of jobs.

High school or post-secondary courses in shop, plumbing, drafting, and physics provide good preparation.

Financial Aid

Grants, scholarships, loans, and work/study programs are available for post-secondary students. For most of this aid, prospective seniors must submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid, which is available from high school guidance offices and post-secondary education financial aid offices.

For more information on federal financial aid programs, or to apply electronically, visit the U.S. Department of Education's Web site at <http://www.ed.gov>.



For more information on federal financial aid programs, call (800) 4FEDAID

FUTURE JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The employment of plumbers is expected to grow at a constant rate through the year 2010.

Due to the lack of people

who are seeking training as plumbers, opportunities should be excellent. Well-trained workers will have especially favorable opportunities.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Plumbers wear rugged clothes to protect them from the weather when working outdoors or in unheated

buildings. Their clothing must also allow them to freely bend, reach, stoop, and kneel.

RESOURCES - HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

BOOK:

Plumbing Systems: Analysis, Design, and Construction by Tim Wentz

ONLINE:

www.mcaa.org
(Mechanical Contractors Association of America)

GENERAL:

National Association of Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors
180 S. Washington St.
P.O. Box 6808
Falls Church, VA 22040
www.naphcc.org

LOCAL:

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751-7900 ext 2017
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YOU HAVE THE POWER

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JOBS IN THIS FIELD

Job titles	Place of work	Kind of work	Average salary*
Plumber	Homes, schools, commercial buildings	Installs and repairs piping systems; cuts, bends, and joins pipes; installs fixtures and appliances.	\$14.00-\$24.24 (hourly)
Apprentice plumber	Homes, schools, commercial buildings, classroom	Learns basic skills of plumbing on the job site and in class.	\$7.00-\$12.12 (hourly)

*Salaries may vary depending on region and experience. Sources: Chronicle Guidance Publications and Occupational Outlook Handbook.