



# The Smart Consumer's Guide

The smart consumer's guide to choosing a plumber.

The only guide you'll ever need to avoid being ripped off.







PIPE PERFECTION  
PLUMBERS

INNER WEST & EASTERN SUBURBS

Dear Homeowner,

Relaxing in your home is one of life's simple pleasures.

Until you have a plumbing emergency. Then . . .

*Mayday! Mayday!* Your home is transformed into a crisis zone, and you need a plumber RIGHT NOW!

Finding a trustworthy plumber can seem challenging in the best of times, but, in the midst of plumbing mayhem, it pays to have someone already on speed dial.

I've written this short guide to help you find **a reliable plumber you can trust to do the best job for the right price.**

The guide will:

- Dispel a few myths about plumbing quotes
- Tell you how to spot a cowboy plumber
- Give you a checklist for choosing a plumber you can rely on

Then, the next time you need a plumber – whether it's for an emergency or just routine maintenance – you won't need to panic.

Happy reading!

Kind regards,

*Darren*

Darren Clancy

Owner and Plumber, Pipe Perfection Plumbers



# Part 1: The Top 3 Misconceptions About Plumbing Quotes

Calling a plumber for emergencies isn't something you should do very often. If the plumbing work being done is of a high standard, your plumber will help you reduce the amount of home maintenance required – and improve the value of your home!

The first step in finding a good plumber is letting go of some common misconceptions about the quoting process.

## Misconception #1:

*"The repair shouldn't cost much more than the materials."*

Plumbing parts can range from a few dollars to a few thousand dollars, but this misconception misses the value of a good plumber's expertise and ability to:

- Diagnose the problem and the root cause
- Recommend the best solution for you and your home
- Decide which method offers the best value for your money
- Install the parts properly
- Provide a warranty for the work performed

And just like any other business, there are costs associated with running a quality service. Quality plumbing companies offer:

- Highly skilled plumbers who understand and follow best practices
- Reliable vehicles stocked with the necessary equipment and materials
- Up-to-date public liability insurance
- Strong administrative support for first-class customer service

## Misconception #2:

*"Quoting should be free."*

Some plumbers provide free quotes. Many do not.

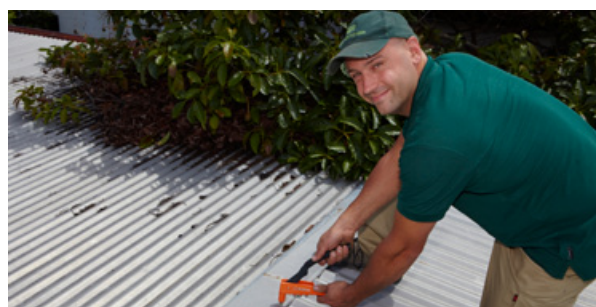
For relatively simple jobs plumbers can usually give you a rough estimate over the phone, but more complicated work needs an inspection if you want a realistic quote.

If a plumber charges for your quote, **you're more likely to get professional and well-thought out advice** with a range of options and suggestions to suit your budget.

And almost all plumbers who ask for a quotation fee will deduct it from the price of the job, so you effectively end up with a free quote.

Here's an insider secret: **good plumbers are regular people.**

If the quote is more than you can afford, explain this to the plumber. A good plumber should be able to make recommendations on scaling back the project without compromising your home.





### Misconception #3:

#### "The lowest quote saves you money!"

At first glance, this makes sense. After all, you don't want to spend more than you have to, right?

In fact, you should **choose the repair that will have the lowest cost per year.**

Some repairs may have a higher upfront cost but will last many years longer, often with the benefit of warranties if replacements are needed.

When one quote is significantly lower than others, ask yourself if you're comparing 'apples with apples':

- Have steps or parts been missed?
- Will the fix be long lasting, or will it fail in the short term?
- Has the plumber allowed enough time to do a good job?
- Will they 'go the extra mile' if problems occur?

Some plumbers quote the bare minimum to attract you, but it's only low because it's a poor fix. Cheaper 'band aid' repairs won't last long, and you will pay more in repeat plumbing visits.

You can be sure that good customer service is *not included*.

**Remember:** Your home is an investment worth protecting. When possible, focus on the quality and long-term durability of the plumbing repair rather than the price.

**Plumbing Tip:** Some companies give great discounts if you get a few jobs done at the same time, so think about what else you might need an expert to look at!



## Part 2: 5 Ways to Spot a Cowboy Plumber

We don't mean the kind that wears a hat. We mean the kind of plumber that leaves a sour taste in your mouth. If your plumber does any – or all – of the following, it's time to find a new plumber.

### 1. You're offered a super cheap drain clean offer

A cheap drain clean is a classic tactic for a plumber to get into your home and **switch you to a more expensive service**.

If you think you have a blocked drain, a drain clean that is done before a proper inspection probably won't clear it. Then you'll be upsold to a drain camera inspection or more drain cleaning.

Not only is this inconvenient and annoying, it's an illegal practice called 'bait and switch.' The only guarantee is that you will *always* pay more than the promotional price.

### 2. The plumber moves your appointment, is late or doesn't show up at all

This kind of plumber does *not* respect your time or deserve your business. While cowboy plumbers are notorious for this unprofessional behaviour, reputable plumbing companies would not dream of treating you this way.

Emergencies do sometimes come up, but emergencies are an exception, not a rule, and you should be notified ahead of time.

### 3. The plumber doesn't have a well-stocked vehicle, and even basic repairs are rescheduled for another day

This one is a big red flag.

It would be normal to reschedule work if you have a major issue that requires extensive work or a very unusual fixture. But a plumber should be able to complete most, if not all, small to medium-sized maintenance jobs on the spot.

**Your time is precious** and, if you've taken time off for an appointment, you shouldn't have to repeat the experience unnecessarily.

### 4. Apprentices do the work, and you never see a licensed plumber

This practice is *illegal* because apprentices don't yet have the experience to diagnose problems or the skills to complete work unsupervised. When working with apprentices, the supervising (licensed) plumber should check everything the apprentice has done.

A better scenario is that the plumber diagnoses the problem, creates an action plan and only leaves an apprentice unsupervised when he is a third- or fourth-year apprentice.

### 5. The plumber makes and leaves a mess

**The right plumber will respect your home**, just as he would his own. You should expect good plumbers to:

- Cover their boots so your floors/carpets don't get dirty
- Keep the work site neat and tidy
- Clean up when they leave

If plumbers don't apply those standards to their work area then it's likely their work will be just as sloppy.

Finding a reliable and trustworthy plumber doesn't have to be a trial and error process. In the last section, you'll find a simple checklist for finding a good plumber.





# Part 3: A Simple Checklist for Finding a Good Plumber

If you don't know anyone who can recommend a reliable plumber, it's time to get proactive. Even if you do get some recommendations, this checklist will help you make sure they are the right plumber *for you*.

## 1. Check their credentials

The first check is to make sure **they are licensed** and a **current member of the Master Plumbers Association**. If they aren't, don't hire them!

The Master Plumbers Association is the trade association of plumbers. Members adhere to a code that promises to:

- Treat customers with integrity and competence
- Gather sufficient facts to understand the customer's situation
- Provide technical recommendations to benefit customers
- Improve and uphold high performance standards
- What else should you look for? Make sure the plumber:
- Has public liability insurance
- Has workers' compensation

**Also** find out how long the company has been in business. *About 50% of plumbers go out of business before their eighth year.* If you find a plumber with many years' experience, they must be doing something right!

## 2. Check their reputation

Google the plumber's name and see what's being said about them online. Read testimonials and reviews and check out their social media pages if they have any.

You can also **ask your plumber for references** and speak to previous

customers directly. A good plumber won't have any issues with this and will be happy to reassure you of the quality of his work.

You can also use the [Master Plumbers Association of NSW website](#) to find a plumber from among their members.

## 3. Look for a money-back guarantee

All plumbers should be accountable for the quality of the work they do, and that means putting their money where their mouth (and pipe wrench) is.



If they do offer a money-back guarantee on work done, make sure you understand any possible situations in which that guarantee may be invalidated. Finally, make sure you have that guarantee in writing, preferably included in your written quote.

## 4. Be suspicious of very low prices

If your plumber quotes you a very low price that seems too good to be true, it probably is. **A low price isn't an indicator of good work** and shouldn't be the reason you choose a plumber.

Remember, a quick and cheap fix will cost you more in the long run.

### 5. Make sure your contract follows the Office of Fair Trading guidelines

When you hire a plumber, **you are covered by strict consumer protections**, especially when you spend more than \$1000. Your plumber should provide you with:

- A written contract
- A clear description of the work and a fixed cost
- A clear statement of the guarantees (including statutory guarantees)

This way you know in advance *exactly* what you are getting, what the plumber recommends and how much you'll be paying.

Ask your plumber whether or not they follow the Office of Fair Trading guidelines, and don't employ them unless they provide a

written contract. You can [read more online about the guidelines](#).

Remember, we're talking about the health and maintenance of your most important investment: your home. This checklist will help you find a plumber you can trust, every time you need them.

*If you'd like a list of questions to ask a prospective plumber just email me, Darren, at [service@pipeperfection.com.au](mailto:service@pipeperfection.com.au).*



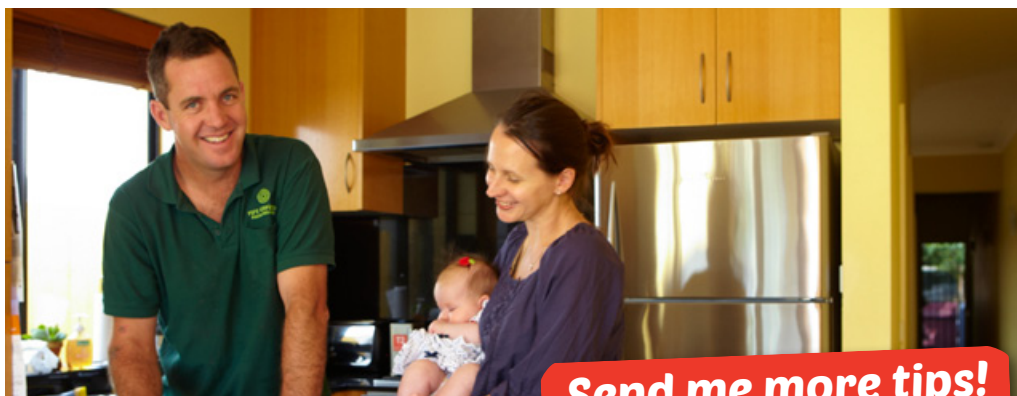
**\$50 Bunnings Voucher!**

Call 1300 00 PIPE to book today!

**Want to book a professional plumber?**  
Mention this Smart Consumers Guide when making a booking and we will give you a \$50 Bunnings voucher.







Don't let home repairs sneak up on you.

Join the 1,500+ homeowners who keep their home happy.

I've been a plumber for more than 25 years, so I know my backflow valve from my rubber keeseal. I've seen plumbing repairs that are so bad it hurts to look at them and repairs that are a work of art.

I wrote this guide to help you make an informed, no-risk decision when choosing a plumber. I hope you will now have enough information to spot a joker from a skilled tradesman, but if you still have questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

**You're welcome to call me at 1300 007 473.**

→ If you would like to learn more about how we can help you, call or visit us at: [pipeperfection.com.au](http://pipeperfection.com.au).

→ You can also subscribe to our monthly newsletter, *Tips for a Happy Home* to have helpful tips and hints that will save you money delivered straight to your inbox.

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We've dedicated our business to educating homeowners, and we'll be happy to help you in any way we can.

Have a happy day,

*Darren*

Darren Clancy

Owner and Plumber, Pipe Perfection Plumbers

**Pipe Perfection Plumbers**, specialists in maintaining plumbing, drainage, gas and metal roofing in the old homes of the inner west and eastern suburbs of Sydney.



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