

How to Become a Plumber & Find Plumbing Work

A practical guide to becoming a professional plumbing engineer



24/7 Reactive & planned maintenance nationwide

Becoming a Plumber

A career in plumbing can be both rewarding and varied, providing you hold problem solving skills and consistently deliver a good service.

It's always important to firstly consider the type of company you would like to work for, as established companies will generally be more trusted and normally operate around the clock, so that you are not limited in your work.

Things to consider

There are a few key points that should be considered if you are thinking about becoming a plumbing engineer, including:

- Good practical skills
- Good problem-solving skills
- Ability to follow technical plans
- Understand the importance of Health & Safety
- Customer service skills
- Full driving license
- The ability to work as part of a team and individually
- A careful and well-ordered approach to work
- Industry recognised qualifications required



Work Activities

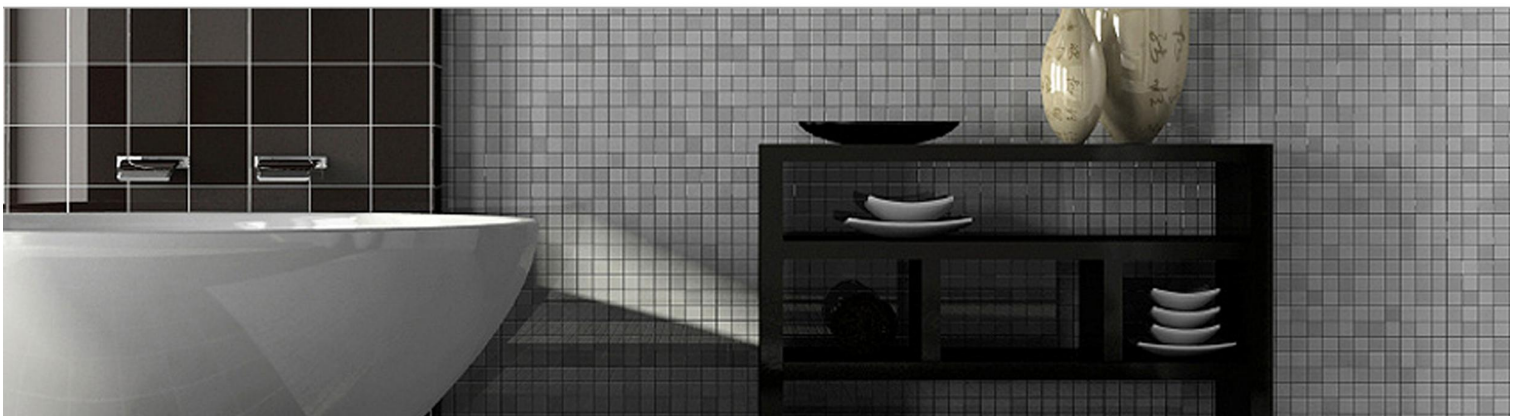
Whether you provide plumbing services for domestic properties, commercial businesses or both, there are a few common tasks that you will carry out on a day to day basis. Some work will require an emergency response, keeping your role challenging and progressive.

Typical Plumbing Services

- Installation of water supplies and heating systems
- Detection and repair of faults in systems or equipment
- Servicing air conditioning and ventilation units
- Servicing gas and oil-fired central heating systems, boilers and radiators
- Attending emergency call outs to fix leaks and burst pipes
- Use of hand and power tools, with possibility of welding equipment

Did You Know?

There are approximately 120,000 registered plumbers in the UK.



Working Hours & Conditions

When it comes to typical working hours, it is dependent on the company you work for. For example, many companies are now providing customers with a 24 hour emergency response, meaning that you are less limited in the hours you can do.

You will be working both indoors and outside, sometimes in narrow spaces. Some work may be at heights, for example on scaffolding to repair guttering or lead work. You will travel locally between jobs, so will typically need a driving license.

Expected Salary

The typical starting salary for a newly qualified plumber can be between £18,000 and £22,000 a year. Experienced plumbers can earn between £22,000 and £35,000 a year, although rates can vary in different regions.

Self-employed plumbers will set their own rates. Above is only a guideline of salaries in the plumbing industry as a subcontractor.

Progression

As outlined above, the more experience you hold as a plumber, the higher the typical salary. When looking for work, it is always good to find a company that specialise in both plumbing and heating, so you can develop your skills further and progress to become a plumbing and heating engineer. An engineer that is qualified in both plumbing and heating is more valuable to a company as they are more versatile to resolve a customers problem.



Insurance

Plumbers Public Liability Insurance is an essential cover for plumbers. It will protect you if someone gets injured or their property is damaged because of your business. If you have employees, contractors or temporary staff, you are required by law to take out employers' liability insurance.

Sub Contracting

Being a subcontracting plumber means that you will be supplied with additional work and you will receive a cut of the overall price that is charged. Although you may not make as much money in comparison to being purely self employed, many find this a more beneficial route as they do not have to market themselves and are given work pre-arranged.

Construction Industry Statistics in the UK

Working pattern: Construction



This chart gives a breakdown of how people are employed in this sector.

Unfilled vacancies due to skills shortages: National



This chart shows the proportion of vacancies in this sector that employers said are due to skills shortages. This compares with the overall figure across all sectors.



Entry Requirements

Qualifications

To become a qualified plumber you will need an industry recognised qualification at level 2 or 3. The level required will be dependent on how much previous experience you have. The main awards that are required in order to be a qualified plumber are:

Level 2 (NVQ) Diploma in Installing and Maintaining Domestic Heating Systems

Level 2/3 (NVQ) Diploma in Domestic Plumbing and Heating

A common route into a plumbing career can be a Plumbing and Heating Apprenticeship. This combines learning and developing skills on the job with study at a college or training centre.

How long does it take?

It normally takes between two to three years to become fully qualified through an apprenticeship.

What apprenticeships are available to me?

Apprenticeships will vary according to the area, and is dependent on your local jobs market and the skills that are required from employers. To find out more about what apprenticeships are available, visit the Apprenticeships website for more information: <https://www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/apprenticeships>



More Information & Contact

Summit Skills

www.summitskills.org.uk

British Plumbing Employers Council

www.bpec.org.uk

Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering

www.ciphe.org.uk

Joint Industry Board for Plumbing and Heating Engineering

www.jib-pmes.org

Gas Safe Register

www.gassaferegister.co.uk

We hope that this guide has assisted you in developing a further understanding of what a career as a plumber is like and how you can take the steps to become one. If you are already a qualified plumber and would like to join the **Able Group**, please visit our website at www.able-group.co.uk/recruitment where you will find more information about the roles available and how to apply. If you prefer, you can call us on **0800 000 000** to speak to a member of our recruitment team.





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Written by The Able Group, the UK's
leading maintenance company.

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