Grow That Local

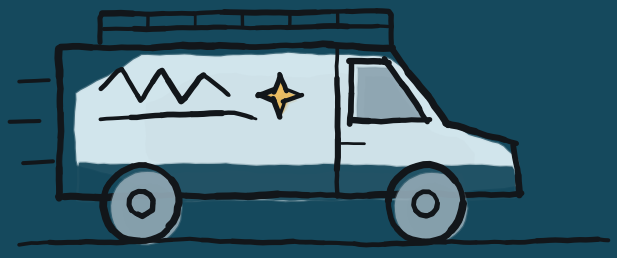
a free guide

The 12 questions every plumbing customer asks, answered

Ready answers for your website, your Google profile and your texts.

For plumbing business owners who want their website to answer what customers ask.

- 12 short sections in 3 parts
- 36 things you can do in the next 24 hours
- An example in every section
- Sources for every figure



growthatlocal.com · Text us at (423) 924-2014

Contents

Before you start: how this guide works 3

Part 1 **The emergency questions** 4

1 Can you come now? 4
2 What do I do until you get here? 4
3 Do you charge to come out, and is it more at night? 5
4 Why is my water bill so high? Is it a hidden leak? 5

Part 2 **The price questions** 7

5 Is it a flat rate or by the hour, and how firm is the price? 7
6 Should I repair or replace my water heater? 7
7 Can I buy my own fixtures? 8
8 When is payment due, and can I pay over time? 8

Part 3 **The trust questions** 10

9 Are you licensed, bonded and insured? 10
10 Who's coming into my house? 10
11 Do I need a permit? 11
12 Do you stand behind your work? 11

Your first 24 hours, in one list 13

Where to go next 14

If you'd rather hand it off 15

Sources 16

GTL estimates 16

Before you start

People call a plumber with water on the floor, a cold shower or a drain that won't move. They're stressed, and they want three answers fast: can you come, what will it cost, and who's coming into my house. The calm, clear answer wins the job.

This guide gives you the 12 questions plumbing customers ask, why they ask, an answer you can copy, and where to put it. Fill in the parts in [square brackets] with your own details. If an answer isn't true for your company, change it or leave it out.

Where the questions come from. Yelp's list of questions to ask a plumber before hiring (Yelp, "15 Questions to Ask a Plumber Before Hiring", yelp.com), the Federal Trade Commission's advice on hiring a contractor (FTC, "How To Avoid a Home Improvement Scam", consumer.ftc.gov), and the questions in our Plumber Marketing Playbook. When a review site tells homeowners to ask something, your callers are asking it.

Where the answers go.

- Your website: one questions page with all 12, plus the matching answer on each job page (drains, water heaters, leaks). This is the main home for every answer.
- Your Google profile: the description holds up to 750 characters, with no links, and Google asks you to focus on your business rather than prices or sales (Google Business Profile Help, "Edit your Business Profile", support.google.com). Use it for the trust answers: license, who's coming, hours.
- Texts and calls: save the short version of each answer as a text shortcut, so whoever's on call can send it in seconds, even from under a sink.

About Google's questions box. Profiles used to have a questions-and-answers box that owners could fill in. Google shut down the Q&A tool for software on November 3, 2025, saying it was updating "the Q&A functionality and user experience" (Google for Developers, Q&A API change log, developers.google.com). Google Maps now lets shoppers type questions into a chat called Ask Maps (Google Maps Help, "Ask questions in Google Maps", support.google.com). If your profile still shows a Q&A box, use it, but don't count on it. Put the answers on your own website first.

About texting. Replying to someone who texted or called you is fine. Marketing texts to people who didn't ask are different: the FCC says commercial texts need written consent, and people can opt out any reasonable way, such as replying STOP (FCC, "Stop Unwanted Robocalls and Texts", fcc.gov). Every text in this guide is a reply to someone who reached out first.

Two rules we kept while writing it:

- Every number has a public source you can check, listed at the end. When we didn't have one, we say "GTL estimate" and tell you why we think it.
- Every example is made up to show the idea. None of them are real customers, plumbers or prices.



Part 1

The emergency questions

1 Can you come now?

The idea. "Are you available, and when?" is the first question on Yelp's list (Yelp, yelp.com). Someone with water coming through the ceiling will call down the list until a person says a time. A real time beats "as soon as we can," even when the time is tomorrow morning.

Ready answer.
For your website:
"We answer the phone [hours], and we take emergency calls [your after-hours window, such as "until 10pm" or "every night"]. For a burst pipe, a sewage backup or no water at all, we aim to be there within [time]. For everything else, we usually book the same day or next morning. Call or text [phone] and you'll get a real arrival window, not "sometime today.""
By text, missed call:
"Sorry we missed you. Is water leaking right now? If yes, reply YES and we'll call you back within [minutes]. If not, tell us what's going on and we'll get you a time."

Where to put it. Your homepage, at the top. Your emergency page and your questions page. Set your Google hours to the hours you really answer.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write down the hours you really answer, including after-hours.
- [ ] Fill in the answer and put it on your homepage.
- [ ] Turn on missed-call text-back with the text above.

2 What do I do until you get here?

The idea. The caller is standing in water, and the minutes until you arrive feel like hours. Telling them how to stop the water shows you know what you're doing, and it saves their floors. It's also the reply they'll remember when a neighbor asks who to call.

Ready answer.
For your website:
"If water is leaking, turn off the main shut-off valve. In most homes here it's [where it usually is, such as "where the water line comes in, in the basement or garage" or "in a box near the street"]. Turn it clockwise until it stops. If the leak is from your water heater, also turn off its power or gas. Move anything valuable away from the water and take a few photos for your insurance. Then call us at [phone]."
By text:
"While we're on the way: turn off your main water valve, usually [where it usually is]. Turn it clockwise till it stops. Move valuables out of the water. We'll be there by [time]."

Where to put it. Your emergency page, your questions page, and the first text you send after any leak call. Print it on a fridge magnet or sticker you leave at every job.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write the shut-off directions for the homes in your area.
- [ ] Fill in the answer and add it to your emergency page.
- [ ] Save the text as a shortcut for every leak call.

3 Do you charge to come out, and is it more at night?

The idea. "Do you charge a service-call fee?" is on Yelp's list (Yelp, yelp.com), and it's the question people are most nervous to ask. Say your fee before they ask. It stops arguments at the door and filters out people who only want a free opinion.

Ready answer.
For your website:
"We charge [fee] to come out and find the problem. Before we fix anything, we tell you the price, and you decide. If you go ahead, [the fee goes toward the repair / the fee is separate]. Nights, weekends and holidays cost [more amount or "more"], and we tell you how much on the phone before we send anyone."
By text:
"Our trip fee is [fee] and covers finding the problem. You get the repair price before we start. After [time] it's [after-hours fee]."

Where to put it. Your questions page and every job page. Say it on the phone before you book.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write down your day fee and your after-hours fee.
- [ ] Fill in the answer and add it to your questions page.
- [ ] Make sure whoever answers the phone says the fee before booking.

4 Why is my water bill so high? Is it a hidden leak?

The idea. A high bill with no water on the floor scares people, because the leak could be inside a wall or under the slab. It's common: EPA WaterSense says 9% of homes have leaks wasting 50 gallons or more a day (EPA WaterSense, "Fix a Leak Week", epa.gov). A plain answer about how you find it brings in the calm, planned job.

Ready answer.
For your website:
"A running toilet is the most common cause, and it can waste a lot of water without a sound. If that's not it, we check your meter with everything off: if it still moves, water is leaking somewhere. We find leaks with [listening equipment / thermal cameras / pressure tests] before we open any wall or floor, so we only cut where the leak is."

By text:
"First check: are any toilets running? If not, we can test your meter and track down the leak without tearing into walls. Want a time this week?"

Where to put it. Your leak detection page and your questions page.

Do it in 24 hours

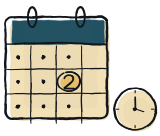
- [ ] Write down the tools and steps you use to find hidden leaks.
- [ ] Fill in the answer and add it to your leak page.
- [ ] Take a photo of your leak-finding gear for your Google profile.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: A preview of your new site

Made before you pay anything. Websites start at $1 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Websites: growthatlocal.com/services/websites



Part 2

The price questions

5 Is it a flat rate or by the hour, and how firm is the price?

The idea. Yelp's list asks "Is there a flat-rate fee for this job?" and "How firm is the estimate?" (Yelp, yelp.com). People have heard stories about a small job turning into a big bill. Say how you price, and what happens if you find more once the wall is open.

Ready answer.
For your website:
"We price most jobs [as a flat rate / by the hour at [rate]]. You get the price before we start, and that's what you pay. If we find something else once we're in, like a rotted pipe behind the wall, we stop, show you, and give you a price for it. Nothing extra happens without your OK."
By text:
"We give you a [flat] price before we start, and that's the price. If we find another problem, we show you and ask first."

Where to put it. Your questions page and each job page.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write down how you price your five most common jobs.
- [ ] Fill in the answer and add it to your questions page.
- [ ] Add "Nothing extra without your OK" to your written estimates.

6 Should I repair or replace my water heater?

The idea. A leaking or cold water heater is a big surprise bill, and people fear being sold a new one they don't need. Age is most of the answer. InterNACHI's chart puts a conventional tank water heater at about 6 to 12 years and a tankless one at about 10 (InterNACHI, nachi.org).

Ready answer.
For your website:
"It depends on age and what's wrong. If your heater is under [age] years and the problem is a part, like a thermostat or element, a repair usually makes sense. If the tank itself is leaking, it needs replacing, since a leaking tank can't be fixed. We'll check the age on the label, show you what we found, and give you both prices when both are honest."
By text:
"Can you text me a photo of the label on the side of the heater? It shows the age, and I can tell you if a repair is likely worth it."

Where to put it. Your water heater page and your questions page.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Decide your repair-or-replace line by age and problem.
- [ ] Fill in the answer and add it to your water heater page.
- [ ] Save the "send a photo of the label" text as a shortcut.

7 Can I buy my own fixtures?

The idea. "Can I buy my own fixtures and products?" is on Yelp's list (Yelp, yelp.com). Homeowners have often already picked a faucet or toilet. A clear yes or no, with the reason, avoids a bad surprise on install day.

Ready answer.
For your website:
"Yes, you can. We'll install fixtures you buy, and we charge [labor only / our standard install price]. Our warranty covers our installation, but the fixture itself is covered by its maker, not us. If you'd like, we can supply one: we use [types or grades] we know hold up, and we warranty both the part and the work."
By text:
"Sure, we can install one you buy. Send me the model number first so I can check it'll fit your [sink / valve / toilet flange]."

Where to put it. Your questions page, your fixture install page and your bathroom and kitchen pages.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Decide your rule for customer-bought fixtures and what your warranty covers.
- [ ] Fill in the answer and add it to your site.
- [ ] Save the "send me the model number" text.

8 When is payment due, and can I pay over time?

The idea. Yelp's list asks "When is payment due?" (Yelp, yelp.com). For a small repair, the answer is easy. For a sewer line or a repipe, it decides whether the job happens. In the Federal Reserve's 2025 survey, only 63% of adults said they'd cover a surprise $400 expense with cash or its equivalent (Federal Reserve, federalreserve.gov).

If you name a monthly payment in an ad, federal rules require the APR, down payment and terms too (CFPB, Regulation Z 1026.24, consumerfinance.gov). "Ask about payment options" is the safe line.

Ready answer.
For your website:
"For repairs, you pay when the job is done and working. We take [cash, check, cards]. For bigger jobs, like a sewer line or a repipe, we ask for [deposit] to order materials and the rest when it's done. [Ask us about payment options for larger jobs.]"
By text:

"You pay when it's fixed and working. For bigger jobs, we have payment options. I can walk you through them at the visit."

Where to put it. Your questions page, your sewer and repipe pages, and every big-job estimate.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write down when you take payment for small and big jobs.
- [ ] If you offer financing, get approved ad wording from your lender.
- [ ] Fill in the answer and add it to your site.



Part 3

The trust questions

9 Are you licensed, bonded and insured?

The idea. "Are you licensed, bonded, and insured?" is on Yelp's list (Yelp, yelp.com), and the FTC tells homeowners to hire only licensed and insured contractors and to check the license with the state (FTC, consumer.ftc.gov). Bad plumbing can flood a house or leak gas. Make the license easy to find and easy to check.

Ready answer.
For your website:
"Yes. Our plumbers are licensed by [state board], license number [number]. You can check it at [state lookup site]. We carry general liability insurance and workers' compensation[, and we're bonded]. Ask and we'll send you the certificates."
By text:
"Yes. Plumbing license #[number], fully insured. I'm sending our certificates now."

Where to put it. Your website footer, on every page. Your questions page. One line in your Google description: "Licensed plumbers, license [number]."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Add your license number to your website footer.
- [ ] Add the license line to your Google description.
- [ ] Get fresh insurance certificates as PDFs on your phone.

10 Who's coming into my house?

The idea. "Who will do the work?" is on Yelp's list (Yelp, yelp.com). The real worry underneath is a stranger in the house, often with kids or an older parent at home. In its Local Services ads program, Google says "plumbing professionals undergo an additional level of screening, including service professional background checks" (Google Local Services Help, support.google.com). That tells you how much this question matters.

Ready answer.
For your website:
"One of our licensed plumbers, in a company shirt and a marked van. We text you their name and photo before they arrive. [Every plumber has passed a background check.] They wear shoe covers inside and lay a drop cloth under the work."
By text, before arrival:
"Hi [first name], [plumber's first name] is on the way and will be there around [time]. Here's their photo: [photo]. They'll be in a [company] shirt and van."

Where to put it. Your questions page and your About page, with photos of your plumbers. Send the before-arrival text on every job.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Take a friendly photo of each plumber (with their OK).
- [ ] Save the before-arrival text with a spot for the photo.
- [ ] Only say "background-checked" if every plumber who goes to homes has been.

11 Do I need a permit?

The idea. "Is a permit required?" is on Yelp's list (Yelp, yelp.com). The FTC lists a contractor who asks you to get the building permits as a warning sign (FTC, consumer.ftc.gov). Homeowners selling a house later worry about unpermitted work too.

Ready answer.
For your website:
"Some jobs need a permit in [town or county], like [water heater replacements, new gas lines, sewer line replacements or repipes]. Small repairs usually don't. When one is needed, we pull it, [the fee is on your estimate], and we schedule the inspection."
By text:
"Yes, [town] needs a permit for a [job]. We pull it and set up the inspection. It's on your estimate."

Where to put it. Your questions page and your water heater, gas and sewer pages.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Check which of your jobs need a permit in each town you serve.
- [ ] Fill in the answer and add it to your site.
- [ ] Add a "Permit: we pull it" line to your estimate template.

12 Do you stand behind your work?

The idea. Yelp's list closes with whether you stand behind your work (Yelp, yelp.com). People who've had a drain clog again a week later want to know if they'll pay twice. Say what you cover and for how long.

Ready answer.
For your website:
"Yes. Our repairs are covered for [time]: if the same problem comes back because of our work, we come back and fix it at no charge. Parts we supply carry [our / the maker's] warranty of [time]. Drain cleaning is covered for [days], since a new clog can come from something new going down the drain."
By text:
"Yes, our repairs are covered for [time]. If the same problem comes back, call us and we'll fix it free."

Where to put it. Your questions page, your invoices and your Google description ("Repairs covered for [time]").

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write down your warranty on repairs, parts and drain cleaning.
- [ ] Fill in the answer and add it to your site.
- [ ] Print the warranty line on every invoice.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: A profile check-up with 10+ fixes

Including a check of your hours and description. Google Business Profile is $200 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Google Business Profile: growthatlocal.com/services/google-business-profile



Your first 24 hours, in one list

You won't fill in all 12 today. Start with these:

- [ ] Put your real answering hours and after-hours window on your homepage and Google profile (section 1).
- [ ] Write your trip fee and after-hours fee (section 3).
- [ ] Add your license number to your website footer and Google description (section 9).
- [ ] Save three text shortcuts: the missed-call text, the shut-off steps and the before-arrival text (sections 1, 2 and 10).
- [ ] Put every answer you've finished on one questions page on your site.

Next week, ask whoever answers the phone which question came up most. If it's not on your page yet, add it.



Where to go next

These questions come from The Plumber Marketing Playbook, our free 34-section guide to getting more plumbing calls. Section 5 covers the questions page, and sections 25 to 28 cover trust, after-hours calls, freezes and water heaters in depth.

Want something you can see tomorrow? 5 Wins in 24 Hours for a Plumber gives you five small jobs for today.



If you'd rather hand it off

Grow That Local does this work for plumbers every month. Each service starts with a free sample, so you see the work before you pay.

Best fit for this guide: Websites. Free sample: a preview of your new site. Websites start at $1 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Websites — **from $1 a month · 7-day full refund**
A fast, good-looking site that turns visitors into calls. Free sample: a preview of your new site.

Google Business Profile — **$200 a month · 7-day full refund**
Show up in the map when neighbors search for what you do. Free sample: a profile check-up with 10+ fixes.

Review requests — **$100 a month · 7-day full refund**
More 5-star reviews, without the awkward asking. Free sample: your first 10 requests sent.

Social media posts — **$200 a month · 7-day full refund**
Fresh posts every week, made from your real job photos. Free sample: two weeks of posts, ready to go.

Email newsletter — **$50 a month · 7-day full refund**
Stay top of mind, so past customers call you first. Free sample: your first newsletter, written.

SEO — **$400 a month · 7-day full refund**
Climb Google for the searches that bring in jobs. Free sample: a ranking check and 10 fixes.

Win-back texts — **$100 a month · 7-day full refund**
Bring past customers back for their next job. Free sample: your first 25 customers texted.

Neighborhood postcard — **$400 a month · 7-day full refund**
Your ad in mailboxes across nice neighborhoods. Free sample: your ad, designed and shown on the card.

Monthly report card — **free**
See how you stack up against local competitors. Free sample: your first report card, this month.

Text us at (423) 924-2014, or start at growthatlocal.com/start.

Sources

Every statistic above, with where to check it:

1. EPA WaterSense, Fix a Leak Week: 9% of homes have leaks wasting 50 gallons or more a day. epa.gov (section 4)
2. InterNACHI Standard Estimated Life Expectancy Chart: conventional water heater 6 to 12 years, on-demand (tankless) water heater 10 years. nachi.org (section 6)
3. Federal Reserve, Economic Well-Being of U.S. Households in 2025 (published 2026): 63% of adults would cover a $400 emergency expense with cash or its equivalent. federalreserve.gov (section 8)

Where the questions come from:

- Yelp, "15 Questions to Ask a Plumber Before Hiring" (availability, licensed bonded and insured, service-call fee, flat rate, how firm the estimate is, when payment is due, permits, who does the work, buying your own fixtures, standing behind the work): yelp.com (sections 1, 3, 5, 7 to 12)
- FTC, "How To Avoid a Home Improvement Scam" (licensed and insured, checking the license, permits): consumer.ftc.gov (sections 9, 11)
- The Plumber Marketing Playbook, section 5 (what it will cost, who's coming into my house). (sections 1 to 12)

Rules and guidance cited (not statistics):

- Google Local Services Help, business screening and verification (extra screening for plumbing, including background checks): support.google.com (section 10)
- CFPB, Regulation Z 1026.24, what credit ads must disclose: consumerfinance.gov (section 8)
- Google Business Profile Help, "Edit your Business Profile" (description up to 750 characters, no links, focus on the business rather than prices): support.google.com (before you start)
- Google for Developers, Q&A API change log (discontinued November 3, 2025): developers.google.com (before you start)
- Google Maps Help, "Ask questions in Google Maps": support.google.com (before you start)
- FCC, unwanted robocalls and texts, written consent for commercial texts and opting out: fcc.gov (before you start)

GTL estimates

These are our own judgment, not measured facts:

1. Put your answers on your own website first (before you start). Reasoning: Google's questions box is changing and Ask Maps writes its own answers, so your site is the one place you fully control what a caller reads.
2. A real arrival time wins the emergency call (section 1). Reasoning: someone with water on the floor calls down the list and stops at the first plumber who gives a time.
3. A running toilet is the most common cause of a high bill with no visible leak (section 4). Reasoning: it's the leak plumbers find most often on these calls, and it makes no noise most people notice.

4. Keep every text answer to two or three short sentences (all sections). Reasoning: the customer is reading it with a towel in one hand.

want it done for you?

Every part of this guide is something we do.

Each one starts with a free sample, so you see the work before you pay. Text us at (423) 924-2014 or start at growthatlocal.com/start.

Grow *That* Local