Grow That Local

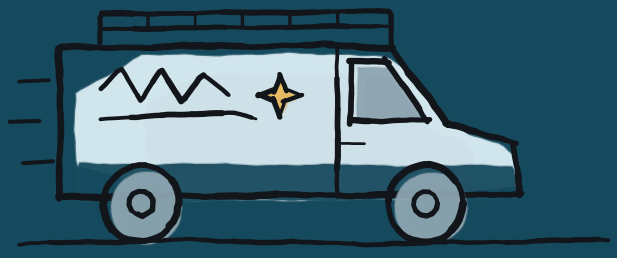
a free guide

How many reviews a plumber needs to win

The review counts that put plumbers in the map's top 3 across 10 Southeast cities, the star bar, and a plan you can keep with a van full of short jobs.

For plumbing business owners wondering if they have enough reviews.

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



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Before you start

Plumbing has one of the most crowded maps we've measured. We looked at 875 plumbing businesses on Google Maps in 10 Southeast cities: Nashville, Tulsa, Louisville, Huntsville, Lexington, Birmingham, Memphis, Little Rock, Montgomery and Jackson, Mississippi. Then we counted the reviews at each spot on the map. The top of that map is mostly big shops with hundreds or more reviews. The rest of this guide shows where a smaller shop can still get in.

How we did it, and its limits: we ran one Google Maps search for plumbers from each city in November 2026 and recorded up to 100 results per search. It's a snapshot. The map order changes with where the searcher stands, the words they type and the profile itself, and Google says reviews are only one part of how it ranks, next to relevance and distance (Google Business Profile Help, support.google.com). So treat these numbers as a target range, not a law.

Part 1 shows the numbers. Part 2 turns them into your own target and a timeline. Part 3 covers why the plumber with the most reviews doesn't always win.

Two rules we kept while writing it:

- Every number has a source you can check, listed at the end. Our own scrape is cited as "GTL analysis of Google Maps results, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026." When we didn't have a source, we say "GTL estimate" and tell you why we think it.
- Every example is made up to show the idea. We never name a real business.



Part 1

What the map's top 3 looks like

1 The review count at each spot on the map, and the cliff at spot 10

The idea. Here's the typical (median) review count at each spot on the plumbing map, across all 10 cities (GTL analysis of Google Maps results, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026):

Map spot	Typical review count
Top 3	1,217
Spots 4 to 10	543
Spots 11 to 20	107
Spots 21 to 100	26

Look at the drop between spots 4 to 10 and spots 11 to 20. The typical plumber in spots 4 to 10 had about five times the reviews of the one just below. The plumbing map is two groups: shops with several trucks that have collected reviews for years, and everyone else.

Don't let 1,217 scare you. In a typical city, the plumber with the fewest reviews in the top 3 had 332. That's the real door into the top 3, and section 4 shows you how to find it in your own service area.

For comparison, here's what the top 3 looked like for trades next to yours, from the same scrape:

Trade	Top 3	Spots 4 to 10
Plumbers	1,217	543
HVAC	1,204	768
Garage door	825	91
Electricians	333	62

Example. A made-up plumber has 140 reviews. On the table, they're past the typical plumber in spots 11 to 20. They need about 190 more to match the smallest top-3 plumber in a typical city, and about 400 more to look like a typical spot 4 to 10 shop.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Open your Google profile and write down your review count today.
- [ ] Find your row on the table above.
- [ ] Write down the gap to the next row up. That's your first target.

2 Your city will be different

The idea. The spread between cities is huge. The typical top-3 plumber had anywhere from 484 to 9,598 reviews. The smallest top-3 plumber ranged from 80 reviews to 2,568 (GTL analysis of Google Maps results, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026).

City	Fewest reviews in the top 3	Typical top-3 count
Tulsa	80	484
Montgomery (66 results)	115	865
Nashville	135	498
Jackson, MS	220	491
Birmingham	257	1,556
Little Rock	406	1,503
Lexington	411	1,334
Memphis (9 results)	512	745
Huntsville	569	1,458
Louisville	2,568	9,598

Two cities returned fewer than 100 plumbers. Memphis returned only 9, so treat its row with care. In Tulsa, Montgomery and Nashville, a plumber with under 140 reviews sat in the top 3 next to shops with hundreds. Distance and relevance put them there, and Part 3 explains how.

If your town isn't on the list, use the range. The only number that counts is the one you find in section 4.

Example. A made-up plumber outside Nashville runs their own searches. The top 3 near their shop had 88, 310 and 1,900 reviews. Their first target is 88, not 1,217.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Find your city, or the one most like yours, on the table.
- [ ] Note both numbers: the fewest in the top 3 and the typical top-3 count.
- [ ] Circle the smaller number. That's your first real target until section 4 gives you your own.

3 The star bar, and the website every top-3 plumber had

The idea. In our scrape, 1 of the 30 top-3 plumbers (3 in each of 10 cities) had under 4.5 stars, and the typical top-3 rating was 4.8. Every one of the 30 had a website, while about a quarter of all the plumbers we saw had none (GTL analysis of Google Maps results, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026).

Homeowners hold the same bar. In BrightLocal's 2026 survey, 31% of consumers said they'll only use a business with 4.5 stars or more, and 68% want four stars or more (BrightLocal Local Consumer Review Survey 2026, brightlocal.com). Someone standing in an inch of water picks fast, and stars are what they see first.

Our free reviews calculator works out how many 5-star reviews it takes to reach 4.8 from where you are.

Example. A made-up plumber has 85 reviews at 4.6 stars, pulled down by a few weekend-bill complaints. The calculator says 85 more 5-star reviews gets them to 4.8. They also start saying the weekend fee on the phone, before the van rolls, so those reviews stop coming.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write down your star rating next to your review count.
- [ ] If you're under 4.8, run the reviews calculator and write down the number it gives.
- [ ] Check that your profile links to a working website. Every top-3 plumber we saw had one.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: Your first report card, this month

The monthly report card is free.

Monthly report card: growthatlocal.com/services/report-card



Part 2

Your target and how long it takes

4 Find your own number in 20 minutes

The idea. The map a homeowner sees depends on where they're standing, so your target depends on where your customers live. Search the way they do, from where they are, and write down what the top 3 has.

Search on your phone, in Google Maps, the way a homeowner would: "plumber," "emergency plumber," "water heater repair" and "drain cleaning." Skip anything marked Sponsored. Google says the map itself can't be bought (Google Business Profile Help, support.google.com), so ads aren't what you're measuring.

Your target is the smallest review count in the top 3, in the part of your area you most want to work. GTL estimate: that number gets you into the conversation. Match it, keep your stars above 4.8, and the things in Part 3 decide the rest.

Example. A made-up plumber runs four searches from three spots: near the shop, in the older neighborhood with cast-iron drains, and in the new subdivision across the county. For "water heater repair" in the older neighborhood, the smallest top-3 count was 150. That's where the sewer and repipe jobs are. Their number is 150.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Pick three spots: near your base, the neighborhood you most want, and the far edge of your service area. Run the searches between calls.
- [ ] From each spot, search "plumber," "emergency plumber," "water heater repair" and "drain cleaning" in Google Maps.
- [ ] Write down the review count, star rating and newest review date for each top-3 plumber.
- [ ] Circle the smallest count in the area you want most. That's your target.

5 How many reviews a month a plumber can really get

The idea. Plumbing has an edge here: lots of short jobs, and a clear moment of relief when the water runs again. Your pace depends on how many people you ask. GTL estimate: if you ask every customer, expect one review for every three to five people you ask, and plan on one in five, because on busy days some asks get missed. BrightLocal's 2026 survey backs the low end: 28% of consumers say they'll always write a review when asked (BrightLocal 2026, brightlocal.com).

GTL estimate: a two-truck shop can plan on about 12 new reviews a month, and a solo plumber about 8. Our reasoning: two trucks finish around 60 jobs a month and a solo plumber around 40, and one in five of those is 12 and 8.

Ask in person, before you leave the driveway, then text the link. Freeze weeks and the days after big holidays bring a rush of calls. Ask every one of them, because those customers had the worst day and the biggest relief.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up two-truck shop counts last quarter: 140 service calls, 25 water heaters and 15 drain and sewer jobs, 180 in all, so 60 a month. At one in five, that's 12 reviews a month. They'd only been asking after water heaters, so they were getting two.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Count every job you finished in the last 90 days, service calls included.
- [ ] Divide by three for your jobs a month. Divide that by five for your realistic reviews a month.
- [ ] Get your review link from your profile (look for "Ask for reviews") and save it in every plumber's phone.
- [ ] Make "ask in person, then send the text" the last step of every job.

6 Your timeline, month by month

The idea. Put sections 4 and 5 together and you get a date. Start with a catch-up month: ask every customer from the last 90 days, newest first. After that, your monthly pace does the work.

Here's the sum: months to target = (target minus today's count minus catch-up reviews) divided by reviews a month, plus one for the catch-up month.

Be honest about the big shops. The plumbers in a city's top 3 often run five or more trucks and keep collecting reviews every week. GTL estimate: a top-3 count in a big city can grow by a hundred or more a year. So win the top 3 near your base first, where distance works for you, and check your searches every three months.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up two-truck shop has 60 reviews. In the catch-up month, they ask the 180 customers from the last 90 days, and one in five says yes: 36 reviews, so 96. Then they add 12 a month. The targets come from section 1.

Target	Reviews	Reached in about
Typical spot 11 to 20	107	2 months
Smallest top-3, typical city	332	21 months
Typical spot 4 to 10	543	39 months

If their section 4 number is 150, they get there in about 6 months. That's the plan: own the neighborhoods near the shop first, then widen.

Do it in 24 hours

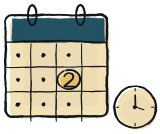
- [ ] Write the sum with your own numbers: your target, today's count, your catch-up, your pace.
- [ ] Pull every customer from the last 90 days and text them your review link, if they've agreed to texts.
- [ ] Put a reminder in your phone for 90 days from now to rerun your searches.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: Your first 10 requests sent

Review requests is $100 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Review requests: growthatlocal.com/services/reviews



Part 3

Why the count alone doesn't win

7 Fresh reviews beat a big old pile

The idea. In 6 of the 10 cities, the typical plumber in spots 4 to 10 had more reviews than the smallest plumber in the top 3 (GTL analysis of Google Maps results, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026). Count matters, but it isn't the whole story.

Freshness is part of the rest. BrightLocal's guide to Google's local ranking lists recency of reviews and steady review growth among the factors that move the map (BrightLocal, Google's Local Algorithm and Local Ranking Factors, brightlocal.com). Customers notice too: in BrightLocal's 2026 survey, 74% look for reviews from the last three months, and 32% look at the last two weeks (BrightLocal 2026, brightlocal.com).

A plumber with 900 reviews and nothing new since spring looks less alive than one with 300 and ten this month. GTL estimate: get at least four new reviews every month. Plumbers do many short jobs, so a steady flow is realistic, and with a third of shoppers looking at the last two weeks, a gap of a month shows.

Example. A made-up plumber's newest review is six weeks old, because the busy freeze week went by without anyone asking. They add a review reminder to the job-close screen in their scheduling app. The next freeze, every plumber asks before leaving.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write down the date of your newest review.
- [ ] Compare it with the newest review of each top-3 plumber from section 4.
- [ ] If yours is older than two weeks, text the link to your last ten customers today.

8 Reply to every review, in your own words

The idea. Google says replies to reviews show you value feedback, and that "positive reviews and helpful replies can help your business stand out" (Google Business Profile Help, support.google.com). Customers read them. In BrightLocal's 2026 survey, 89% of consumers expect owners to respond to reviews, 50% are put off by generic or templated replies, and 19% expect a reply the same day (BrightLocal 2026, brightlocal.com).

Don't stuff replies with search words like "best emergency plumber in town." BrightLocal lists keywords in owner replies among the things with little effect on the map (BrightLocal, Google's Local Algorithm and Local Ranking Factors, brightlocal.com). Write like the person who was under the sink.

GTL estimate: reply within two days, and the same day for a bad one. The bad review plumbers get most is about price after a night or weekend call. A calm reply that explains the fee helps the next reader more than it helps the one who wrote it.

Example. A reply to a 5-star review after a late-night call:

> **Thanks, Chris. A burst supply line at 11pm is nobody's idea of fun. Glad we got the water off fast and the floor dried out. Keep that shut-off valve tag where you can find it.**

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Reply to every review you haven't answered, good or bad. Name the job in each reply.
- [ ] Turn on review alerts in your Google profile so you see new ones the same day.
- [ ] For any review about price, thank them, explain the fee plainly, and offer to talk.

9 The words in your reviews, and the rule about asking

The idea. What customers write matters as well as how many write. Google builds "Place Topics" from the themes in your reviews and shows the words customers mention most in bold (Google Business Profile Help, support.google.com). BrightLocal says the language in reviews can affect relevance, because when customers mention your services and your area, search engines understand you better (BrightLocal, Google's Local Algorithm and Local Ranking Factors, brightlocal.com).

You can't ask for those words, though. Google's rules say businesses must not ask for specific content in a review, must not offer anything in exchange, and must not ask only happy customers. They also ban asking customers to name a staff member and giving staff review targets (Google Maps user-contributed content policy, support.google.com). So never write "please mention our water heater service" or "please mention Mike."

What you can do is ask right after a specific job. A customer asked the moment the hot water comes back tends to write about the water heater. A small card with the plumber's first name and the review link helps too. You aren't asking for the name, but customers who remember it often use it.

Example. A made-up plumber's review text, sent from the van after a water heater swap:

> **Thanks for having us out today, Morgan. Glad the hot water's back. If you have a minute, an honest Google review helps a small local company like ours a lot: (your review link)**

The text names the job in the thank-you. It doesn't tell Morgan what to write.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Read your review request text. Remove anything that asks for particular words, a rating or a plumber's name.
- [ ] Drop any review targets or prizes for your plumbers.
- [ ] Check your profile's services. Add every job you do: water heaters, drains, sewer lines, leaks, repipes, fixtures, emergency calls.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: Your first 10 requests sent

Review requests is $100 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Review requests: growthatlocal.com/services/reviews



Your first 24 hours, in one list

If you only do five things today, do these:

- [ ] Write down your review count, star rating and newest review date (sections 1 and 3).
- [ ] Run your four searches from three spots between calls, and circle your target (section 4).
- [ ] Count your jobs from the last 90 days and work out your monthly pace (section 5).
- [ ] Text your review link to every customer from the last 90 days who agreed to texts (section 6).
- [ ] Reply to every unanswered review, in your own words (section 8).

Tomorrow, count your new reviews. That's your first data point. Rerun your searches in 90 days.



Where to go next

Ready to ask? How to Get Your First 50 Google Reviews is a 30-day plan for who to ask first and when. 50 Review Request Texts That Get Replies gives you the exact words, with lines written for plumbers. Before you text anyone, read the texting rules.

If the plumber above you still wins with fewer reviews, Why the Other Guy Shows Up First on Google walks you through the other six things to check.



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: Review requests. Free sample: your first 10 requests sent. Review requests is $100 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

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

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.

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. GTL analysis of Google Maps results, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026: 875 plumbing businesses from one Google Maps search per city (Nashville, Tulsa, Louisville, Huntsville, Lexington, Birmingham, Memphis, Little Rock, Montgomery, Jackson MS), up to 100 results each; Memphis returned 9 and Montgomery 66. Review counts by map spot, fewest reviews in the top 3, star ratings, websites. Totals only; no business named. A snapshot from one spot in each city: map order changes with the searcher's location, the words searched and the profile itself. (sections 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)
2. BrightLocal Local Consumer Review Survey 2026 (1,002 US adults, published Feb 11, 2026): 31% only use a business with 4.5 stars or more. brightlocal.com (section 3)
3. Same survey: 68% only use a business with four stars or more. (section 3) (brightlocal.com)
4. Same survey: 28% always write a review when asked. (section 5) (brightlocal.com)
5. Same survey: 74% look for reviews from the last three months. (section 7) (brightlocal.com)
6. Same survey: 32% look for reviews from the last two weeks. (section 7) (brightlocal.com)
7. Same survey: 89% expect owners to respond to reviews. (section 8) (brightlocal.com)
8. Same survey: 50% are put off by generic or templated replies. (section 8) (brightlocal.com)
9. Same survey: 19% expect a reply the same day. (section 8) (brightlocal.com)

Rules and guidance cited (not statistics), checked on 2026-11-12:

- Google Business Profile Help, "Tips to improve your local ranking on Google" (relevance, distance and prominence; more reviews and positive ratings can help; helpful replies help you stand out; no paid ranking): support.google.com (before you start, sections 4, 8)
- Google Business Profile Help, "Understand business summaries on Google Maps" (Place Topics built from reviews; most-mentioned words in bold): support.google.com (section 9)
- Google Maps user-contributed content policy (bans incentives, asking only happy customers, requesting specific content or staff names and staff review quotas): support.google.com (section 9)
- BrightLocal, "Google's Local Algorithm and Local Ranking Factors" (review recency and steady growth among ranking factors; review language can affect relevance; keywords in owner replies have little effect): brightlocal.com (sections 7, 8, 9)

GTL estimates

These are our own judgment, not measured facts:

1. Aim first for the smallest review count in your local top 3 (section 4). Reasoning: it's the lowest count that's already winning where your customers search, so it's the nearest target that's proven to work.
2. Expect one review for every three to five customers asked, and plan on one in five (section 5). Reasoning: 28% say they'll always review when asked, a reminder brings in some of the rest, and busy days mean some asks get missed.

3. A two-truck shop can plan on about 12 new reviews a month, a solo plumber about 8 (section 5). Reasoning: two trucks finish around 60 jobs a month and a solo plumber around 40, and one in five of those is 12 and 8.
4. A top-3 count in a big city can grow by a hundred or more a year (section 6). Reasoning: the shops at the top run several trucks and keep asking, so a dozen or more new reviews a month is normal for them.
5. Get at least four new reviews every month (section 7). Reasoning: plumbers do many short jobs, so a steady flow is realistic, and with a third of shoppers looking at the last two weeks, a gap of a month shows.
6. Reply within two days, and the same day for a bad review (section 8). Reasoning: a fifth of shoppers expect a same-day reply, and a quick, calm reply stops a bad review from setting the tone for the next customer.

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