Grow That Local

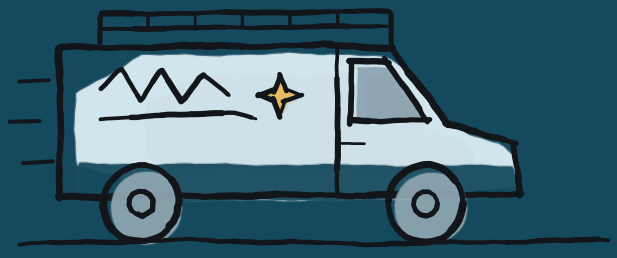
a free guide

The plumber storm and season playbook

What to post, text and mail before the first freeze, on thaw day, at Thanksgiving, in the rain and in the quiet weeks.

For plumbing business owners planning their busy and slow months.

- 8 short sections in 5 parts
- 32 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 emergencies feel random, but many of them come in waves you can see coming: a hard freeze in the forecast, the day it thaws, the weekend after Thanksgiving, a week of heavy rain. The quiet weeks are just as easy to predict.

This guide takes you through those moments one at a time. Each section says what homeowners search for and worry about right then, gives you a post, a text and a postcard to copy, and ends with a checklist you can finish in 24 hours.

Three 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, homes or results.
- Texts go only to customers who've agreed to hear from you by text. Say who it's from, and stop the moment someone replies STOP or asks you to. The FCC says consent is needed for automated texts to cell phones and can be taken back at any time, in any reasonable way (FCC, fcc.gov).

The search phrases in each section are examples of how homeowners word things. To see your own area's pattern, look up "frozen pipes" or "plumber" for your state in Google Trends (trends.google.com). It shows interest on a 0 to 100 scale, compared with all searches in that place and time, not a count of searches (Google Trends Help, support.google.com).



Part 1

Six weeks before freeze season

1 Find your first freeze date and get the freeze kit ready

The moment. Late summer or early fall, six weeks before your area usually sees its first freeze. The phones are steady, and nobody is thinking about pipes.

NOAA's map of the first fall freeze shows the median date for each area: the date by which a freeze has happened in five of every ten years, based on 1991 to 2020 records (NOAA NCEI, ncei.noaa.gov). That's your anchor. The freeze that does the real damage is harder: State Farm warns that pipes in uninsulated spaces are most at risk below 20°F (State Farm, newsroom.statefarm.com).

What homeowners search and worry about. "Winterize outdoor faucet," "how to shut off outside water," "hose bib cover." The worry is small and easy to fix now, which is why it's a good reason to reach them.

Example: what to post (made up).

> **First freeze usually lands around [date] here. Before then: unhook garden hoses, shut off and drain outside faucets if you have an indoor valve, and find your main shut-off. If you can't find it, we'll show you.**

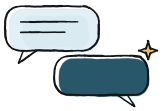
Example: what to text (made up), to past customers.

> **Hi [first name], it's [your name] at [business]. Freezing nights are a few weeks out. Want us to check your outside faucets and show you your main shut-off? Reply YES for times, or STOP to opt out.**

Example: what to mail (made up). A postcard to older neighborhoods and homes with crawl spaces: "Know where your water shut-off is before the first freeze. We'll tag it for you, free with any visit this fall."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Look up your area's median first fall freeze on NOAA's map and write the date down.
- [ ] Count back six weeks. Put "freeze kit ready" on that date.
- [ ] Write and save your freeze warning post, your freeze text and your thaw-day post (sections 2 and 3).
- [ ] List past customers with crawl spaces, older homes or pipes on outside walls.



Part 2

Freeze and thaw

2 Freeze watch: two days before a hard freeze

The moment. The forecast shows a night in the teens. Your phone alert for 20°F or lower just went off. You have about two days.

A hard freeze is expensive for homeowners. State Farm handled more than 20,000 frozen pipe and winter water claims from 2024 through June 2025, with over $628 million paid and an average claim payment over $30,000 (State Farm, newsroom.statefarm.com). A post that prevents one of those is the most useful thing a plumber can share all year.

What homeowners search and worry about. "How to keep pipes from freezing," "should I drip my faucets," "what temperature do pipes freeze." The worry is the pipe they can't see, in the crawl space or the outside wall.

Example: what to post (made up).

> **Down to the teens Thursday night. Open the cabinet doors under sinks on outside walls, let a faucet drip, and know where your main shut-off is. If a pipe bursts, shut the water off first, then call us.**

Example: what to text (made up), to past customers in older homes.

> **[business] here. Hard freeze Thursday night. Open cabinet doors under sinks on outside walls and let a faucet drip. If a pipe bursts, here's our number: [phone]. Reply STOP to opt out.**

Do it in 24 hours (before the freeze)

- [ ] Post the freeze warning on Google, Facebook and your town's Nextdoor or Facebook group.
- [ ] Text past customers with crawl spaces, older homes or pipes on outside walls.
- [ ] Put an extra plumber on call for the freeze night and the day after.
- [ ] Change your missed-call text so it starts with "Shut off your main water valve."

3 Thaw day: the second wave

The moment. The morning temperatures climb back above freezing. Pipes that froze and cracked overnight start to leak, often somewhere no one is looking.

Water damage is common in any season. Across all insurers, about one in 67 insured homes has a water damage or freezing claim each year, averaging $15,400 per claim (2019 to 2023 data, Insurance Information Institute (iii.org)).

What homeowners search and worry about. "Burst pipe," "water coming through ceiling," "emergency plumber near me," "does insurance cover burst pipes." The worry is panic: water is moving and they don't know how to stop it.

Example: what to post (made up).

> **Pipes that froze last night can crack and leak as they thaw. Check under sinks, in the basement and in the crawl space today. If you see water, shut off the main valve and call us. We're running extra crews.**

Example: what to text (made up), sent when you miss a call.

> **Sorry we missed you. If water is leaking, shut off your main water valve now (often where the line enters the house). Then reply with your address and we'll call you right back.**

Example: what to mail (made up). A week later, a postcard to the streets where you fixed burst pipes: "Freeze damage on your street last week. Want your pipes checked before the next one? Free shut-off tag with every visit."

Do it in 24 hours (on thaw day)

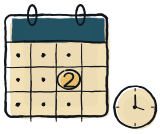
- [ ] Post the thaw-day check the morning temperatures rise.
- [ ] Book repairs in tight route clusters, so each plumber reaches more homes.
- [ ] Give every caller an honest time window and text when you're on the way.
- [ ] Take before-and-after photos of each repair (no addresses) for posts next week.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: Your first 25 customers texted

Ready before the next freeze. Win-back texts is $100 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Win-back texts: growthatlocal.com/services/win-back-texts



Part 3

Holidays and heavy rain

4 Thanksgiving week: the kitchen drain rush

The moment. The week of Thanksgiving. Extra cooking, extra guests and extra showers. A national drain-cleaning company reports a 50% spike in service calls the day after Thanksgiving and a 21% boost across the Thursday-to-Sunday weekend (company press release, Nov 20, 2025, prnewswire.com). These are one company's own numbers, but the pattern is one most plumbers know.

What homeowners search and worry about. "Garbage disposal not working," "kitchen sink clogged," "toilet overflowing," "plumber open on Thanksgiving." The worry is a house full of guests and one bathroom out.

Example: what to post (made up), two days before.

> **Grease and turkey drippings go in a can, not the sink. Run the disposal with plenty of cold water and feed it slowly. We'll be on call Friday if the kitchen drain disagrees.**

Example: what to text (made up), to past customers.

> **Hi [first name], [business] here. Hosting this week? We're on call through the holiday weekend if a drain or toilet gives out. Save our number: [phone]. Reply STOP to opt out.**

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Set your holiday hours on your Google profile as special hours, so the map shows when you really answer (Google Business Profile Help, support.google.com).
- [ ] Post the grease tip two days before Thanksgiving.
- [ ] Plan who's on call Thursday to Sunday, and the after-hours fee you'll say on every call.
- [ ] Ask every holiday customer for a review that week.

5 A week of heavy rain: sump pumps and backups

The moment. A week of heavy rain in the forecast, often in spring. Basements take on water, sump pumps run nonstop, and old sewer lines back up.

Sump pumps don't last forever. InterNACHI's life expectancy chart puts a sump pump at about 7 years (InterNACHI, nachi.org), so many homes are running one that's due.

What homeowners search and worry about. "Sump pump not working," "water in basement after rain," "sewer backup in basement." The worry is the finished basement and everything stored in it.

Example: what to post (made up), the day before.

> **Heavy rain this week. Pour a bucket of water into your sump pit and make sure the pump kicks on. If it doesn't, call us before the basement finds out.**

Example: what to text (made up), to customers whose sump pump is 7 or more years old.

> **Hi [first name], it's [business]. Big rain coming. Your sump pump is about [age] years old. Want us to test it before the weekend? Reply YES, or STOP to opt out.**

Example: what to mail (made up). In late winter, before rain season, a postcard: "Test your sump pump before spring rain. Seven years is about when they give out."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Pull every customer you've installed or serviced a sump pump for, with the date.
- [ ] Save the bucket-test post and send it the day before heavy rain.
- [ ] Add a sump pump page to your site with "test it before the rain" at the top.
- [ ] Check your van stock of pumps before rain season starts.



Part 4

The quiet weeks

6 March: Fix a Leak Week

The moment. Every March, the EPA runs Fix a Leak Week (March 16 to 22 in 2026). It's a ready-made reason to reach people when the freeze calls have stopped and the phone is quieter.

The EPA says the average household's leaks waste more than 9,300 gallons of water a year, 9% of homes have leaks wasting 50 gallons or more a day, and fixing easy leaks can save about 10% on water bills (EPA WaterSense, Fix a Leak Week, epa.gov).

What homeowners search and worry about. "Running toilet," "how to check for a water leak," "high water bill." The worry is the slow leak they've been ignoring, and the bill.

Example: what to post (made up).

> **It's Fix a Leak Week. Try this: write down your water meter reading, don't use any water for two hours, then check it again. If it moved, you've got a leak somewhere. We can find it.**

Example: what to text (made up), to past customers.

> **Hi [first name], [business] here. It's Fix a Leak Week. If a toilet runs or a faucet drips, we're doing leak checks this week. Reply YES for a time, or STOP to opt out.**

Example: what to mail (made up). A postcard in early March: "The average home's leaks waste over 9,300 gallons a year (EPA). We'll find yours."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Check the EPA's Fix a Leak Week page for next March's dates and put them in your calendar.
- [ ] Write and save the meter-check post.
- [ ] Plan a leak-check visit you can book in under an hour.
- [ ] Add a "hidden leaks" page to your site if you don't have one.

7 Summer and early fall: water heaters and plans

The moment. June to October in many areas: no freezes, fewer emergencies, and time to sell planned work.

Water heaters are the big one. InterNACHI puts a conventional water heater at 6 to 12 years (InterNACHI, nachi.org). Planned replacements are calmer, easier to schedule and less likely to end with a flooded closet.

What homeowners search and worry about. "How long do water heaters last," "water heater making noise," "tankless water heater worth it." The worry: is mine about to go?

Example: what to text (made up), to customers whose tank is 8 or more years old.

> **Hi [first name], it's [your name] at [business]. Your water heater is about [age] years old now. Want a free check while it's quiet, before winter puts it to work? Reply YES, or STOP to opt out.**

Example: what to post (made up).

> **How old is your water heater? The date is in the serial number on the label. Text us a photo of the label and we'll tell you.**

Example: what to mail (made up). A postcard to neighborhoods built 10 to 15 years ago: "Your water heater may be as old as your house. Text us a photo of the label for a free age check."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Pull every water heater you've installed with its install date.
- [ ] Text the ones 8 or more years old.
- [ ] Add a "text us a photo of the label" line to your water heater page.
- [ ] Offer a yearly maintenance plan to every summer customer.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: Your first newsletter, written

Ready for the quiet weeks. Email newsletter is $50 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Email newsletter: growthatlocal.com/services/email-newsletter



Part 5

Your year on one page

8 A plumber's month-by-month plan

The moment. Any slow afternoon. Put the whole year on one sheet so the freeze post goes out on time.

This one is for a made-up plumber in a place with real winters. In warm places, freezes are rare, so shift the weight to rain, water heaters and holidays.

Months	What's happening	Post	Text	Mail
Jan to Feb	Freezes and thaws	Freeze warnings, thaw-day checks	Freeze texts to older homes	Shut-off tag postcard
Mar to Apr	Fix a Leak Week, spring rain	Meter check, sump pump test	Leak checks, sump pump age	Leak check postcard
May to Aug	Quieter, planned work	Water heater label tip	Water heater age texts	Postcards around sewer jobs
Sep to Oct	Six weeks before the first freeze	Outside faucet shut-off	Fall faucet and shut-off visits	First freeze postcard
Nov to Dec	Thanksgiving, first hard freeze	Grease tip, freeze warning	Holiday on-call texts	Holiday card to customers

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Copy the table and change the months to match your first freeze and rain season.
- [ ] Put each row's first action on your calendar, six weeks before that row starts.
- [ ] Set a phone weather alert for 20°F or lower in your area.
- [ ] Share the plan with your office and team, so everyone knows what's coming.



Your first 24 hours, in one list

If you do these today, you'll be ready for the next freeze before it's in the forecast:

- [ ] Look up your first fall freeze date on NOAA's map (section 1).
- [ ] Write and save your freeze, thaw-day and Thanksgiving posts (sections 2, 3, 4).
- [ ] Set a phone alert for forecasts at or below 20°F (section 2).
- [ ] List past customers with older homes, crawl spaces or old water heaters (sections 1, 7).
- [ ] Copy the month-by-month table and fill in your dates (section 8).



Where to go next

This guide comes from The Plumber Marketing Playbook, our free guide to the whole job of getting more plumbing calls: your website, your Google profile, reviews, posts, follow-up, postcards, freezes and maintenance plans.

Two free tools go with it. Is your business ready for busy season? gives you a score and the gaps to close first. Your slow months shows how much work you're short in the quiet weeks and how many jobs fill the gap.

To see the months people near you search for a plumber, read When Your Town Searches for a Plumber: Your Busy Season Calendar.



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: Win-back texts. Free sample: your first 25 customers texted. Win-back texts is $100 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

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.

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.

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. NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, "When to Expect Your First Fall Freeze": median first fall freeze date (a freeze in five of ten years), from the 1991 to 2020 US Climate Normals. ncei.noaa.gov (sections 1, 8)
2. State Farm newsroom: more than 20,000 frozen pipe and winter water claims, 2024 through June 2025. newsroom.statefarm.com (section 2)
3. Same source: over $628 million in paid losses. (section 2) (newsroom.statefarm.com)
4. Same source: average claim payment over $30,000. (section 2) (newsroom.statefarm.com)
5. Same source: pipes in uninsulated areas most at risk below 20°F. (sections 1, 2) (newsroom.statefarm.com)
6. Insurance Information Institute, Facts + Statistics: Homeowners and renters insurance: about one in 67 insured homes has a water damage or freezing claim each year (2019 to 2023). iii.org (section 3)
7. Same source: average water damage and freezing claim $15,400 (2019 to 2023). (section 3) (iii.org)
8. Company press release (PR Newswire, Nov 20, 2025): a 50% spike in service calls the day after Thanksgiving. prnewswire.com (section 4). Company-reported.
9. Same release: a 21% boost in calls over the Thursday-to-Sunday holiday weekend. (section 4) (prnewswire.com)
10. InterNACHI Standard Estimated Life Expectancy Chart: sump pump about 7 years. nachi.org (section 5)
11. Same chart: conventional water heater 6 to 12 years. (section 7) (nachi.org)
12. EPA WaterSense, Fix a Leak Week: the average household's leaks waste more than 9,300 gallons a year. epa.gov (section 6)
13. Same page: 9% of homes have leaks wasting 50 gallons or more a day. (section 6) (epa.gov)
14. Same page: fixing easy leaks can save about 10% on water bills. (section 6) (epa.gov)
15. Same page: Fix a Leak Week dates, March 16 to 22, 2026. (section 6) (epa.gov)

Rules, tools and guidance cited (not statistics):

- FCC, Stop Unwanted Robocalls and Texts (consent for automated texts to cell phones; consent can be revoked at any time in any reasonable way): fcc.gov (before you start)
- Google Trends Help, how Trends data is normalized (0 to 100, relative to all searches in that place and time): support.google.com (before you start)
- Google Business Profile Help, special hours for holidays: support.google.com (section 4)

GTL estimates

These are our own judgment, not measured facts:

1. The search phrases in each section are examples of common wording, not measured search volumes (all sections). Reasoning: they're how homeowners describe these problems; Google Trends shows the real pattern for your area.

2. Get the freeze kit ready six weeks before your first freeze date (section 1). Reasoning: posts, texts and on-call plans take a few weeks to set up, and the first hard freeze often comes with only a few days' warning.
3. Freeze calls come in two waves, the freeze night and thaw day (section 3). Reasoning: frozen pipes often crack while frozen but leak only once the ice melts.
4. Text water heater customers once their tank is 8 or more years old (section 7). Reasoning: that's the middle of InterNACHI's 6 to 12 year range, early enough to plan a calm replacement.

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.

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