

# HELPFUL TIPS FOR FINDING A PLUMBER

DO YOU HAVE A SEWER BACKUP? DID MSD SAY YOU NEED A PLUMBER?

If you are having a sewer backup, and the MSD workers find that the main public sewer in the street is not the problem, you will need a plumber to check the plumbing and sewer pipes of your home. If you don't know a good plumber, it's hard to know who you should hire. But please understand MSD workers cannot recommend or endorse any particular plumber or company.

We're sorry we can't give you any names, but we do have some tips and advice for finding a plumber to help you with your sewer backup problem.

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**Tip #1** **Ask for referrals.** Ask your family, friends, neighbors who they have used and been happy with. Do you know a real estate agent? Someone who does construction work? These people may know someone in the plumbing field. Is there a contractor that you've used for other work? Sometimes an electrician or dry wall installer will know a good plumber.

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**Tip #2** **Look in directories.** The phone book, for example. Also, the internet enables you to search for service providers in your part of town. A lot of websites allow customers to "rate" companies, so you can see other peoples' feedback. Some places to try:

Yellow Pages of your Local Telephone Book

Online Yellow pages

[yellowpages.com/cincinnati-oh/sewer-cleaning](http://yellowpages.com/cincinnati-oh/sewer-cleaning)

The Better Business Bureau

513-421-3015

[bbb.org/cincinnati/accredited-business-guide/find/](http://bbb.org/cincinnati/accredited-business-guide/find/)

Cincinnati Master Plumbers Association or CMPA

[cmpa-phcc.org/html/find\\_a\\_plumber.html](http://cmpa-phcc.org/html/find_a_plumber.html)

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**Tip #3** **Shop and compare.** Get at least two quotes from two different plumbers.

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**Tip #4** **Ask a lot of questions!** On the other side of this page we have listed a lot of good questions you can ask, and a few other tips for choosing the right plumber or sewer cleaner for your job.

# Example questions to ask when hiring a plumber

- **Are you licensed and insured (or bonded)?**
  - A licensed plumber has gone through plumbing school and is usually familiar with MSD policies and procedures as well as plumbing principles.
  - A bonded plumber protects the homeowner if the plumber damages their private property.
- **Do you have enough chains to clean out my building sewer completely?**
  - Some plumbers only carry 50' of chains. That's enough to snake out building drains but usually not enough to snake house taps all the way to the public sewer. Try to find a plumber who has at least 100' of chains.
- **Can you locate underground pipes?**
  - You want a plumber who can trace the location of the building sewer and find where any problem areas are in the building sewer. This will help to determine if the problem is on private property or in the public Right-of-Way.
  - The ability to locate may indicate that the plumber is familiar with main building sewer investigations instead of just indoor plumbing.
- **Do you have a camera to inspect my building sewer ?**
  - Plumbers can use a video camera to inspect inside pipes for damage or blockages. This technology is an important tool in sewer backup problem investigation.
  - The plumber should always clean out the building sewer prior to video-inspecting it.
  - Make sure the plumber can make a recording (such as a DVD) of the inspection so it can be submitted to MSD if needed.
- **Do you offer root maintenance programs and guarantees ?**
- Tree roots that invade building sewer pipes are the most common cause of sewer backups. If tree roots are a problem on your property, it's good to hire a plumber with knowledge and experience with root problems. Maintenance programs can provide you with some assurance that the root problem will be addressed, and not just be temporarily fixed.
- **Do you guarantee your work?**
  - This is an important point if there are any problems that need fixing after the initial work.

## Other "Helpful Hints"

- Ask the plumber to use the largest root cutting saw possible for the size of your pipe (usually a 2.5" or 3.5" saw ). You want your plumber to clean out the entire pipe, not just do the minimum to get it to drain.
- 1.25" chains are the preferred size for snaking a pipe, especially when dealing with root intrusion.
- If your problem is with sewer odors in your house (and NOT a sewer backup), ask the plumber about a "smoke test." This procedure can be used for odor investigations, and a plumber who knows how to do smoke tests is probably experienced with odor investigations.
- If you have questions, feel free to call MSD Customer Service at (513) 352-4900.



Helpful  
Tips