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Feature

Choosing Reliable Plumbers

Most of us have to deal with blocked sink pipes, a leaking toilet, a burst washing machine hose, blocked drains or clogged pipes that need fixing immediately. Well, all, you need is a good plumber.

But who would you call? The phone books are full of plumbers promising a rapid response to such problems, but choosing the wrong one could be costly! Are these plumbers licensed that appear in the phone book?

Over the years, the Council has been receiving complaints and concerns against some plumbers operating around the country.

The complaints range from the plumbers charging exorbitant amount of money for a small job, not being able to finish work on time thus causing delays, unable to fix the problem after using trial and error method, shoddy materials used which is improvised on the job site, using wrong material, incomplete work and the worst is money taken and the plumber nowhere to be seen. Some consumers may have experienced that once you hire one plumber, you never get to say goodbye to him/her as they keep returning because the problem recurs.

In a number of complaints lodged, the consumers cried foul, being unsatisfied with the job done by the plumbers. When the complainants requested the plumbers to redo the job, these plumbers asked for more money.

Case Study

One Ramesh Prasad engaged the services of a plumbing company to clear the blocked sewer line. The company assigned a plumber to Ramesh's residence to do the job. After the completion of the work, the plumbing company was paid \$400 for their services.

After a lapse of few days, Ramesh noticed that the chamber was still leaking. He contacted the plumbing company but no positive response was forthcoming from the plumbing company. So Ramesh lodged his complaint with the Council. Ramesh was not willing to hire a new plumber for the same job, having paid \$400 in total to the plumbing company.

The Council then called for mediation with both parties. The plumbing company agreed to seal the sewer chamber but the company director stated that he could not clear the line because according to him the blockage was now at another place and that will cost more money to fix.

In another case, a complainant paid a plumber \$70 to repair a leaking tap. After few days, the complainant noticed that the tap started leaking at the same place. Complainant sought redress from the Council by asking for a full refund.

It doesn't stop here, in another case; a plumber was paid \$250 to fix the blocked toilet pipe. The plumber worked on the pipe several times over a span of three days. He gave a run around to the complainant by making him purchase different types of pipes and even breaking the tiled walls. But the plumber was not successful in fixing the blocked toilet pipe. He walked away with \$250.

Finding a reputable plumber who keeps appointments, does a quality job and doesn't cost the moon is not easy.

The golden rule is to conduct a quick research on the background of the individual plumber or the plumbing company before hiring their services. However, the best way to choose a reliable plumber is by word of mouth. Ask family members, workmates, neighbors, or friends for referrals.

If you need a plumber for an emergency, call and explain the nature of the problem by giving as much detail as possible. The plumber should be able to give a quote but additional costs depend on the nature of the problem and the materials required.

If the work to be undertaken by a plumber isn't urgent, then it is worth spending a little longer looking for the right plumber.

Before you agree to any work, have at least three plumbers look at your job to provide estimates for labor and materials. Comparable quotes will act as a guide to avoid being overcharged.

Avoid plumbers who only give a quote over the phone when you ask for an estimate in writing. When there's no paperwork and the plumber is eager to get to work, then you must think twice about hiring this plumber. This is to avoid getting an invoice after completion of the job which is two or three times the original price and when you protest there is no sympathy from the plumber.