

HIRING A QUALIFIED PLUMBER

Overview

If you're experiencing a private sewer issue, you will need a qualified plumber to check out your private building sewer and the plumbing inside your home.

If you don't know a good plumber, it's hard to know who you should hire.

While MSD cannot recommend or endorse any particular plumber or company, we do have some tips and advice for finding a plumber to help you with your sewer backup problem:

Tip #1: Get Referrals

If you don't already know of a trusted plumber, ask friends and family for referrals.

Tip #2: Check Directories

Check directories such as Angi.com, The Better Business Bureau, or the Cincinnati Master Plumbers Association (CMPA).

Tip #3: Shop and Compare

Compare quotes from at least two or more plumbers.

Tip #4: Ask Questions

The following is a list of questions you can ask companies to help you choose the right 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. A bonded plumber protects the homeowner if the plumber damages their private property.
- **“Do you have enough chains to clean out my private building sewer completely?”** Some plumbers only carry 50 feet of chains. That's enough to snake out building drains but usually not enough to snake private building sewers all the way to the public sewer. Try to find a plumber who has at least 100 feet of chains.
- **“Can you locate underground pipes?”** You want a plumber who can trace the location of the private building sewer and find the problem areas. This will help determine if the problem is on private property or in the public ROW. The ability to locate may indicate the plumber is familiar with private building sewer investigations.

Additional Helpful Tips



- **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.**
- **“Can you video my private building sewer?”** Plumbers can use a video camera to inspect pipes for damage or blockages. The plumber should always clean out the building sewer prior to video inspecting it. Make sure the plumber can make a recording of the inspection so it can be submitted to MSD if needed.

If your plumber finds a problem in an area maintained by MSD, please call us at **(513) 352-4900** and send the video inspection and other documents to: **MSDCustomerDocumentation@cincinnati-oh.gov**
- **“Do you offer root maintenance programs?”** Tree roots that invade private building sewers are a 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, not just temporarily fixed.
- **“Do you guarantee your work?”** This is an important point, especially if there are any problems that need fixing after the initial work.