

**Title:** Plumbing Inspections & Common Plumbing Problems

**Description:** Get a professional plumbing inspection of your home and uncover potential or common problems before they become bigger, more costly repairs.

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# Common Plumbing Problems to Look for When Purchasing a Home

You're excited! You've found the right home, your offer has been accepted and you want to be sure your new property is in great shape and has no hidden problems before you sign on the dotted line. Do yourself a favor: take advantage of a plumbing home inspection prior to closing, while there's still time to negotiate repairs if needed.

Hiring an [experienced plumbing professional](#) as part of your buying decision can save you time and money -- especially if they find something that can be easily and affordably repaired before it becomes a much larger problem. You'll know what needs to be done, how much it will cost and how long it will take and whether it's something you should ask the seller to complete before your transaction is closed.

Here's just one example of how a professional plumbing inspection can save you big money:

Perhaps there's a sewer clog on the property that was recently cleared, and the current homeowner later discloses that there's been a history of clogs. Your inspection reveals the lines have begun to decay and may be in danger of collapsing.

Using a drain camera, a pro will determine if installing a new lining will support the existing pipe and avoid a very costly repair later that involves digging up your lawn or driveway to install new sewer lines. This is the kind of important information you may not have uncovered without a professional plumbing inspector.

During your inspection, ask questions about the home's existing plumbing, such as:

- What type of water piping is in the home?
- What type of drain piping is currently in the home? Is the main sewer line between the house and the street original or has it ever been replaced?
- What remodels or alterations have been made to the home. If so, were building permits pulled for the work?
- Are most of the plumbing fixtures and faucets original to the home or have they been updated?

- What is the age of the water heater?
- Is there an existing sump pump or perimeter/french drain? Is groundwater a possible concern with the home?

## What Does my Plumbing Inspection Cover?

Plumbing professionals know just where to look and what they're looking for to uncover problems that may not be readily apparent. Almost every property has some type of issue and experienced inspectors are not fooled by a coat of fresh paint that may be hiding a serious problem.

Becoming a qualified inspector requires hundreds of hours of technical education and only about a third of the students earn a passing grade. After passing, there is required field work experience as an apprentice with an already certified and established inspector.

Using a qualified inspector means "peace of mind" when it comes to possibly inheriting and avoiding common plumbing problems. Below is a plumbing inspection checklist of items typically reviewed during your routine home inspection:

- Verify proper operation of all shut off valves throughout the house.
- Verify proper operation of all faucets and fixtures.
- Checking incoming water pressure as well as water pressure at each faucet.
- Checking all exposed gas piping for possible leaks.
- Visual inspection under all sinks.
- Visual inspection of mechanical room as well as laundry room.
- Visual inspection of water heater and verifying it's age.
- Visual inspection of all exposed water and drain piping.
- Verify proper operation of the sump pump if there is one. Many homes have a pit installed without a pump, the pit would be inspected to see if there is any standing water.
- Perform camera inspection of the main sewer line from the house to the street.

Be sure to ask about:

1. Any possible groundwater issues
2. If there is any history of sewer-related blockages in the property
3. Does the home have cast iron drain lines under the basement floor -- it's common for kitchen lines to deteriorate which would require a camera verification

## Most Common Plumbing Problems: What you Need to Know

Knowing what to look for and how to fix some of the common and simple issues in your new home can give you a better idea of what to negotiate with the seller and what you can easily fix yourself once you're in your new home. Blue Sky will be happy to assist by [evaluating the problem](#) and giving you a fair estimate so you know what your next step is.

### Top 10 Most Common Plumbing Problems and How to Fix Them:

**No hot water:** This is an easy problem to evaluate by quickly checking the following:

- make sure the pilot light is lit
- check the temperature setting to see if it's high enough for hot water
- be sure the water heater is big enough for your family's needs

If each of these check out, you may have a bigger problem and want to ask the seller to fix or replace your water heater.

**Dripping faucet:** This is a common plumbing annoyance and can be easily fixed by installing new washers. This is an easy fix and an inexpensive solution... it probably isn't something you need to ask the seller to address. You can avoid future issues by using less force when you turn the faucet off and on.

**Clogged drains:** Again, this is not likely to be a deal-breaker and can be easily addressed once you're in your new home. Clean the strainer or plug to remove any debris. If the clog persists, you can use a plunger to loosen a bigger clog in the trap. If the drain is still clogged, you can use a drain cleaner, but be sure to follow the directions on the product. Blue Sky recommends an eco-friendly product, such as [Bio-Clean](#) to break down hair, botton, food, etc.

**Installing a new faucet:** Changing faucets is often a decorative decision in your home to enhance your decor and style. Once you're in your home, you can switch out the fixtures to suit your taste. Be sure to [turn off the water](#) at the source and follow the directions carefully to avoid leaks.

**Leaky pipes:** Rust or lime deposits in the pipes might indicate an impending leak. Leaky pipes can cause extensive damage to your floors and belongings in the area. This is something you will want the seller to address immediately and before you close on your home. Leaks can quickly become a bigger issue that can be costly.

**Water Heater Leaks:** If your water heater is leaking, it's time to replace it. Leaking usually means there's rust in the bottom of the tank and you'll want to negotiate with the seller to replace it or give you a closing credit for a new tank as part of your transaction.

**Toilet is Running:** If you notice the sound of water running or a low humming noise after the toilet has been flushed, it's likely the flapper is leaking or may need to be replaced. It may also mean the float needs to be adjusted. Both of these are an easy fix and can be addressed by the seller or by you after you close.

**Toilet is Leaking:** This can be a very expensive issue in your home, leading to unnecessarily high water bills. Once you have the tank tested and you know it's leaking, you may want to call in a professional to evaluate the source of the problem. If the toilet needs to be replaced or removed, this is something to discuss with your agent and address in the contract.

**Garbage Disposal:** If your disposal isn't working, it may be jammed or someone has put something in there that can't be broken down. You can clear the clog with pliers or tongs and you're done. If it's still not working, have your plumbing inspector verify that the disposal is working and if not, you may want to have it replaced. Disposal replacements typically cost around \$100 and depending on what other issues you're negotiating, it may be something you'd like to select and install once you've moved in.

**The House is Cold:** This is an important item on your list and should be included in your inspection. The furnace blades and pilot should be dust-free and a clean filter installed. If there's still a problem, a professional should evaluate what's needed and you should ask the seller to repair it or provide a credit in closing so it can be repaired immediately after closing.

So, before you finalize your contract and close on your new home, get a [professional plumbing inspection](#) to avoid common problems and costly repairs. Many first time buyers are tapped out after they close and may not have sufficient funds to take on an large and urgent project right away.