

Plumbing

Plumbers install and repair pipes that carry water, steam, air, or other liquids or gases to and in businesses, homes, and factories.

Work Environment

Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters work in factories, homes, businesses, and wherever else there are pipes or septic systems. Workers must often lift heavy materials, climb ladders, and work in tight spaces. Some plumbers travel to a variety of work sites every day. About 14% of persons are self employed.

Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters work in factories, homes, businesses, and wherever else there are pipes or septic systems.

Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters have a higher-than-average risk of injury and illness. Cuts from sharp tools, burns from hot pipes and soldering equipment, and falls from ladders are common injuries.

Most plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters work full time, including nights and weekends. They are often on call to handle emergencies, and overtime is common on construction sites to meet completion deadlines.

Although self-employed plumbers can set their own schedules, they are also more likely to deal with after-hours emergencies.

How to get Qualified

Most plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters learn on the job through an apprenticeship. Some start out by attending a technical school. Most states and localities require plumbers to have a license in the developed world. Training institutions offers skills training in plumbing and formal certification is becomes or important.

Job Outlook

Employment of plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters is expected to grow 26 percent from 2010 to 2020, faster than the average for all occupations. Stricter water efficiency standards and new building and power plant construction are projected to spur demand for workers.

Job opportunities are expected to be good as some employers continue to report difficulty finding qualified professionals. In addition, many workers are expected to retire over the next 10 years, which will result in more job openings. Workers with welding experience may have the best opportunities.

Like that of many other types of construction work, employment of plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters is sensitive to fluctuations of the economy. On the one hand, workers may experience periods of

unemployment when the overall level of construction falls. On the other hand, shortages of workers may occur in some areas during peak periods of building activity.

However, maintenance and repair of plumbing and pipe systems must continue even during economic downturns, so plumbers and fitters outside of construction, especially those in manufacturing, tend to have more stable employment.