

# PLUMBING

## Plumber

Are you looking for on-the-job variety? Do you like working with your hands and with machines? Are you disciplined and precise? Can you visualize detailed structures from drawings? Do you like dealing with people? Then, plumbing may be the career for you!

## What the work is like

Plumbers install, repair and maintain pipes and plumbing equipment used for water distribution and disposal.

They are employed by construction companies, plumbing contractors and maintenance departments, or they may also be self-employed.

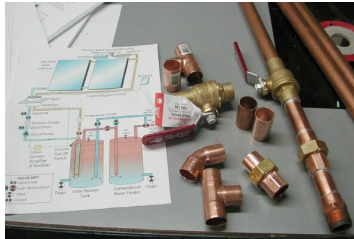
Plumbers work in the new home building and renovation, and institutional and commercial construction sectors.

## Your duties

Plumbers usually specialize in either residential or commercial/institutional work.

As a plumber, your duties may include:

- Installing, repairing and maintaining domestic, commercial or industrial plumbing systems
- Marking positions for pipe connections and fixtures in walls and floors
- Cutting openings in walls and floors to accommodate pipes and pipe fittings
- Measuring, cutting, bending and installing pipes using hand and power tools
- Joining pipes using clamps, screws, bolts or cement
- Welding pipes
- Testing pipes for leaks
- Preparing cost estimates
- Reading and interpreting blueprints



## Work conditions

The standard work week for plumbers is 40 hours (8 hours a day, 5 days a week). As with many careers in construction, there are peak periods that will require you to work overtime. The number of additional hours you work each week depends on the construction sector and region you work in, and will vary from one job to the next.

As a plumber, you may work outdoors and indoors, alone or with a team of other construction professionals. The work can be physically demanding—you may have to stand or crouch for long periods of time, and you may have to lift heavy materials.

As with all careers in the construction industry, safety is the top priority. Plumbers are trained to work safely, and take special precautions to protect themselves from injury.

## Building your career

With experience and additional training, you can move into more senior positions, including supervisory roles such as foreman or estimator. You can also transfer your skills to other construction trades, such as steamfitter/pipefitter or gasfitter. Another option is to become self-employed and start your own contracting business.

As with most careers in the construction industry, your skills are portable. If you want to move, you can take your skills with you.

## More information:

Gauteng Master Builders Association

Tel: 011-805 6611  
www.gmba.org.za

