

Keep Plumbing Costs Down By Working With A Company That Arrives Prepared

By Bobby Bellini, *Varsity Plumbing and Heating, Inc.*



How prepared is your plumber when he arrives on the job? This question can have a big impact on how much you pay and how much inconvenience you experience. Recently, two different Resident Managers — one from a condo in Chelsea and one from a co-op on the Upper East Side — shared with me stories about plumbing jobs that should have been simple, but became long,

drawn-out fiascos that ended up wasting valuable time and costing much more than they should have. Why? Because, in the case of the first call, the plumbers showed up without the proper materials, even after an estimator had visited the property, looked over the project and priced out the job. In the case of the second call, the plumber who showed up to address a standard apartment leak didn't even have a service vehicle stocked with parts, and was forced to wait two and a half hours until the required repair materials were delivered to him by his office, at the co-op's expense.

Don't let this happen to you. There are many companies out there that offer low prices, but don't deliver. In some cases they don't even have service trucks with standard inventory driven to the job site for the serviceman to immediately draw the materials required for the repair. Also, many companies don't have the warehouse space necessary to store the parts they need, if and when their estimator's stock falls short. Both scenarios can add time and cost to any job, turning a low estimate into an overpriced and time-consuming endeavor.

At Varsity Plumbing and Heating, our headquarters in Flushing features a 28,000-square-foot office as well as an 8,000-square-foot parts warehouse with over a million dollars worth of inventory. This, along with our fleet of fully stocked trucks, allows us to service our clients at any time of day, without having to depend on suppliers.

Whenever we receive a call for proposal, we send out a trained estimator as quickly as possible. Our estimators take continuing education classes every year, and have years of on-the-job experience. After visiting the site, analyzing and diagnosing the problem, our estimator returns to the Varsity office with a full report, and writes up a detailed proposal. This proposal is reviewed by the estimator's supervisor, to make sure nothing has been left out. Then the proposal is sent over to the property's Super or Resident Manager, and if required, to the Managing Agent as well. If the proposal is accepted by the building, it is sent to our service manager and warehouse manager for scheduling and preparations, ensuring that all the parts needed for this particular job are in the warehouse prior to the job being scheduled. If materials are required, they are immediately brought in to ensure that we can complete the job as quickly and efficiently as possible. Once all the materials are in-house, the job is loaded onto the plumber's truck BEFORE he heads out to do the job. That is how it should be done, and it really is that simple.



Varsity Plumbing's fleet of trucks stand at the ready outside their 32,000 square foot of office and warehouse space at their Flushing, Queens headquarters.

In the case of the aforementioned properties, both plumbers arrived on the job without all of the required materials. In both cases, the Resident Managers, who had scheduled their staff and daily tasks around these plumbing repairs, had to juggle schedules and waste time waiting, along with the plumbers, for the proper materials to be delivered to the buildings so the jobs could be completed.

When the bills came in, both of these Resident Managers called the plumbing companies to complain, explaining that they should not be charged for the time the plumber was waiting around for parts, due to their own poor planning. They both had to waste more valuable time on the phone arguing their point.

Next time you have a plumbing problem, call someone who can provide a solution, in a prompt, efficient, cost-effective manner. Plumbing skills are only part of the equation when it comes to good service. Staff, storage, transportation and supplies are equally important. Be sure that your plumber arrives prepared so that your property can get the job done at the right price in the shortest amount of time.

About Varsity Plumbing and Heating, Inc.

Family owned and operated since 1962, Varsity provides a wide range of services to all kinds of properties, from co-ops and condos to rentals and commercial properties. Company President Robert J. Bellini serves as Past President of the Master Plumbers Council of the City of New York and is a member of the NYC Plumbing Licensing Board.

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