
Plumbers

Plumbers are specialty trades workers who work on sewage and water systems. They tend to be individually credentialed, but are often incorporated as small firms. There are general plumbing workers, and there are those with special areas of focus, such as septic and well installation and maintenance and sprinkler systems.

Common Qualifications

Many states have an apprentice system with separate licenses for apprentices, journeymen, and master plumbers. They often have experience and supervisory requirements.

Examples of License Titles

Every state regulates plumbing, often with multiple licenses per state. In the national occupational license database, there are 328 licenses coded to plumbing occupations, representing 50 states and territories. Of those, 43 states have a specific “Plumber” license. Two states issue licenses at the regional or municipal level and so are not included in our data. One requires a General Contractor license of Plumbers, so it’s not captured in this analysis. Three states require licenses but are missing as a separate license in our data source, either because they’re (likely incorrectly) included in a more general contractor license or as an oversight. Many states use an apprentice system, with 22 states issuing a specific “journeyman plumber” license. Sprinkler-system-related licenses exist in 14 states and 30 states have some kind of septic, underground storage, or excavation related plumbing license.

Most common license titles:

Master Plumber
Pump Installer
Septic Tank Installer

Outlier license title examples:

Certified Pipelayer
Certified Plumber & Gas Fitter Apprentice
Restricted Water and Service Line Installer

Examples of License Boards

Licenses are usually issued by a Plumbing Board. Tanks, Wells, and other underground storage may be in a water quality division and sprinkler systems may be regulated by the state Fire Marshal.

Most common board titles:

Board of Examiners of Master Plumbers
Board Examiners of Plumbing Heating & Fire Sprinkler Contractors
CONTRACTOR LICENSING BOARD

Outlier board title examples:

Drinking Water Services
Office of State Fire Marshal

ONET codes

For the most part, licensure is clearly associated with EMTs or Paramedics. Sometimes a license will cover both and should be assigned to both occupation codes, and sometimes licenses are more specific (Advanced EMT, EMT, BASIC INTRAVANOUS) and multiple licenses within the same state will be coded to each occupation. Emergency Medical Responders should be coded to 29-2042.00.

47-2152.00 Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters

Assemble, install, alter, and repair pipelines or pipe systems that carry water, steam, air, or other liquids or gases. May install heating and cooling equipment and mechanical control systems. Includes sprinkler fitters.

47-2151.00 Pipelayers

Lay pipe for storm or sanitation sewers, drains, and water mains. Perform any combination of the following tasks: grade trenches or culverts, position pipe, or seal joints.

47-5023.00 Earth Drillers, Except Oil and Gas

Operate a variety of drills such as rotary, churn, and pneumatic to tap subsurface water and salt deposits, to remove core samples during mineral exploration or soil testing, and to facilitate the use of explosives in mining or construction. Includes horizontal and earth boring machine operators.

Related Occupations

Sometimes there's some overlap in the boards or regulation with Heating, Venting and Air Conditioning (HVAC). For sprinkler systems in particular, there are some sales and monitoring services or occupations that can be related. General contracting also may cover plumbing.

Associated Certifications

Fluid Power Connector and Conductor
Internal Corrosion Technologist
Corrosion Specialist
Journey Level Pipefitter-Steamfitter
STAR Fire SprinklerFitter Mastery
STAR Plumber Mastery
STAR Steamfitting-Pipefitting Mastery
UPC Journeyman Plumber

Backflow Prevention Cross-Connection Control Surveyor Certification
Backflow Prevention Program Specialist/Administrator Certification
Residential Potable Water Fire Protection Certification
Rainwater Catchment Systems Certification
Hydronic Heating and Cooling Certification
Water-Based Fire Protection Certification
Backflow Prevention Assembly Repairer Certification
Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester Certification
Plumbing
IAPMO - UPC Residential and Commercial Inspector
Plumbing Plans Examiner
Service Plumbing Certification
Infection Control & Water Quality Certification
Plumbing Plans Examiner
Commercial Plumbing Inspector
Certified in Plumbing Design
Certified Plumbing Design Technician
Medical Gas Certification