

The Plumbing Rate Book Starter

Every line you could be charging for, and room for your numbers. 2026 edition.

You are standing in someone's bathroom with a torch in one hand. The quote you give in the next two minutes decides whether you get the job and whether it is worth having. This is the list of every line you could be charging for — fill in your own numbers once and you never have to do this maths on a wet floor again.

Why there are no prices printed in this document. We checked. Published 2026 figures for the same job disagree wildly — one national source puts a water heater replacement at \$800–\$1,500, another at \$1,494–\$3,891. Labour rates swing three-fold between a rural county and a metro. Any number we printed would be a guess wearing a suit, and you would be quoting real work off it. So the blanks are deliberate: the rates in this book should be *yours*, worked out once from the sheet on the next page.

How to use it

1. Work out your shop rate on the next page. Most people undercharge because they bill against their wage instead of their true cost.
2. Go through the checklist and fill in a rate for every line you actually offer. Cross out what you do not.
3. Keep it in the van. A rate you have to invent at the kerb is a rate you will regret.
4. When you are tired of copying it by hand, put it into QuoteFlow once and say the job out loud instead.

THE LINES PEOPLE FORGET TO CHARGE FOR

These are the ones that quietly come out of your margin:

- Trip charge on the second visit for parts
- Permit and inspection — charged through at cost plus your time to pull it
- Haul-away and disposal of the old unit
- Drywall and tile you had to open up, and who is closing it
- After-hours and weekend uplift, as a separate line so it is visible

Step 1 — Work out your shop rate

This is arithmetic, not opinion. Fill in the left, and the bottom line is the hourly rate you have to charge to keep the doors open and make the margin you intended.

A. Your target take-home pay for the year	
B. Payroll taxes, insurance, workers' comp, benefits (labour burden — commonly 20–35% on top of A)	
C. Annual overhead (van, fuel, tools, licence, phone, software, accountant, advertising, rent)	
D. Total cost to operate = A + B + C	
E. Billable hours a year (be honest — a 40-hour week is rarely more than 25 billable. 25 × 48 weeks = 1,200)	
F. Break-even hourly rate = D ÷ E	
G. Target net margin (if you want 20%, divide by 0.80 — do not just add 20%)	
Your shop rate = F ÷ (1 – G)	

The mistake this sheet exists to stop

Charging your hourly wage plus a bit. If you pay yourself \$40 an hour and bill \$60, you are not making 50% — after burden and overhead you are probably losing money on every hour, and the busier you get the faster it goes. Line E is where most people flatter themselves: unbilled hours spent quoting, driving, chasing parts and invoicing all have to be carried by the hours you do bill.

Step 2 — Your plumbing rate book

Fill in a rate for everything you offer. Add a unit so future-you knows whether it is per job, per hour, per foot or per square.

LABOUR

LINE ITEM	UNIT	YOUR RATE
Call-out and diagnosis		
Licensed plumber — per hour, standard		
Licensed plumber — per hour, after hours		
Licensed plumber — per hour, weekend / holiday		
Apprentice / second pair of hands — per hour		
Minimum charge (first hour)		

WATER HEATERS

LINE ITEM	UNIT	YOUR RATE
Replace tank water heater — 40 gal, gas		
Replace tank water heater — 50 gal, gas		
Replace tank water heater — electric		
Tankless — supply and install		
Expansion tank		
Pan, drain line and seismic strapping		
Haul away and dispose of old unit		

DRAINS AND WASTE

LINE ITEM	UNIT	YOUR RATE
Snake / cable a drain — accessible cleanout		
Snake / cable a drain — pull the toilet to access		
Hydro-jetting — per hour		
Camera inspection		
Replace P-trap / branch line		
Main line repair — per foot		

FIXTURES

LINE ITEM	UNIT	YOUR RATE
Toilet — supply and install		
Toilet — reset only (install customer’s unit)		
Kitchen faucet — supply and install		
Lavatory faucet — supply and install		
Garbage disposal		
Shower valve / cartridge replacement		
Sink and vanity install		

PIPE AND SUPPLY

LINE ITEM	UNIT	YOUR RATE
Repipe — per fixture		
Copper — per foot, installed		
PEX — per foot, installed		
Shut-off valve replacement		
Pressure regulator (PRV)		
Water softener install		
Leak detection		

CHARGES AND ADDERS

LINE ITEM	UNIT	YOUR RATE
Permit — cost passed through		
Permit — your time to pull and meet inspector		
Trip charge / fuel surcharge		
Wall or floor access and patch-ready close-up		
Warranty period offered (note the term, not a price)		

Tired of copying this into every quote?

That is the whole idea behind QuoteFlow. You enter this rate book once, then stand at the job and say what you are doing — “replace 40-gallon gas water heater, expansion tank, permit, four hours labour, haul away the old one” — and it comes back as priced line items from the rates on these pages. Nothing is generated or guessed; anything it does not recognise arrives flagged with no price, so a made-up number never reaches a customer. The customer signs on their phone before you leave.

First 10 quotes are free. No credit card. \$29/month flat after that — no per-quote or per-signature fees.

quoteflow.org/plumbing