

What is defined as plumbing?

Wisconsin Statutes, Chapter 145, state that: Plumbing means and includes:

“(a) All piping, fixtures, appliances, equipment, devices and appurtenances in connection with the water supply, water distribution and drainage systems, including hot water storage tanks, water softeners and water heaters connected with such water and drainage systems and also includes the installation thereof.

(b) The construction, connection or installation of any drain or waste piping system from the outside or proposed outside foundation walls of any building to the mains or other sewage system terminal within bounds of, or beneath an area subject to easement for highway purposes, including private sewage systems, and the alteration of any such systems, drains or waste piping.

(c) The water service piping from the outside or proposed outside foundation walls of any building to the main or other water utility service terminal within bounds of, or beneath an area subject easement for highway purposes and its connections.

(d) The water pressure system other than municipal systems as provided in ch. 281.

(e) A plumbing and drainage system so designed and vent piping so installed as to keep the air within the system in free circulation and movement; to prevent with a margin of safety unequal air pressures of such force as might blow, siphon or affect trap seals, or retard the discharge from plumbing fixtures, or permit sewer air to escape into the building; to prohibit cross-connection, contamination or pollution of the potable water supply and distribution systems; and to provide an adequate supply of water to properly serve, cleanse and operate all fixtures, equipment appurtenances and appliances served by the plumbing system.”

Penalties can be costly!



A state law was enacted in 2005 that added direct forfeiture to the plumbing license law penalties (See s. 145.12 (5), Wis. Stats.). Here’s a summary of the forfeitures:

Violation	Offense		
	1st	2nd	3rd
Plumbing without the right license No MP in charge	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$2,000
Plumbing without the right license MP in charge	\$ 100	\$ 500	\$1,000
MP allowing someone to use their license to obtain a permit, without the MP assuming responsibility	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$2,000
MP allowing another licensed plumber to install plumbing when the MP isn’t in charge	\$ 500	\$1,000	\$2,000
An MP allows an individual without the right license to install plumbing when the MP is in charge.	\$1,500	\$1,750	\$2,000
Offering to, or superintending plumbing	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$2,000

MP = Licensed Master Plumber

IT'S THE LAW



PLUMBING LICENSE LAWS IN WISCONSIN

A Safety and Buildings Division publication to help you understand legal limitations and penalties pertaining to plumbing.

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State Law, Ch. 145 says:

“(1)(a) No person may engage in or work at plumbing in the state unless licensed to do so by the department. A master plumber may work as a journeyman. No person may act as a plumbing apprentice or pipe layer unless registered with the department. (b) No public utility shall engage in or perform plumbing unless exempted by sub. (4)

(2) No person shall install plumbing unless at all times a licensed master plumber is in charge, who shall be responsible for proper installation. Licenses shall be issued only to individuals, and no license shall be issued to or in the name of any firm or corporation. No such license shall be transferable. It is unlawful for any licensed master plumber to allow the use of his or her license, directly or indirectly, for the purpose of obtaining local permits for others or to allow the use of his or her license by others to install plumbing work.

(3) Each member or employe of a partnership or limited liability company or each officer or employe of a corporation engaging in the business of superintending plumbing installations shall be required to apply for and obtain a master plumber's license before engaging in the work of superintending plumbing installations.” And. . .

“(4) This section shall not apply to:

(a) Plumbing work done by a property owner in a one-family building owned and occupied by him or her as his or her home or farm building, except where such license is required by local ordinance.

(b) Plumbing from the private water supply pump to and including the initial pressure tank and connection to an existing water distribution system, when installed by persons licensed under ch. 162.

(c) Installation of sewer and water service piping from the main to the property lot line, when installed by authorized municipal utility employes or sewer and water utility installers under a contract with a municipality.

(d) Making minor repairs to faucets, valves, pipes or appliances, repair or replacement of electrical or gas energy or other automatic valves or control devices or removing of stoppages in waste or drain pipes.

(e) Installation of sewer and water mains, as defined in ch. 144, when installed by sewer and water utility contractors and their employes.

(f) Installation, repair, or replacement of water service piping, from the property line to the meter, including meter installation, to service any building or structure or proposed building or structure when such installation, repair or replacement is accomplished by employes of a public municipal water utility, providing such utility regularly has engaged in such installation, repair or replacement for at least 5 years prior to January 1, 1964.”



Before you install plumbing in your home, you must live there.

A plumbing license is required to install plumbing in Wisconsin, except when the plumbing work is performed by a property owner in a one-family dwelling he or she occupies.

A local license may be required.

Farmers may install plumbing in their own buildings.

Remember to check with local plumbing officials for local requirements that may not allow for this exemption from the license requirement.

Check the Safety and Buildings Website for the Plumbing Consultant or

Wastewater Specialist nearest you:

<http://www.commerce.wi.gov/sb/SB-DivContacts.html>

You can install plumbing on your own property, if. . .

1. The plumbing is inside the building.
2. The work is in a one-family dwelling.
3. The home is your primary residence, not a cabin, summer home, rental property business, etc (primary residence is determined as the address where he or she claims permanent residency for voting and receipt of state or federal tax mailings, etc).
4. You occupy the home, so this exemption does not apply to new construction. There are code requirements for the installation of plumbing fixtures for a home connected to a sewer, including at least; one water closet (or substitute), one wash basin, one kitchen sink, one bathtub or shower and a water heater to meet the basic requirements of sanitation and personal hygiene.
5. The plumbing is in farm buildings, other than a new, one-family home, on property owned and occupied by the property owner, except where a license may be required by local ordinance.
6. Even in your own home, all plumbing installed meets the requirements of the Wisconsin Uniform Plumbing Code.

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