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Homeowner's Plumbing Diagnostic & DIY Checklist

A free homeowner guide from plumbing.id

Diagnose the Problem First

Slow or clogged drain

- ☐ Try a drain snake / auger before any chemical cleaner
- ☐ Check and clean the P-trap under the sink if accessible
- ☐ If it recurs quickly in the same spot, it may need a camera inspection

Running toilet

- ☐ Watch the flapper seal fully after a flush
- ☐ Check the fill valve float isn't stuck too high
- ☐ Replace the flapper or fill valve — both are inexpensive kits

Dripping faucet

- ☐ Shut off water under the sink before starting
- ☐ Identify your faucet type: compression, cartridge, ball, or ceramic disc
- ☐ Replace the matching worn washer or cartridge

DIY or Call a Licensed Plumber?

Usually safe to DIY

- ☐ Clearing a simple clog with a snake or plunger
- ☐ Replacing a toilet flapper or fill valve
- ☐ Swapping a faucet cartridge or washer
- ☐ Cleaning or replacing an aerator/showerhead

Call a licensed plumber for

- ☐ Anything involving gas lines or gas water heaters
- ☐ Work behind walls, under slabs, or on the main line
- ☐ Water heater electrical connections
- ☐ Repeated clogs that suggest a deeper line issue

Getting a Fair Quote

Before you agree to work

- ☐ Ask for the price confirmed in writing before work starts
- ☐ Ask if the quote is flat-rate or time-and-materials
- ☐ Confirm the plumber is licensed and insured in your state
- ☐ Get a second opinion for anything over a few hundred dollars

Ballpark ranges (national averages)

- ☐ Clogged drain: lower end of a standard service call
- ☐ Running toilet / faucet repair: usually the smallest jobs
- ☐ Pipe repair section: mid-range, varies with access
- ☐ Water heater replacement: the largest single line item

Still not sure what's wrong?

Run your symptoms through our free 60-second AI diagnostic tool at plumbing.id, or get matched with a licensed local plumber for a free, no-obligation quote.

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