CALGARY PLUMBING PRO

Hiring & Quotes

Choosing a Calgary plumber, what a written quote and contract should include, journeyperson certification, deposits and Alberta's prepaid contracting licence, WCB clearance, warranties and comparing quotes

4 Expert Answers from Plumbing IQ

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Q1

Is a verbal plumbing quote binding in Alberta?

A verbal quote does not give you the protection a written contract does in Alberta, and the gap between what was said on the phone and what shows up on the invoice is hard to settle without paper.

What Alberta law actually says

Under Alberta's Consumer Protection Act, any contract for home services worth $200 or more that is concluded at your home, or where a deposit is taken before all the work is done, must be in writing. The written contract must include the names and addresses of both parties, the date, a detailed description of the work and materials, itemized prices, the total with taxes, payment terms, start and completion dates, cancellation rights, and both signatures. A copy must be handed to you when you sign, or within ten days. If those requirements are not met, your right to cancel can extend up to a year after the contract was made, and a refund is due within fifteen days of cancelling.

A verbal agreement can still be a contract in a legal sense, but proving what was agreed is the problem. Without a written record, the price becomes your word against the plumber's.

The ten-day cancellation right runs from when you receive the written copy of a direct-sales or prepaid contract, which is one more reason to insist on one.

What this means in practice. If a plumber gives you a number over the phone and you let them start work without a written scope, you have very little leverage if the bill comes in higher.

Getting it in writing protects both sides. A proper written quote for a plumbing job in Calgary should include a fixed price or a clearly stated hourly rate plus call-out fee, the parts and equipment by make and model, whether the permit and inspection are included, who handles wall or floor patching after the work, removal and disposal of old equipment, a warranty on both parts and labour with the terms spelled out, and the scheduled start and completion dates.

Three checks belong before any signature: the plumber's trade certificate (journeyperson or registered apprentice under one), a WCB-Alberta clearance letter confirming their account is in good standing, and their Alberta prepaid contracting licence if any deposit changes hands before the job is finished.

If a contractor takes a deposit without a licence, or the written contract is missing required information, your cancellation window extends well beyond the standard ten days. If something goes wrong and you cannot resolve it directly, you can file a consumer complaint with Service Alberta.

Be wary of any written quote that reads "plus materials" or "plus any additional work required" without a cap or a change-order process written beside it.

Q2

Signed a plumbing contract in my Calgary home yesterday, can I cancel?

Yes, almost certainly. Alberta's Consumer Protection Act gives you **10 days to cancel** a direct-sales or prepaid contract, for any reason, counted from when you receive the written copy of the contract. That 10-day window starts the day you received that written copy, and yesterday's signing means you are well within it.

What the cancellation right covers

A contract signed at your home is a direct-sales contract, and a business that takes money before all the work is done is a prepaid contracting business that must hold an Alberta prepaid contracting licence issued by Service Alberta. If work has already started inside the 10 days, the business can charge a reasonable amount for it. If they do not hold one, your cancellation window can stretch to up to one year.

The same extended right applies if the written contract is missing required information. Under Alberta law, a proper prepaid contract must include the names and addresses of both parties and any salesperson, the date and place the contract was signed, a detailed description of the work and materials, itemized prices, the total price with taxes and payment terms, the start and completion dates, the cancellation rights, and both signatures. A copy must be given to you when you sign or within 10 days. If yours is missing any of those elements, the cancellation period extends beyond the standard 10 days.

To cancel, put your notice in writing and deliver it to the contractor. Keep a copy and note how and when you sent it. Once you cancel, the contractor must refund any deposit within 15 days.

Before you decide, it is worth checking a few things about the contract itself. Confirm the contractor's trade certificate (plumbing work for pay requires a certified journeyperson or a registered apprentice working under one, under Alberta's Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Education Act), their Alberta prepaid contracting licence through Service Alberta, and a WCB-Alberta clearance letter confirming their account is in good standing. If the work needs a permit, the City of Calgary issues plumbing permits, and the contract should say who is pulling it.

If you do decide to proceed rather than cancel, make sure the written contract spells out the full scope, a fixed price or the hourly rate and call-out fee, the equipment by model, who takes out the permit, whether wall or floor patching is included, disposal of old materials, and the warranty terms on both parts and labour in writing.

Hold onto the signed contract, any receipts, the permit and inspection records, and the warranty documentation once the job is complete.

Q3

What warranty should a Calgary plumber give on labour?

Labour warranties from Calgary plumbers are not set by provincial law, so what you get depends entirely on what the contractor offers and what you negotiate before signing. There is no standard length, so the term you get is the one written into the contract; compare it across quotes the same way you compare the price.

What a reasonable warranty looks like

A fair labour warranty covers the cost of returning to fix anything that fails because of how the work was done, not because of a separate problem that developed later. It should be written into the contract, not just mentioned verbally. Look for these specifics:

- The duration, stated clearly as a number of months or years from the date of final inspection, not from the quote date
- What it covers: labour to correct defective workmanship, and whether it includes any parts that fail as a result of that workmanship
- What it excludes: normal wear, damage caused by the homeowner, or failures traced to a pre-existing condition the plumber flagged before starting
- Who honours it: if the company changes hands or the individual plumber leaves, does the warranty travel with the business

Parts usually carry a separate manufacturer's warranty. A good contractor will tell you the model of any major component installed so you can register it yourself.

The written contract is where the warranty lives. Under Alberta's consumer protection rules, a contract signed at your home for $200 or more must be in writing and include the scope, price, payment terms, start and completion dates, and cancellation rights. A verbal promise about warranty is difficult to enforce; if it is not in the document, treat it as if it does not exist.

Before you sign, ask the plumber directly: what happens if the repair fails in six months? A confident tradesperson will answer without hesitation. If the answer is vague, that tells you something.

One other check worth doing: ask to see the plumber's trade certificate (journeyperson or registered apprentice under one, as required under Alberta's Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Education Act), an Alberta prepaid contracting licence if any deposit changes hands before the work is complete, and a WCB-Alberta clearance letter confirming their account is in good standing. A contractor who balks at any of those three is a contractor worth walking away from.

The City of Calgary issues plumbing permits here, and the permit and inspection process gives you an independent set of eyes on the work. A plumber who pulls the permit and passes the final inspection has already had the job checked against the National Plumbing Code of Canada 2020, which is a reasonable baseline for any warranty conversation.

If you are comparing two quotes, put the warranty terms side by side the same way you compare the price: duration, what is covered, and whether it is in writing.

Q4

A holdback on a big Calgary plumbing job, reasonable to ask?

Holding back a portion of payment until a big plumbing job is done and inspected is not just reasonable, it is one of the most practical protections a Calgary homeowner has. Bring it up before you sign, not after the crew shows up.

How a Holdback Works in Practice

No law sets a holdback amount for residential plumbing work, so the amount is something you agree in writing: enough that the final payment only goes out once the City of Calgary's final inspection passes and you have confirmed the work matches the agreed scope. On a whole-house Poly-B repipe that typically runs $10,000 to $13,000, or a sewer replacement that can reach $15,000 or more, that final payment is your leverage if something needs correcting.

If a contractor refuses any holdback on a large job, ask why before you sign.

Before you pay any deposit, check that the contractor holds an Alberta prepaid contracting licence through Service Alberta. Any business that takes money before all the work is finished must hold one. Also ask for a WCB-Alberta clearance letter confirming their account is in good standing; WCB-Alberta says anyone who hires a contractor without coverage could be responsible for unpaid premiums.

The written contract is where the holdback gets its teeth. Under Alberta's Consumer Protection Act, a prepaid contracting agreement of $200 or more signed at your home must be in writing and include the names and addresses of both parties, a detailed description of the work and materials, itemized prices, the total with taxes, payment terms, start and completion dates, and cancellation rights. You have 10 days from receiving that written copy to cancel for any reason. Keep a copy of everything.

For the permit side: the City of Calgary issues plumbing permits here, and starting work before the permit is issued doubles the permit fee. The City's final inspection is the natural release point for your holdback. Tying your final payment to that passed inspection means the contractor has a financial reason to book it promptly.

One more check worth doing: confirm that the plumber holds a valid Alberta trade certificate as a journeyperson plumber, or that any apprentices on site are working under one. The Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Education Act makes plumbing a compulsory certification trade, meaning paid work requires certification. Ask to see the certificate.

When you set two written quotes side by side, line up the permit (who pulls it and what it covers), the exact scope of patching and disposal, the equipment specified by model or specification, the warranty terms on both parts and labour, and where each payment falls relative to the inspection milestones.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Calgary Plumbing Pro. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local building authority (the City of Calgary or your own municipality) before starting any plumbing or gas project. Information is current as of November 15, 2026 and may change. Visit **calgaryplumbingpro.com** for the latest answers.