

The issue of plumbing licenses is one that staff is currently wrestling with. We feel it is imperative that the City require plumbing licenses. The primary enforcement mechanism that we have is to require the plumbers to show proof of insurance. This has dual benefits; one is that if there is harm done to a property owner, they can file a claim with the insurance company to offset the harm caused. The other benefit is that if a plumber has repeatedly had claims against them, the insurance companies will no longer cover them, which can help weed out some of the most egregious offenders.

We do feel that there is more that we could do to try to vet our plumbers, and have discussed requiring proof of certification through the ICC or UPC codes. However, that is very challenging, as many plumbers passed those tests years ago and no longer have proof that they passed. While this could help weed out some of the plumbers who do substandard work, it could also prevent some very qualified plumbers from being able to do business in the City. One thing that could help is if we were to establish some sort of requirement for continuous insurance coverage, as some of the plumbers who are the most unqualified tend to be issued liability insurance for a specific project and then cancel that bond as soon as it is done. The more qualified plumbers keep their bonding year-round. It may also be beneficial to require some continuing education, as technologies change. At the time many of our plumbers tested for their licenses, there were no high-efficiency furnaces, etc. and it would be beneficial for them to be required to learn how to work with these types of installations.