
HomeFixRadar
2026 EDITION
THE HOMEOWNER'S FIELD GUIDE
What's wrong, and who fixes it?
Leaks, clogs, no heat, roof leaks, gutters, pests and more: the signs, the first steps and the right kind of pro.
Burst or leaking pipe
Clogged drain or sewer backup
No hot water or leaking water heater
Water damage and flooding
Mold after a leak
No heat or no cooling
FIND THE RIGHT PRO
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WELCOME

Keep this guide where you can find it fast

Problems at home rarely wait for a good moment. This guide helps you recognize what's going on, decide how fast to act and know what to do in the first few minutes.

1. **Start with the sign.** The "Start with what you see" page matches what you see to the likely problem.
2. **Check the urgency.** Every problem carries a color: ● Call today, ● Call this week, ● Not urgent.
3. **Do the first steps.** Each problem lists what to do right now, while you call.

⚠ **Safety first.** If anyone is hurt or in danger, call 911.

ONE CALL CONNECTS YOU WITH AN INDEPENDENT LOCAL COMPANY

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WHO TO CALL

One line for each kind of pro

Each number connects you with an independent local company for that trade.

Plumbing	**(833) 835-1569**
Water Damage	**(844) 990-0433**
Roofing	**(888) 261-1486**
Heating & Cooling	**(844) 511-3573**
Gutters	**(844) 962-8381**
Pest Control	**(855) 424-9709**
Bathroom	**(844) 509-2229**

Not sure which? Find your problem in this guide; each page shows the right kind of pro.

AT A GLANCE

How urgent is it?

A quick way to sort the problem in front of you.

Call today

- Burst or leaking pipe
- Water damage and flooding
- No heat or no cooling
- Roof leak or storm damage

Call this week

- Clogged drain or sewer backup
- No hot water or leaking water heater
- Mold after a leak
- Bugs or rodents

Not urgent

- Overflowing or sagging gutters
- Bathroom that needs an upgrade

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START HERE

Start with what you see

Find your symptom, then jump to the problem and the pro who handles it.

WHAT YOU NOTICE	MOST LIKELY	PAGE
Water spraying from a pipe	**Plumber**	7
Several drains backing up	**Plumber**	9
No hot water	**Plumber**	11
Water on floors after a leak	**Water damage company**	13
Musty smell after a leak	**Water damage company**	15
Furnace blowing cold	**Heating and cooling**	17
Stain on the top-floor ceiling	**Roofer**	19
Water spilling over gutters	**Gutter pro**	21
Droppings in the kitchen	**Pest control**	23
Hard to step into the tub	**Bathroom remodeler**	25



01 CALL TODAY

PROBLEM 1 OF 10

Burst or leaking pipe

WHO FIXES IT
A plumber

THEN
Water damage company if things got soaked

How to recognize it

Water spraying, pouring or dripping from a pipe, often after a hard freeze.

Prevent it next time

- Insulate exposed pipes.
- Know your main shut-off.
- Drip faucets on the coldest nights.

First move

Shut the main water valve, then call a plumber.

Signs to look for

- Water spraying from a pipe
- Sudden pressure drop
- Frost on pipes
- Ceiling dripping below a bathroom

Do this now

1. Shut the main water valve.
2. Turn off power to wet rooms.
3. Photograph the damage.

What the pro will do

1. The plumber repairs the pipe.
2. A water damage company dries what got wet.
3. Both check for hidden moisture.

Call a plumber now.

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02 CALL THIS WEEK

PROBLEM 2 OF 10

Clogged drain or sewer backup

ONE DRAIN	SEVERAL DRAINS
Local clog	**Main sewer line**

How to recognize it

Slow or standing water in a sink or tub; several drains backing up together means the main line.

Prevent it next time

- Use drain strainers.
- Keep grease out of drains.
- Flush only toilet paper.

First move

Stop using water if more than one drain is affected.

Signs to look for

- Slow drain
- Gurgling
- Sewage smell
- Floor drain backing up

Do this now

1. Stop using affected drains.
2. Skip chemical drain openers.
3. Note which drains backed up first.

What the pro will do

1. Clears the line with a cable or jetting.
2. Inspects the main line by camera if needed.
3. Explains repairs for roots or breaks.

> Call this week; today if sewage is backing up.

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03 CALL THIS WEEK

PROBLEM 3 OF 10

No hot water or leaking water heater

WHO FIXES IT	LEAKING TANK
A plumber	**Same-day problem**

How to recognize it

No or little hot water, rusty water, rumbling noises or a puddle at the base.

Prevent it next time

- Flush the tank yearly.
- Check around the tank monthly.
- Note its install year.

First move

If it's leaking, shut the cold supply and power or gas.

Signs to look for

- No hot water
- Rusty water
- Rumbling
- Puddle at the base

Do this now

1. Shut the cold supply if leaking.
2. Turn off power or gas.
3. Check the breaker or pilot.

What the pro will do

1. Diagnoses heating parts or leaks.
2. Repairs or replaces the heater.
3. Tests the relief valve.

> Call this week; today if the tank is leaking.

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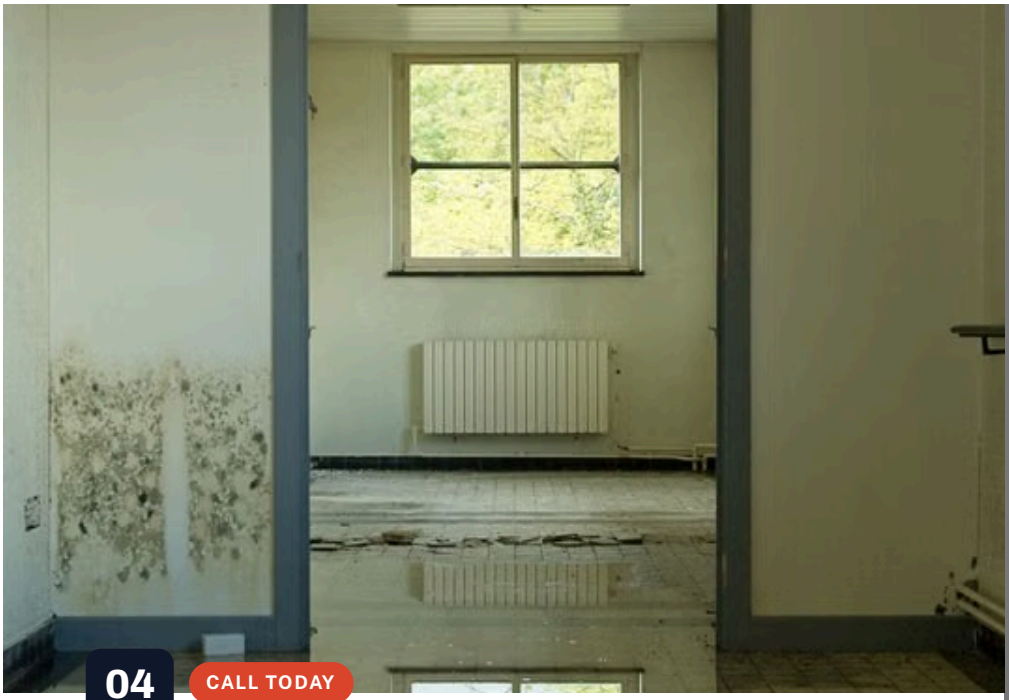

04 CALL TODAY

PROBLEM 4 OF 10

Water damage and flooding

WHO FIXES IT
A water damage restoration company

MOLD WINDOW
24 to 48 hours

How to recognize it

Standing water, soaked carpet, wet drywall or stains after a leak, storm or backup.

Prevent it next time

- Fix leaks the day you find them.
- Test the sump pump twice a year.
- Point downspouts away from the house.

First move

Stop the water, make the area electrically safe and call.

Signs to look for

- Standing water
- Wet carpet or drywall
- Waterlines on walls
- Ceiling stains

Do this now

1. Stop the water source.
2. Stay out of water near outlets.
3. Photograph everything.

What the pro will do

1. Removes water fast.
2. Measures moisture in walls and floors.
3. Dries the house and checks daily.

Call today. Fast drying prevents mold.

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05 CALL THIS WEEK

PROBLEM 5 OF 10

Mold after a leak

WHO FIXES IT
A water damage or mold company

CLUE
Musty smell

How to recognize it

Dark spots, a musty smell, or spots that return after cleaning, often near a past leak.

Prevent it next time

- Keep humidity under 50 percent.
- Run bath fans.
- Dry leaks within 24 to 48 hours.

First move

Find and stop the moisture source.

Signs to look for

- Dark or fuzzy spots
- Musty smell
- Peeling paint near damp areas
- Spots that come back

Do this now

1. Don't scrub large areas.
2. Keep the room closed.
3. Fix the moisture source.

What the pro will do

1. Contains the area.
2. Removes or cleans affected materials.
3. Helps fix the moisture source.

> Call this week.

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06 CALL TODAY

PROBLEM 6 OF 10

No heat or no cooling

WHO FIXES IT	CHECK FIRST
A heating and cooling company	**Thermostat, breaker, filter**

How to recognize it

The furnace or AC won't start, blows the wrong temperature or keeps shutting off.

Prevent it next time

- Change the filter regularly.
- Book seasonal tune-ups.
- Keep vents clear.

First move

Check the thermostat, breaker and filter before calling.

Signs to look for

- Cold or warm air from vents
- System won't start
- Short cycling
- Strange noises

Do this now

1. Check thermostat mode and batteries.
2. Check the breaker.
3. Replace a dirty filter.

What the pro will do

1. Diagnoses the furnace, heat pump or AC.
2. Repairs the failed part.
3. Tests the system before leaving.

> Call today in extreme weather.

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07 CALL TODAY

PROBLEM 7 OF 10

Roof leak or storm damage

WHO FIXES IT	SHOWS UP
A roofing company	**Top-floor ceilings**

How to recognize it

Ceiling stains that grow after rain, missing shingles or dents after hail.

Prevent it next time

- Check ceilings after heavy rain.
- Look in the attic twice a year.
- Trim branches near the roof.

First move

Bucket under drips, stay off the roof, photograph from the ground.

Signs to look for

- Ceiling stains after rain
- Missing shingles
- Granules on the ground
- Wet attic insulation

Do this now

1. Bucket under the drip.
2. Stay off the roof.
3. Photograph damage.

What the pro will do

1. Finds the leak.
2. Tarps the roof if needed.
3. Repairs shingles or flashing.

Call today if it's leaking.

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08 NOT URGENT

PROBLEM 8 OF 10

Overflowing or sagging gutters

WHO FIXES IT
A gutter company

RISK
Wet basement, rotted fascia

How to recognize it

Water spilling over the edge, gutters dipping or pulling away, or puddles at the foundation.

Prevent it next time

- Clean gutters each fall and spring.
- Keep downspout extensions on.
- Trim overhanging branches.

First move

Watch it in the rain and photograph from the ground.

Signs to look for

- Water over the edge
- Sagging runs
- Puddles by the foundation
- Plants in gutters

Do this now

1. Stay off ladders in bad weather.
2. Add a downspout extension.
3. Photograph from the yard.

What the pro will do

1. Cleans, repairs or replaces gutters.
2. Fixes slope and hangers.
3. Moves water away from the foundation.

Not urgent unless water reaches the basement.

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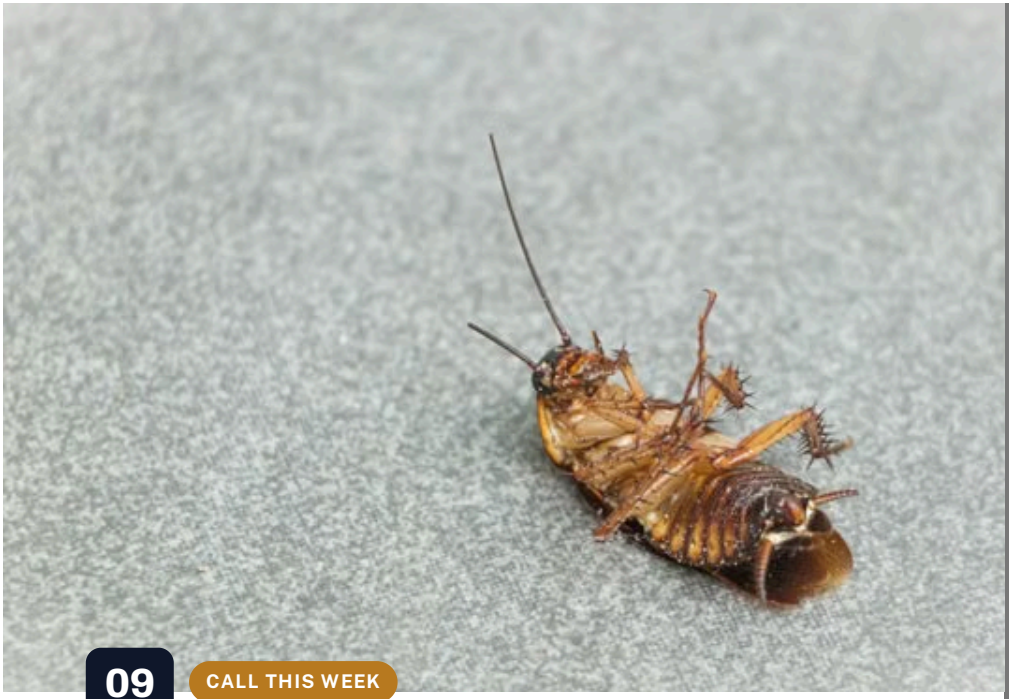

09 CALL THIS WEEK

PROBLEM 9 OF 10

Bugs or rodents

WHO FIXES IT
A pest control company

NOTE
Insects and rodents, not wildlife

How to recognize it

Droppings, ant trails, roaches at night, bites or nests.

Prevent it next time

- Seal gaps around pipes and doors.
- Store food sealed.
- Tip out standing water.

First move

Seal food, keep kids and pets away from nests and droppings.

Signs to look for

- Droppings
- Ant trails
- Roaches at night
- Wasp nests

Do this now

1. Seal food.
2. Don't spray nests.
3. Keep kids and pets away.

What the pro will do

1. Identifies the pest.
2. Treats active areas.
3. Shows you entry points to seal.

> Call this week; today for wasp nests by doors.

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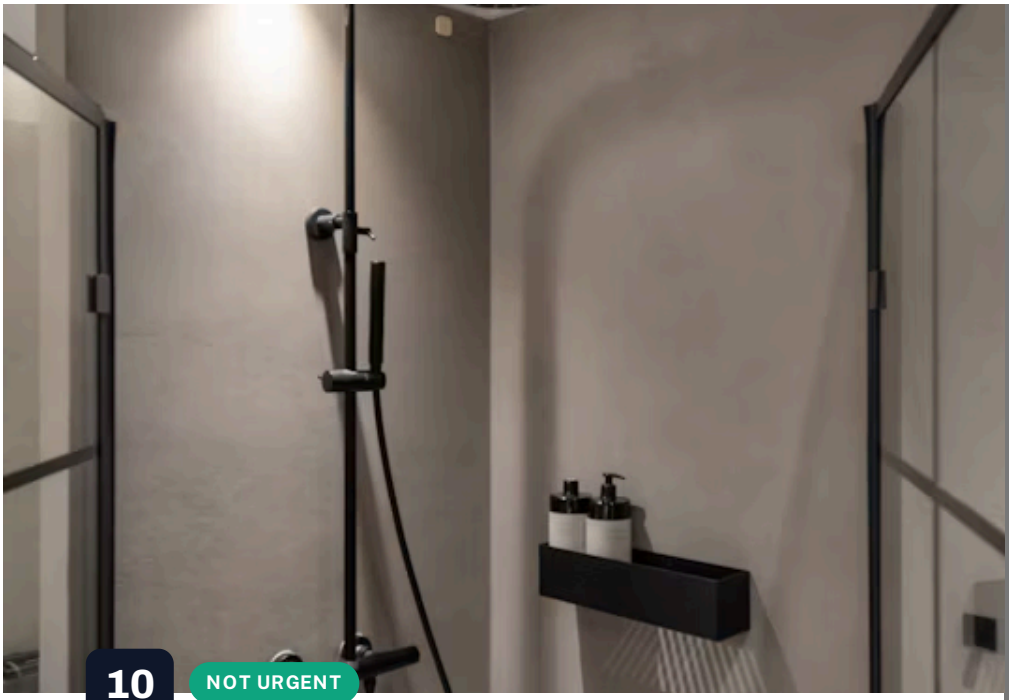

10 NOT URGENT

PROBLEM 10 OF 10

Bathroom that needs an upgrade

WHO FIXES IT
A bathroom remodeler

POPULAR
Tub-to-shower conversions

How to recognize it

A hard-to-step-into tub, failing grout, recurring mold or a soft floor.

Prevent it next time

- Run the fan every shower.
- Recaulk cracked corners.
- Use a non-slip mat.

First move

Photograph and measure the room.

Signs to look for

- Hard to step into the tub
- Cracked grout
- Recurring mold
- Soft floor by the toilet

Do this now

1. Use a non-slip mat.
2. Measure the space.
3. Photograph problem areas.

What the pro will do

1. Measures the room.
2. Installs a step-in shower or new vanity.
3. Adds safety features you choose.

When you're ready, sooner after a fall or leak.

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SIDE BY SIDE

Who do I call?

The most common mix-up after a leak.

Plumber or water damage company?

	Plumber	Water damage company
JOB	Stops and repairs the leak	Removes water and dries the house
CALL WHEN	Pipe, fixture or drain problem	Floors, walls or ceilings got wet
ORDER	First, to stop the source	Right after, to prevent mold
SOMETIMES	Both are needed	Both are needed

Still not sure? Describe what you see on the phone and a local pro can tell you which it is.

HOW TO

Before you call

Take photos

Photograph the problem before you touch anything.

Know your shut-offs

Find the main water valve and the electrical panel now.

Make it safe

Water near electricity, a gas smell or smoke: get out and call 911.

Note the pattern

When it started, what makes it worse and what you've tried.

Watch the clock

Water damage and no heat in a freeze can't wait.

Call the right pro

Each line on this guide goes to the matching kind of company.

FILL THIS IN TODAY

My home at a glance

Five minutes now spares you a scramble later. Keep this page with the guide.

Main water shut-off is located:

Electrical panel is located:

Gas shut-off is located:

Water heater and furnace ages:

Roof age:

Pros we've used before:

Notes:

THROUGH THE YEAR

Your home through the year

A few minutes each season heads off the most common problems.

Winter

- Protect pipes from freezing.
- Change furnace filters.
- Watch for ice along the roof.
- Test CO alarms.

Spring

- Test the sump pump.
- Clean gutters.
- Book an AC tune-up.
- Check the roof after storms.

Summer

- Change AC filters monthly.
- Tip out standing water.
- Check washer hoses.
- Watch for pests around the house.

Fall

- Clean gutters after leaves fall.
- Book a heating tune-up.
- Drain garden hoses.
- Seal gaps before mice move in.

QUESTIONS

Home problem questions

Who do I call for a water leak?

A plumber to stop and repair the leak, then a water damage company if floors, walls or ceilings got wet.

Who fixes a ceiling stain?

If it appears after rain, a roofer. If it's under a bathroom, a plumber. If the ceiling is soaked, a water damage company too.

Who do I call when the furnace stops working?

A heating and cooling company. Check the thermostat, breaker and filter first.

Who handles mold after a leak?

A water damage or mold remediation company, after the leak is fixed.

Who fixes overflowing gutters?

A gutter company can clean, repair or replace them.

Who do I call for mice or roaches?

A pest control company. For raccoons, squirrels or bats, you'd need a wildlife service instead.

QUESTIONS

Home problem questions (continued)

What home problems are emergencies?

Burst pipes, sewage backups, no heat in freezing weather, active roof leaks, gas smells and CO alarms.

What should I do first in a home emergency?

Make it safe: shut off water, cut power to wet areas, and leave for gas smells or CO alarms.

Can I wait to fix a slow drain?

Usually, if it's one drain. Several slow drains at once point to the main line and shouldn't wait.

Who installs a walk-in shower?

A bathroom remodeler.

How do I know if I need a plumber or a handyman?

Anything involving pipes, drains, water heaters or gas is a plumber's job.

Do I need a roofer after a hailstorm?

It's smart to get an inspection after hail, even if nothing is leaking yet.

CUT OUT AND KEEP

When something goes wrong

1. Water leak? Shut the main water valve.
2. Water near electricity? Stay out and cut power from a dry spot.
3. Gas smell or CO alarm? Get out and call 911.
4. No heat in a freeze? Open sink cabinets and drip faucets.
5. Photograph the problem.
6. Call the right pro using the lines in this guide.

KEEP THIS NUMBER IN YOUR PHONE

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Scan for the online guide

with the 60-second problem finder and more answers.

homefixradar.com/home-problem-guide/

KEEP HANDY

Important numbers

Fill these in now, so you're not searching when something goes wrong.

Emergency: 911

Gas utility emergency line

Water utility

Electric utility

Plumber

Neighbor with a spare key

Policy number for your home

YOUR LOCAL PRO LINE

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

HomeFixRadar

HomeFixRadar helps homeowners figure out what's wrong and connects them with independent local pros for plumbing, water damage, heating and cooling, roofing, gutters, pest control and bathrooms.

How we're paid

HomeFixRadar is a referral service. Homeowners don't pay us. Independent local companies in our network pay us when we connect them with homeowners who call. We don't perform the work, and any work, timing and terms are agreed directly between you and the company.

Important

This guide is general information, not advice for your specific home. Every home is different. In an emergency, or if anyone is in danger, call 911 first. Before you hire anyone, confirm they hold the credentials required for the work in your area. Same-day service is subject to availability. Calls may be recorded for quality purposes.

Photos

Photographs are stock images from Pexels and Unsplash, used under each site's terms, to illustrate common problems. They don't show specific companies, jobs or customers. Any people shown are models.

What's wrong, and who fixes it?
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WHEN YOU NEED HELP

One call to a local pro

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