HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE

Repiping Your Home

Everything You Need to Know Before Making This Critical Investment

Andrus Plumbing & Heating

2026 Edition

Is Your Home's Plumbing Sending You Warning Signs?



The pipes hidden behind your walls are easy to forget—until something goes wrong. Most homeowners don't think about their plumbing system until they're mopping up water from a burst pipe or dealing with discolored water trickling from their faucets. But your home's pipes don't last forever, and ignoring the warning signs of aging plumbing can lead to catastrophic failures and significant disruption to your daily life.

Repiping an entire home is one of the most significant plumbing investments you'll ever make. It's a decision that shouldn't be taken lightly, but it also shouldn't be postponed when your pipes have reached the end of their useful life. The difference between proactive repiping and emergency replacement can mean thousands of dollars and the difference between a planned project and a plumbing nightmare.

This guide will walk you through everything you need to know about home repiping. You'll learn how to identify the warning signs that indicate it's time for new pipes, understand the different materials available and their respective advantages, and discover what the repiping process actually entails from start to finish.

We'll help you understand the factors that influence project scope and complexity, prepare you for what to expect during the work, and provide you with the knowledge to make informed decisions about your home's plumbing infrastructure. Whether your home was built decades ago with outdated materials or you're experiencing recurring problems, this guide will give you the clarity and confidence to move forward.

By the end of this ebook, you'll be equipped with professional insights to determine whether repiping is necessary, what questions to ask contractors, and how to ensure the project is completed to the highest standards. Your home's plumbing is too important to leave to chance—let's explore everything you need to know.

Understanding When Your Home Needs Repiping

The Age Factor

The age of your plumbing system is one of the most important considerations. Homes built before 1970 often contain galvanized steel pipes with a lifespan of 40–50 years. If your home is in this age range and still has original plumbing, you're on borrowed time. Polybutylene pipes, popular in the 1980s and 1990s, are known to fail prematurely and should be replaced. Even copper pipes, while more durable, eventually corrode from the inside out after 50–70 years.

Visible Warning Signs

Several clear indicators suggest your pipes are failing. Discolored water—particularly brown or rusty—indicates corrosion inside your pipes. Frequent leaks in multiple locations suggest systemic failure rather than isolated problems. Low water pressure throughout your home often indicates buildup inside aging pipes restricting flow. Visible corrosion on exposed pipes is a clear sign that unseen pipes are likely in similar or worse condition.

The Problem With Patchwork Repairs

Many homeowners attempt to extend their plumbing system's life through repeated repairs. While fixing individual leaks might seem economical, this approach becomes expensive and frustrating when you're calling a plumber every few months. More importantly, each leak is a symptom of overall pipe deterioration—fixing one doesn't prevent the next from appearing. At some point, continued patchwork repairs cost more than a full replacement would have.

KEY INSIGHT

If you're experiencing multiple plumbing issues within a year or two, or if more than one plumber has suggested repiping, it's time to seriously consider complete replacement. Delaying this decision typically results in more emergency repairs and potentially severe water damage that far exceeds the investment in new pipes.

Exploring Your Pipe Material Options

Choosing the right pipe material for your repipe project is one of the most important decisions you'll make. Today's options offer significant advantages over older materials, and understanding the differences will help you select the best solution for your home's specific needs and conditions.

Copper: The Proven Standard

Copper remains the gold standard for residential plumbing, trusted for over a century. Its advantages include:

- Extremely long lifespan of 50–70+ years with proper installation
- Natural resistance to bacteria growth
- Handles both hot and cold water without degradation
- Proven track record in millions of homes
- Recyclable and environmentally friendly

PEX: The Modern Alternative

Cross-linked polyethylene (PEX) has become increasingly popular due to its flexibility and ease of installation. Key benefits include:

- Resistant to scale and chlorine, won't corrode or develop pinhole leaks
- Flexible tubing reduces the number of connections needed
- Expands slightly, making it more freeze-resistant than rigid pipes
- Faster installation typically reduces overall labor time
- Color-coded for easy identification of hot and cold water lines

CPVC: The Budget-Conscious Option

Chlorinated polyvinyl chloride (CPVC) offers another plastic alternative at a lower price point. While less expensive than copper or PEX, it's more rigid than PEX and requires more fittings throughout the system. It's a viable option for straightforward plumbing layouts but may not be the best choice for homes in extreme climates or with complex configurations.

KEY INSIGHT

Don't make your material decision based solely on initial cost. The right choice depends on your water chemistry, local building codes, budget, and long-term plans for the home. A professional assessment of your specific situation will help identify the optimal material for your needs.

What Factors Influence Your Repiping Project

Home Size and Layout

The square footage of your home directly impacts the amount of piping needed. A 1,500-square-foot home requires significantly less material and labor than a 3,000-square-foot home. But size isn't the only consideration—your home's layout matters tremendously. A single-story home with a straightforward layout is simpler to repipe than a multi-story home with complex plumbing runs. Homes with multiple bathrooms, especially on different floors, require more extensive planning and work.

Accessibility Challenges

The accessibility of your existing pipes significantly influences the project. Pipes hidden behind finished walls require more careful work and wall repair afterward. Homes with crawl spaces or unfinished basements allow easier access to main lines. Slab foundations present unique challenges when supply lines run through concrete, and older homes with lath-and-plaster walls require more delicate handling than modern drywall construction.

Scope Decisions: Full vs. Partial Repipe

You'll need to decide whether to repipe your entire home or specific sections. A complete repipe replaces all water supply lines throughout the house, ensuring uniformity and eliminating weak points. Partial repiping addresses specific problem areas but may leave older pipes that could fail later. Some homeowners choose to repipe in phases, though this approach can sometimes cost more overall than completing everything at once.

Fixture and Connection Considerations

When repiping, it's also worth evaluating your fixtures, shutoff valves, and water heater connections. Older shutoff valves often fail when exercised after years of inactivity. Replacing these components during repiping—while walls are already open—is far more economical than returning later to address them individually as they begin to fail over time.

KEY INSIGHT

While it's tempting to save money with a partial repipe, this approach often leads to regret. If a significant portion of your plumbing is near the end of its lifespan, completing a full repipe now saves you from disruption and additional expense. The incremental difference is often modest compared to the value of entirely new plumbing.

The Repiping Process: What Actually Happens

Understanding what happens during a repipe project helps you prepare your home and family for the work ahead. While every project has unique aspects, the general process follows a predictable and well-organized pattern that experienced contractors execute efficiently.

Initial Assessment and Planning

The process begins with a thorough evaluation of your existing plumbing system. A professional plumber will inspect accessible pipes and assess water pressure and quality. During this phase, you'll discuss material choices and establish your budget.

- Identify the full scope of work and pipe routing
- Discuss fixture replacements and upgrade opportunities
- Review material options suited to your home
- Establish a realistic project timeline and schedule

The Work Begins

On day one, the plumbing team will protect your home with drop cloths and establish work areas. They'll shut off your main water supply and begin systematically removing old pipes. Strategic access points are created in walls and ceilings where necessary. The team installs new pipes following the planned routes, working efficiently to minimize disruption. Water is typically restored each evening so your household maintains basic functionality throughout the project duration.

Testing, Inspection, and Finishing

After installation, the entire system undergoes pressure testing to verify there are no leaks or weak connections. The work must pass local building code inspections before walls are closed up. Once approved, drywall repairs are completed and painted to match your existing finishes. A thorough cleanup and final walkthrough ensures everything meets expectations before the project is considered complete and handed back to you.

KEY INSIGHT

Choose a plumbing company that handles the entire process, including wall repairs and finish work. Working with a single contractor who takes responsibility for the complete project provides accountability and ensures seamless coordination between all phases of the work.

Avoiding Common Mistakes and Ensuring Success

Don't Delay Until Emergency Strikes

The biggest mistake homeowners make is waiting too long to address obvious plumbing problems. Emergency repiping during a crisis means making rushed decisions without proper planning or competitive quotes. You'll have less control over timing, potentially face higher prices, and deal with water damage remediation on top of the repiping work itself. When you recognize the warning signs—discolored water, recurring leaks, low pressure—act proactively while you still have time to plan properly and choose the right contractor at the right time.

Choose Your Contractor Carefully and Thoroughly

Not all plumbers are equally qualified for whole-house repiping. Look for contractors with specific repiping experience, proper licensing and insurance, verifiable references from similar projects, and written warranties on both materials and labor. Be wary of unusually low quotes—they often indicate shortcuts or hidden costs that emerge later in the project. A reputable company will be transparent about their process, timeline, and what is included in their written proposal from the very start.

Plan for the Disruption in Advance

Many homeowners underestimate how disruptive repiping can be. Make arrangements for your daily routine, including alternative water sources for drinking and cooking. Plan for meal preparation without running water during work hours, and consider whether staying elsewhere might be appropriate if you have infants or specific health concerns. Clear the work areas of valuables and personal items before the crew arrives on the first day. Understanding the timeline and communicating openly with your contractor makes the entire process smoother for everyone involved.

KEY INSIGHT

The lowest quote isn't always the best value. A reputable contractor who provides comprehensive service, stands behind their work, and communicates clearly throughout the project delivers far more value than a bargain-priced service that cuts corners or leaves you managing multiple subcontractors for repairs and finishing work.

Taking Action to Protect Your Home's Future

Your home's plumbing system is a critical infrastructure that directly impacts your comfort, safety, and property value. While repiping represents a significant investment, it pays dividends through reliable water delivery, protection from water damage, improved water quality, and peace of mind for decades to come.

Now that you understand when repiping is necessary, what materials are available, and what the process entails, you're prepared to take action. Aging pipes don't improve with time—they only deteriorate further until failure occurs. Taking action now, on your terms and your timeline, is always preferable to reacting in crisis mode when damage has already been done and your options are limited. Here's how to move forward with confidence:

Your Next Steps

1. Assess your current situation—evaluate your home's age, water quality, and any ongoing plumbing problems.
2. Schedule a professional evaluation if you're experiencing warning signs.
3. Get multiple detailed quotes from qualified contractors, comparing scope, materials, and warranties.
4. Plan the timing strategically during a period that minimizes family disruption.
5. Prepare your home and family with realistic expectations about temporary inconvenience.

The decision to repipe your home isn't one to take lightly, but it's also not one to postpone indefinitely when the need is clear. Taking action now, on your terms, is always preferable to reacting under pressure. A well-executed repipe gives you decades of reliable, worry-free plumbing—and that peace of mind is invaluable for any homeowner who wants to protect their most important investment.

Ready to Explore Your Options? Contact Andrus Plumbing & Heating

Andrus Plumbing & Heating has helped countless homeowners successfully navigate the repiping process. Our experienced team can assess your home's specific needs, explain your options clearly, and complete the work with minimal disruption and maximum quality. **Schedule your comprehensive plumbing evaluation today and get honest answers, detailed recommendations, and a clear path forward.**

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