

DIY?

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS THWAITES

You may end up wishing you'd called the plumbing professionals

The cottage has always been a place for do-it-yourselfers, a spot to pull out the tool box and tackle odd jobs.

That's fine for some tasks, but there are definitely areas for weekend warriors to avoid. Plumbing is chief among them.

"We see it all the time," says Marc Benoit. "Someone decides to do their own plumbing, gets in over their head, and needs to be bailed out."

Professional training

Marc's company, Plumbtech Plumbing, employs a team of highly-trained plumbers, apprentices and support workers who work throughout the region.

"A plumbing apprenticeship takes 9,000 hours of study and on-the-job training," Marc notes. "I'm always amazed that people think they can replace that by watching YouTube videos."

Do-it-yourselfers run into all kinds of problems. "The most common scenario is that they start a job and find it's bigger

than they expected," Marc says. "They take the faucet apart to replace a washer, and then find out that the valve is leaking, the pipes are corroded, and the new parts don't fit."

Another common woe is discovering that a job needs a small part that isn't available locally... or can't be purchased because it's Saturday evening and stores are closed. "That's why our crews travel in trucks that are packed with gear: they're equipped for almost anything," Marc says. And, he adds, Plumbtech offers service calls around the clock.

Don't settle for 'good enough'

The biggest problems seem to strike the do-it-yourselfer who never calls for help and just puts up with an inadequate repair.

Something as simple as tightening a fitting too hard or seating a toilet improperly can lead to slow, hidden leaks – a major cause of mold and other building damage.

Even if the home repair job solves the problem, there's a good chance it won't be the

ideal solution. "This field is constantly changing," Marc explains. "There are new products and techniques coming along all the time."

Some of these use tools a do-it-yourselfer doesn't have, like drain cameras or GPS locators to find underground pipes.

The pros can also find ways to conserve energy, reduce water use, or just provide a better shower or a more efficient kitchen.

"If you're renovating the kitchen or bath, we can guide you through the options for your space, and quite possibly show you alternatives you wouldn't have considered," says Marc. "That might mean a fixture that uses less hot water, or a creative way of placing the shower."

It can be an improvement over your original plans, and may save you money.

And it will leave you more weekend time for more enjoyable things. **DS**

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