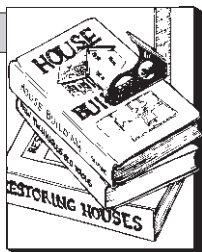


Plumber's Reference

Plumbers Handbook, by Howard Massey; Craftsman Book Co., Carlsbad, Calif.; 1985; \$16.75, paperback.



A handbook should be concise, portable, and focused. Although the *Plumbers Handbook* is quite portable—weighing a mere 1 1/4 pounds—it's too big to tuck into your breast pocket while working. It's also concise—too concise in most cases to make it very useful as an everyday trade reference.

There is a great deal of useful information packed into this "handbook's" pages but it suffers from poor organization, sloppy editing, lack of photos, and failure to adequately cover the basics. *Plumbers Handbook* does offer tables of trap/drain sizes, recommended fall per foot, maximum fixture sizes, vent sizes and lengths, and instructions on properly backfilling under cast iron hubs. There's a table of regulations for various DWV materials, specs for clearances in trenches, underfootings, and placement of pipe supports. Rough-in dimensions for various fixtures are given in a (rare) illustration with adequate captions.

Apparently the author's main purpose is to help plumbers understand the code and prepare for their licensing exam. He repeatedly refers to the plumbing code, but doesn't cite specific sections. The section on venting begins without first telling how a trap works or how a vent prevents trap siphoning. Abbreviations are given in an appendix, which I discovered by accident while attempting to track down the meaning of a mysterious "Vtr" label on an isometric drawing. Massey tells us that pipe that can leave toxic materials in water can't be used for supply lines, but doesn't give any examples of what these might be. And what about lead in solder?

In an ultra-concise nine-page chapter on hot water systems, a full page is devoted to an exposition on water heater drain pans! Later Massey informs us that flat-plate collectors are "the most practical and least expensive" method of solar heating—ignoring the fact that batch-type heaters are far more cost-effective for heating domestic hot water. He also advises that solar collectors should be in full sun from "two hours after sunrise to two hours before sunset," whereas it's general knowledge that the hours of 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. will yield about 90 percent of the usable solar radiation.

The book closes with 210 test questions (plus answers) to prepare for the licensing exam, along with appendices covering definitions, abbreviations, and symbols. In the latter I found a picture denoting a "Hygia," which was not listed in the index, and couldn't be found among the definitions or in my reliable old Webster's Collegiate. I hope the term isn't on the Exam. I could go on, but I won't.

K&B Overviews

Kitchens and Bathroom Design by Jane Moss Snow; National Association of Homebuilders, Washington, D.C.; 1987; paperbacks. (*Cost for Kitchens*: 77 pages, \$28/\$22 NAHB members. *Bathroom Design*: 124 pages, \$30/\$24 NAHB members. Add \$2.50 handling.)

Kitchens by Jane Moss Snow provides novice kitchen designers with an overview of what goes into planning a space for food preparation and cleanup. Ms. Snow introduces market surveys, traffic flow, work centers, the kitchen triangle, clearances, eating counter dimensions, typical layouts, and other fundamentals. She also offers the latest in cabinetry, cooktops, induction cookers, microwaves, sinks, countertops, refrigerators, and flooring—without giving in-depth discussion or info on selecting or installing these products.

On energy, the author adequately treats background and task lighting (including wattage guidelines), plus sizing of ventilation appliances. However, she says a well-vented kitchen "saves money," without explaining how. Despite the necessity and value of proper kitchen venting, following her recommendations I could see heat (and dollar signs) flying out the exhaust vent here in New England.

Two chapters suggested layouts for the "basic" kitchen and the more generous "move-up" kitchen. She does not include as many "idea kitchens" as you find in competing books. Ditto for Ms. Snow's coverage of kitchen design for the elderly and handicapped—which is treated much better in more specialized books. A final chapter gives a once-over to the "Traditional," "Country," "Mission," "French Provincial," "Contemporary," and "Euro" looks in kitchen design. A couple of appendices and errata sheets close the book.

Bathroom Design is a companion to *Kitchens*, and covers the same sort of basics. Chapter 1 covers demographics, trends, and the changing market, and gives a bit of bathroom history. Did you know that the vestibule (that's the entry, folks) to one of the ancient Roman public baths was converted into an entire church by Michelangelo? How's that for a remodel!

Ms. Snow looks at bath types (master suite, half-bath, etc.), fixtures (from Victorian chamberpots to today's whirlpools), fittings and accessories, mounting control heights,

Free & Cheap

How-To Assortment: The Housing Resource Center (Cleveland, Ohio) offers members a good deal on the Ortho how-to series: *Bathrooms, Kitchens, Deck Plans, Decks & Patios, Basic Wiring Techniques, and Basic Plumbing Techniques*. The books are \$5.50 apiece, and the group offers a \$2 rebate on any one of the books listed above. Regular membership costs \$15/yr. Contact HRC, 1820 West 48th St., Cleveland, Ohio, 44102; 216/281-HOME.

Kitchen Island Design: Intended for DIY'ers but may give you some ideas, *Kitchen Island/Plan Sheet* has been published by the Western Wood Products Association. The first 25 copies are free. Contact the association at Dept P-153T, Yeon Building, 522 S.W. 5th Ave., Portland, OR 97204-2122; 503/224-3930.

Lots of Tile Info: *Tile Installation, Maintenance and Terminology* are the subjects of three brochures available from the Tile Council of America. The organization also publishes specifications. For more specific information, contact TCA at P.O. Box 2222, Princeton, NJ 08543-2222.

Hardware Catalog: Reproduction colonial forged iron hardware and accessories are featured in a new 60-page catalog from Acorn Manufacturing Co. Over 400 items are described, including hardware for cabinets, doors, shutters and gates, as well as mailboxes, electrical wall plates, and fireplace tools. Contact Acorn at P.O. Box 31, Mansfield, MA 02048; 617/339-4500.

Outdoor Plans: Building plans for several outdoor projects are being sold by the Southern Forest Products Association. Simple plans for a gazebo, planter box, ground-level deck, trellis, storage shed, and potting shed are among those for sale. The series is armed at the do-it-yourselfer, but would be a good resource for anyone doing this type of work. Prices range from \$2 to \$4. Write for a free catalog at Southern Forest Products Association, P.O. Box 52468, New Orleans, LA 70152. An "idea book" including building ideas and tips for porches, in addition to many other indoor/outdoor projects, is available at this same address, care of the Southern Pine Marketing Council. It's free, just ask for publication #122.

ceramic tiles, "cultured stone," and other materials. Once again she covers a broad field without providing much depth. This is especially true in the scant chapter on lighting, heating, ventilating, and insulation, which are supplemented—almost as an afterthought—by an appendix with more detailed information. I wondered too about Ms. Snow's statement that 1 square foot of skylight will light approximately 2 square feet of bathroom floorspace. Windows for daylighting are typically ten percent of floorspace, and skylights are perhaps twice as effective in providing illumination. Bathroom storage is well covered,

as is design for the handicapped (in contrast to *Kitchens*). Again the book closes with a potpourri of ideas for both basic and move-up baths (the latter for those with a "yen for luxury"). Color and black and white photos, drawings, and a few of the worst CAD graphics I've ever seen supplement the text of both books, along with reproducible graph paper and drawing symbols for use in making your own plans. The symbols don't always seem to correspond to the standardized versions used in the trade.

Both volumes are adequate, but no great shakes.

—Paul Hanke