PLUMBING

A BETTER WATER HEATER FOLLOW-UP FOR PLUMBERS

Reach homeowners before the failure, not after.

Plumbing customers tend to call when something breaks, then disappear for years. You already know which homes have older water heaters. Most companies never use that.

WHO TO CALL

- Water heaters 10 years and older in your records
- Customers you haven't seen in 12 to 24 months
- Maintenance agreements that lapsed

WHAT TO SAY

Keep it simple. Remind them who you are, explain the value of a check on a unit that age, and offer two time windows. The person on the phone should book the visit and leave the diagnosis to your plumber.

VERIFY THE BOOKING

Confirm the date, window, address and best number before you hang up. Most no-shows start with a vague booking.

WHY THIS IS THE EASIEST CALL YOU CAN MAKE

A water heater tends to fail all at once, and it tends to fail badly. The homeowner doesn't know how old the tank is. You do, or you can find out. That gives you a good reason to call, and it's a call that's genuinely in their interest.

The emergency version of this job goes to whoever answers first. The planned version goes to the company that called ahead.

BUILD THE LIST

Search your records for anything that reveals age:

- Installs you did yourself, by date
- Equipment notes from past visits
- Service tickets that mention a tank, an anode, a leak or a flush
- Serial numbers, which usually encode the manufacture date

If your records are thin, ask your plumbers to capture brand, model, serial number and approximate age on every visit from now on. It takes under a minute, and it builds the most valuable list in your business. Also note whether the unit is gas, electric or tankless.

RANK BY URGENCY

Start with the oldest tanks. Then add units a plumber flagged for rust, weeping or a failing relief valve. Then add homes with a history of leaks or hard-water problems. Check for plans or open estimates first, so you don't call someone twice about the same thing.

WHAT THE PLUMBER SHOULD DO

The visit should earn the customer's trust whether or not they buy. A good water heater check covers:

- The age and condition of the tank
- Signs of corrosion or leaking at fittings
- The relief valve and its discharge line
- Venting and combustion on gas units
- The expansion tank, where one is required
- Water pressure and temperature setting
- Whether the installation meets current local requirements

Photograph what you find and leave it in writing. If the tank has years left, say so. A plumber who says "you're fine for now" gets the next call.

SHOW OPTIONS

When replacement makes sense, present real choices: a like-for-like replacement, a higher-efficiency model, or tankless where the home suits it. Discuss warranty, expected life and what the install includes. Permits and code items should be part of the price, so nothing appears as a surprise later.

WHAT TO SAY ABOUT THE 2029 CHANGE

Federal efficiency standards for consumer water heaters take effect in May 2029. Most common-size electric storage heaters will need heat pump technology at that point. This isn't a reason to rush anyone today. It's useful background if a homeowner asks. See what's changing for the details and check again before you quote.

FOLLOW UP

If they decide to wait, note the reason and call again at 30 and 90 days. Send the written findings again with a short, friendly note. If a tank was in rough shape, the conversation is a matter of when and who, and you want to be the name they remember.

MEASURE IT

Track calls made, checks booked, show rate, replacements sold and average ticket. Compare the margin on planned replacements with emergency ones. Planned jobs fit your schedule and let you buy and stage equipment properly, which often makes them easier to run well.

MAKE IT A STANDING ROUTINE

Pull a fresh list every month. As your plumbers add equipment data, it gets longer and better. In a year or two, you'll know the age of nearly every tank you've ever touched, and few of your competitors can say that.

Sources: Service ProCall program guidance.

Published by Service ProCall. Last reviewed November 2026.

BEST PRACTICES: CUSTOMERS WHO NEVER HEAR FROM YOU AGAIN

MAKE IT A HABIT

What good looks like

> A clean list with a working phone number and the equipment age for most customers.

> Every customer contacted at least once or twice a year.

> Aging equipment flagged before it fails, not after.

The habits

1. Clean the list first: remove duplicates, fix phone numbers and mark do-not-call customers.
2. Sort by what predicts a sale: equipment age, last visit and open repairs.
3. Start with the warmest groups: lapsed members, recent repairs on old equipment and unsold estimates.
4. Lead with a reason to visit, such as a safety check or no-charge inspection, not a sales pitch.
5. Call during your slow weeks, so the work lands when you have room on the board.
6. Track every campaign from call to sold job, so you know what to run again.

Signs it's time to get help

- Nobody owns calling past customers, so it never happens.
- You buy leads while thousands of past customers go uncalled.
- Your board has open slots most weeks of the year.

How one shop did it: A contractor described by ACHR News columnists (name not published). Skipped ads and reached out personally to its own past

customers. $135,000 in booked work in five days from about 250 contacts. ACHR News, October 31, 2025

Where we fit: Service ProCall runs this as equity mining: trained schedulers call your past customers and book visits into the slots your team can run.

More on customers who never hear from you again