



# PHCC OF WASHINGTON NEWS LEAK

December  
2006

## What A Night!!!

If you were unable to attend this year's annual Holiday Party and Auction you missed out on all the excitement. On December 2<sup>nd</sup> 165 people gathered together at the Sea-Tac Marriott for good conversation, excellent food, great prizes and dancing.

The Art of Plumbing, American Leak Detection and Wolverine Brass donated a BAJA 150 ATV for an employee raffle. Employees were each given one ticket and had the opportunity to purchase more; some purchased as many as 100 extra tickets. The lucky winner of the ATV was Mike Reeves from Stack Plumbing. Way to go Mike!!!

The PHCCWA would like to thank all of those individuals and companies (listed below in alphabetic order) that made donations to this years auctions. Without your generous donations this event could not have been such a great success!

We would also like to recognize Sandy Stack, Chair of the Holiday Committee for her hard work in putting this all together. Sean Daly and Tonna Bailey for their help in planning this years event. Last but not at all the least the volunteers, Joanne Maas, Wendy Brady and Nicole Flosi, for their invaluable help.



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American Leak Detection  
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Double K Plumbing  
Keller Supply Company  
Lorne Murray  
Meridian Plumbing  
Mitchel Plumbing Co. appreciate  
Pacific Plumbing Supply  
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Prima Plumbing  
Raymark Plumbing and Sewer  
Sandy Stack, Realtor from Windermere  
Sea-Tac Marriott  
Seattle Mariners  
Silvana Plumbing  
Stack Plumbing, Inc.  
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Strictly Scandinavian Gifts  
Superior Cleaning and Restoration  
The Art of Plumbing  
Wolverine Brass



Visit us on the  
web at  
[www.phccwa.org](http://www.phccwa.org)

## PHCC of Washington

### PHCCWA's Newest Affiliate Member

**P**HCC-WA has teamed up with [www.AnytimeCE.com](http://www.AnytimeCE.com) to bring On-line Continuing Education classes for plumbers. These On-line classes are easy to take and they can be accessed 24/7.

There is plenty of L&I approved classes to choose from.

The plumber can log in and out numerous times, allowing him to proceed at his own pace and time schedule.

At the completion of the course, the plumber can download his Certificate of Completion from the web sight. L & I is also sent confirmation of the plumber's completion.

The plumber has an opportunity to give feedback to AnytimeCE. On the feedback form, check PHCC-WA selection under the feedback question of how you heard about the classes.

Typical cost of a four (4) hour class is \$59.50. Packages reduce the cost.

AnytimeCE.com is an easy way to get your required training at your own time schedule! Try a course. We are sure that you will like it!

## Hands on Training

**A**n award winning Gas Furnace trouble shooting course is scheduled evenings: January 8 –20<sup>th</sup>. Students will learn and wire the 4 basic types of ignition systems, perform a complete furnace start up and complete 100 simulated gas furnace service calls. See GS102 at [www.Hvacschool.com](http://www.Hvacschool.com) for more details.

Hvacschool.com offers training/classes in troubleshooting, code review/updates, general fundamentals and continuing education. With the legislation at hand for HVAC licensing, have affiliates like Hvacschool.com to refer to will be very handle when you need to renew your license and update those continuing education credits.

## New Member Benefit—PHCCList—an email discussion group

**M**embers can now connect 24/7/365 with industry colleagues on PHCC's new online discussion forum—PHCCList. This new benefit will enable members to connect with contractors across the country to share ideas, find solutions to specific business management and technical problems. Members with a valid e-mail address on record with PHCC can join the discussion group, through PHCC's Web site at [www.phccweb.org](http://www.phccweb.org). The amount of email generated and subject matter covered varies daily. When subscribing, members are encouraged to read the list rules and etiquette, as well as the subscription options and instructions on how to post messages, unsubscribe and view the list archives.



## Upcoming Dates of Interest

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| Jan 13 | Tacoma area CPR Class @ Bob Larson Plumbing              |
| Jan 18 | Tacoma area Network Meeting: Tankless hot water heaters  |
| Jan 30 | Seattle area Network Meeting: Tankless hot water heaters |

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web at  
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## PHCC of Washington

### Best Practices—Pros & Cons of Techs Taking Trucks Home Daily

The following is an excerpt from a recent PHCCList discussion on the pros, cons, HR implications and maintenance issues related to having techs park service vehicles at their homes instead of a company lot or truck yard. To view the entire discussion thread, PHCC members who have subscribed to the list may visit the discussion archive at [www.phccweb.org](http://www.phccweb.org). All comments were provided by PHCC members.

#### A. Pros vs. Cons

Downside is that it makes it convenient and tempting for techs to ‘borrow’ materials and use company tools, on their own home, or those of friends and relatives. Also, you lose some control at the beginning and end of day. Math of it is the time it takes to bring your guys into the shop and then get them to the jobs. If you estimate the time by the number of techs, and multiply it by your average ticket sales, then there is no comparison. Taking the truck home is a definite perk for the tech; techs feel they are vested in the company. The advertising that your moving billboards get at locations of employee’s home is great. Assets are much safer at a home than in a company truck yard. If a vehicle were to get broken into, it would be only one; if they are all together in a yard, several may be hit. Need to be careful about laws that prohibit certain sized/weighted vehicles from parking in residential areas. If you can’t trust your men with a truck how can you trust them with your clients’ safety and health.

#### B. HR Issues

If techs go to shop to get truck, time starts when they get to the shop. If they take truck home, time starts when they get to the job. Have a documented vehicle policy and have employees sign a document stating that the vehicle will be used only for business calls. Have **zero** tolerance for anyone who strays from policy. Check with your accountant, allowing techs to take a vehicle home is a benefit and must show on their taxes. GPS works as a time clock – check time cards against GPS reports.



#### C. Truck Washing/Maintenance Schedules

Taking their truck home is a benefit, not an entitlement – techs are required to wash the trucks on their own time. Techs are responsible for stopping by Jiffy Lube, when required (on their own time) to get oil changed/lube. For repairs, our techs bring their trucks back to the shop and use an extra stocked truck while repairs are made. Techs come in for weekly meeting, this is when you have truck inspections.

#### D. Techs Bring Route in Daily

Bring techs in every other day or have runners pick up route in field; count up shop time when they bring it in and you’ll see the loss to the company if done daily. It’s all about production! Have runners pick up route in field while they are out delivering material and helpers to job sites.

#### G. GPS / Monitoring

GPS is a must and is the best observer you can have for seeing that rules are kept. Best type is ‘real time.’ Gas savings with use of GPS due to more efficient dispatching. If the truck engine is on, the Nextel better be in it; time control becomes a no brainer.

#### H. Getting helpers to the Job Site

Have helpers meet tech at agreed upon location, close to route to jobsite / have parts runners deliver helpers.

#### J. Company Tools

Use tool-tracking program. Sign out tools and keep them on the trucks (you should only be checking out hammer drills, core drillers, etc.) Techs don’t become techs until they have everything on your tool list.

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## PHCC of Washington

### Competitive Intelligence

**T**o know yourself is wisdom. To better know yourself, you must discover your skills, motivations and challenges. You must know your environment. But you cannot measure yourself against yourself and discover any of that fully. Therefore, I submit to you...

To know your competition is lucrative.

Yet not only financially lucrative. (Even though in business, this single trait is highly prized.) In the process of knowing your competition, you better define your skills, motivations, and challenges. You begin to know yourself much better. What are you doing right? What's wrong? What are some things you never would've thought of... or done... or that would you rightly avoid in the future?

Your competition can hold the keys to much of this insight. So who exactly is your competition?

**Discerning the competition** means to evaluate "who" is worth reviewing. I assure you that studying the losers will get you very little closer to your goal just as attempting to study the \$20m construction giant when you're still trying to keep 10 people busy is time poorly spent.

Your most likely objectives in discernment are to find who is most closely aligned with yourself; who is exceeding your standard; and lastly how you will become different and better than each.

There are various ways to find your competition:

#### 1. Yellow Pages

Get a Yellow Pages book to sacrifice. Mark the cover as your "CIR Copy" (Competitive Intelligence Report). Find 5-10 ads that stand out (if you can even find any that stand out!) or from people who you'd rank as "recognizable" names in your market. Use a couple of ads from companies who you'd "like to be" on par with in your market, just for fun. These can be several times larger than you currently are. Circle and or tear these ads out. (You'll be using them later.)

Whether big, old, or just loud, make a list of who appears viably competitive *even if they work a different part of your market*. You do this because we are now only looking to help define – and then refine – the "standard" expectations in your market.

#### 2. Other Advertising

There will also be the companies who spend less of their funds as a percentage of sales in media other than Yellow Pages. (I personally applaud this.) The most common medium is newspaper, so seek out the ads in there (even if they're the same as your YP selections) of notable companies. You may find an aggressive new company that didn't make the YP this year.

Be aware of billboards, electronic media or other messages and make a note of them for your "Review List".

Also, tell your neighbors, friends, employees to listen out for telemarketing calls or to save any direct mail letters or postcards that come from competitors. These can be excellent resources. The more information, the better your study.

#### 3. Competitive Bids

Simply have an employee, spouse, or friend stay home and take bids all day long. Have real quotes and real proposals from your competition all arranged in your presentation book. Print up sheets that compare "apples to apples".

How to Set Up and Conduct Sampling:

1. Establish a "sample home" with a typical installation for your market
2. Allow the "Sampling Customer(s)" to call each of your chosen competitors – including your company – making appropriate notes on the Sampling Inquiry Form.
3. Allow the customer to see as many in a day as is possible and to get a full understanding and impression of each, making immediate notes upon their departure.

**Ongoing Review** - Keeping up with who's grabbing your business is an ongoing, monthly concern. A company who is serious about betterment will conduct a small competitive inquiry quarterly. A more serious one semi-annually. A full competitive inquiry should be administered annually or when market indications would warrant.

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