



The Building Commission is now targeting organisations and businesses that engage persons to carry out plumbing work

Organisations and businesses to be targeted

In Western Australia, a person must be appropriately licensed or an apprentice working under a licensed plumber in order to carry out plumbing work. It is an offence to employ or engage a person to carry out plumbing work if the employer knows a person must have a licence to carry out that work. The Building Commission has identified instances of persons being employed for the purpose of carrying out plumbing work whilst not suitably licensed.

On behalf of the Plumbers Licensing Board, the Building Commission will soon conduct an audit of organisations and businesses such as plumbing companies, maintenance service contractors, bathroom renovators, schools, hospitals and aged care facilities. Whilst it will be looking at compliance generally, the audit will take a particular interest in licences of employees or others engaged to carry out plumbing work.

Where non-compliance is found, officers will provide information to the organisations, businesses and individuals that will assist them to comply in the future. In suitable cases the Building Commission may recommend further action be taken.

Obligations when carrying out plumbing work

All plumbing work regulated by the Plumbers Licensing and Plumbing Standards Regulations 2000 must be carried out by a licensed plumbing contractor or an appropriately licensed tradesperson under the contractors general direction and control. It is not enough to engage a person who claims to have plumbing knowledge and skills to carry out the work.

Depending on the type of plumbing work certain compliance steps must be taken by licensed plumbing contractors. These steps are designed to protect, directly or indirectly, the health and well-being of the community by ensuring hygienic water supplies and sanitary waste disposal.

Enforcement options

The Building Commission accepts that non-compliance is often due to inadvertence and will often address it by way of formal warning. However, a business that employs or engages an unlicensed person to carry out plumbing work knowing that such a person ought to be licensed could be exposed to a fine of up to \$25,000 if the circumstances warrant it.

An individual who carries out plumbing work when not licensed, can be fined up to \$5,000. Disciplinary action can also be taken against plumbers who, while licensed, have been operating outside the scope of their licence. Such action could result in the cancellation or suspension of the licence.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this bulletin is provided as general information only and should not be relied upon as legal advice or as an accurate statement of the relevant legislation provisions. If you are uncertain as to your legal obligations you should obtain independent legal advice.

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