



# Plumbers News



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## Western Australia's plumbing regulations

The Building Commission is the division of the Department of Commerce that regulates the built environment for the benefit of the community. The Building Commission works with the other divisions of the department and the Minister for Commerce to develop the building and plumbing industries, set appropriate standards, and ensure that the community is confident to use these industry services.

The Building Commission supports the operations of the Building Commissioner, the Building Services Board and the Plumbers Licensing Board (PLB). Building Commission staff are mindful and supportive of the important role the PLB has and continues to play in regulating Western Australia's plumbing industry. This role is to perform its statutory functions as set out in section 59B of the *Water Services Licensing Act 1995*, which is:

- to monitor matters relating to the qualification and training of plumbers and to provide advice on those matters to the Minister and, with the approval of the Minister, to any other person or body concerned with those matters;

- to advise the Minister on matters relating to the licensing and regulation of plumbers;
- to administer any licensing scheme provided for by the regulations; and
- to perform licensing, disciplinary and other functions given to it by the regulations.

While some of the stationery may have changed, the PLB is continuing to diligently perform its legislative functions with support from staff of the Building Commission.



# What is happening with national licensing?

The national licensing of plumbing occupations was originally scheduled to commence on 1 July 2012. However, due to delays in the development of a Regulatory Impact Statement, national licensing of plumbing occupations is not expected to commence until sometime in 2013.

The National Occupational Licensing Authority (NOLA) is continuing work on the development of the Regulatory Impact Statement used as a basis for consultation with industry. Once published, representatives from NOLA and the State Government will hold a series of forums around Western Australia to seek feedback from the plumbing industry and other interested parties on the preferred national licensing model.

Information on the consultation sessions will be emailed to licensed plumbers and available on both the Plumbers Licensing Board and Building Commission web sites once dates are known.



## Unlicensed plumbing workers

The Plumbers Licensing Board (PLB) has recently dealt with a number of instances where licensed plumbing contractors have employed unlicensed people to carry out plumbing work.

It is an offence under the Water Services Licensing (Plumbers Licensing and Plumbing Standards) Regulations 2000 for a licensed plumbing contractor to employ a person who is not licensed to carry out plumbing work. Licensed plumbing contractors who employ unlicensed people to carry out plumbing work risk prosecution by the PLB. A maximum penalty of

\$5,000 and disciplinary proceedings that may result in sanctions, including licence suspension or cancellation, will apply.

The PLB encourages all licensed plumbing contractors to carry out adequate checks to ensure that people are licensed to carry out plumbing work before employing them. A search function to determine if a person is licensed to carry out plumbing work is available on the Boards website at

[www.plumbers.wa.gov.au/content/licensing/licence\\_search.html](http://www.plumbers.wa.gov.au/content/licensing/licence_search.html)



## Licensed Plumbers

As at 1 June 2012 there were:

**2936** Licensed Plumbing Contractors

**3413** Tradesperson Licensees

**113** Restricted Plumbing Permit holders

# Unlicensed drainage plumbing work

The Plumbers Licensing Board (PLB) is concerned about unlicensed plumbing work occurring in the drainage plumbing sector in Western Australia.

While there are circumstances where unlicensed labourers can assist, such as carrying pipes to the point they are to be laid, this does not include the undertaking of any plumbing work. Where plumbing work is undertaken by an unlicensed person, they are in breach of the Water Services Licensing (Plumbers Licensing and Plumbing Standards) Regulations 2000 and could be prosecuted for performing unlicensed plumbing work.

The regulations establish drainage plumbing work as work, other than exempt work, that involves the installation, alteration, extension, disconnection, repair or maintenance of underground pipes and other fittings used or intended to be used for the carrying of:

- i) wastewater to a sewer; or
- ii) wastewater or other waste to an apparatus for the treatment of sewage.

Licensed plumbing contractors who employ unlicensed individuals to carry out plumbing work also risk prosecution by the PLB and a maximum penalty of \$5,000, as well as disciplinary proceedings which could result in sanctions, including licence suspension or cancellation.

The qualifications required to obtain a tradesperson's licence (drainage plumbing) in Western Australia include:

- i) a Certificate II in drainage issued by a registered training provider, or an equivalent Western Australian qualification as determined by the Board; or
- ii) a recognised qualification in drainage plumbing work and provision of evidence to the satisfaction of the Board of at least two years' practical experience in drainage plumbing work; or
- iii) having passed a test in drainage plumbing work, involving both theoretical and practical components, conducted by an approved person or body, and provision of evidence to the satisfaction of the Board of at least two years' practical experience in drainage plumbing work.

## Technical notes

The Plumbers Licensing Board (PLB) regularly publishes technical notes to inform and assist industry operatives and stakeholders. The information in the notes is based on current trends, changes to standards or concerns identified by PLB Compliance Officers that may be causing problems in plumbing installations.

The PLB has recently published two new technical notes to add to the series.

In January 2012, a technical note about the correct use and connection of braided flexible hoses was published. The note covered certification of hoses and the correct installation requirements in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

In March 2012, a technical note covering waste water drainage from and water supply to evaporative air

conditioners was issued. It sets out the requirements for correct termination of waste water from these units in order not to cause damage to buildings, nuisance or injury. It clarifies provisions on the connection of water supply and other requirements that are not clearly covered by the AS/NZS 3500:2003.

In addition to these new publications, the March 2009 technical note on air admittance valves was updated in January 2012. Other notes that are in the process of being revised are, issued in multi-unit development October 2008, and 'Drainage audit requirements', issued in 2008.

All current technical notes are available on the PLB's web site at [www.plumbers.wa.gov.au](http://www.plumbers.wa.gov.au) and emailed to all licensed available tradespeople and contractors with a current email address registered with the Board.

## Condolences to the family and friends of Garry Dunbar

The Building Commission and the Plumbers Licensing Board regret to advise of the recent passing of a most valued colleague and friend - Garry Dunbar.

Many of you will remember Garry's dedication, passion and extensive knowledge of the plumbing industry during his 10 years of service as a Board member and then a plumbing compliance officer.

Garry relocated to Broome with his wife in May 2011 to undertake the role of our new Regional Plumbing Compliance Officer for the Kimberley region.

Our thoughts are with Garry's family, his friends and colleagues at this time of loss. He will be greatly missed.



# Use of plumbing products with WaterMark Certification



The WaterMark Certification process is designed to provide assurance to Australian consumers and plumbers that plumbing products used in plumbing installations are of a high standard and will work effectively under Australian conditions.

In accordance with the relevant Australian Standards, materials and products used in plumbing or drainage installations must be marked in accordance with AS 5200.000 Procedures for Certification of Plumbing and Drainage Products. Approved WaterMark symbols are shown in below.



Use of the WaterMark is not limited to goods manufactured in Australia; it may also be used on goods that are manufactured outside Australia. Ensuring that all pipes and fittings used are WaterMark certified will assist in complying with Western Australia's plumbing regulations.

## Subscribe for news and updates



The Building Commission and Plumbers Licensing Board (PLB) will be keeping plumbers better informed through email. Plumbers with access to a computer are encouraged to lodge an email address by subscribing online at

[www.buildingcommission.wa.gov.au/forms-publications/subscriptions](http://www.buildingcommission.wa.gov.au/forms-publications/subscriptions)

If your contact details have changed, notify the PLB by completing a Notification of Change of Address Form available online or by contacting us on 1300 489 099.



# New fees from 1 July 2012

An annual review of fees and charges required under the *Water Services Licensing Act 1995* has been carried out by the Department of Commerce and recommendations made to increase fees inline with the CPI of 2.8 per cent.

New fees to apply from 1 July 2012 are as follows:

Plumbers licensing and standards	\$ Fees 2012/13
Application for contractor's licence	53.95
Application for tradesperson's licence	21.65
Contractors licence fee	540.00
Tradespersons licence fee	200.00
Renewal of contractors licence	540.00
Renewal of tradesperson's licence	200.00
Renewal of restricted plumbing permit	270.00
Duplicate licence or permit	21.55
Combined notice of intention and certificate of compliance (each)	21.55
Booklet of 2 or more	20.50
Multi entry certificate of compliance (each)	16.20
Booklet of 12	178.85
New installation fee for plumbing work:	
9 or less fixtures	65.00
More than 9 fixtures	10.75
Re-inspection fee per hour	65.25
Copy of register	53.95
Extract from register	21.55

## MPA forums

During 2012, the Building Commission has joined the Master Plumbers & Gasfitters Association (MPA) at various regional industry forums held throughout Western Australia.

The Building Commission's Senior Technical Officer, Mike Read, joined a panel of industry representatives to speak to local plumbers about the following topics:

- 🔥 Formation of the Building Commission
- 🔥 The adoption of the Plumbing Code of Australia
- 🔥 Latest amendments to the AS/NZS 3500:2003
- 🔥 Overview of technical notes
- 🔥 Lodgement of compliance certificates

Following the presentations, Mr Read received questions and concerns from local plumbers. One of the issues raised was about certain businesses disconnecting the water supply to existing urinals and introducing product to absorb the urine. It was pointed out that in line with the recent amendment to the standards this practice is no longer permitted and cases could be referred to the Plumbers Licensing Board for action.

To find out about future industry forums contact the MPA on (08) 9471 6661 or visit



[www.masterplumbers.asn.au](http://www.masterplumbers.asn.au)

# MPA and Building Commission 2012 Awards for Excellence

The Building Commission is proud to partner the Master Plumbers & Gasfitters Association (MPA) as platinum sponsors of the 2012 Awards for Excellence.

The Awards showcase high standards in plumbing work and give plumbers an opportunity to be recognised as leaders in the industry. There are various categories and winners will receive valuable publicity and ongoing promotion throughout the year.

Entry is open to members and non-members of the MPA who are licensed with the Plumbers Licensing Board. Entries close on Friday July 27 2012.

For further information and to obtain an entry form contact Ms Ashlee Phur, MPA Events Manager, on (08) 9471 6667.



## Work Safety Awards WA 2012

- Have you had an idea that made your workplace safer?
- Do you know an OSH representative, OSH manager, OSH officer or co-worker who has made a difference at work?
- Does your workplace have an impressive safety and health management system?



Whether it was just an everyday achievement or a large scale initiative, your achievements or those of your workmates could be worthy of a Work Safety Award WA in 2012.

The Western Australian awards are now open for submissions from individuals, groups and organisations. Why not submit an entry so that achievements in safety and health are celebrated and worthy people are recognised?

For more information or to enter, visit

[www.commerce.wa.gov.au/worksafe/content/services/work\\_safe\\_awards/work\\_safety\\_awards.html](http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/worksafe/content/services/work_safe_awards/work_safety_awards.html)

Entries close at 5.00 pm on 6 July 2012.

## Work-related expenses for plumber employees



If you're a plumber employee, the Australian Taxation Office is developing a guide with you in mind. It's called *Plumber employees – claiming work-related expenses* (NAT 74192) and focuses on common claims you can make on your tax return.

To obtain a copy of the guide, visit the ATO website at

[www.ato.gov.au/occupations](http://www.ato.gov.au/occupations)

The guide will be available from July 2012.



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