



Targeted plumbing certification audit

The Building Commission is now targeting notices, fees and certifications.

Obligations

In Western Australia, plumbing work and those undertaking plumbing work are regulated by the Plumbers Licensing Board (the Board). The Board regulates this State's plumbing trade by issuing licences to suitably qualified and experienced Licensed Plumbing Contractors (LPCs) and their tradespersons. It is illegal for a person to carry out plumbing work unless they are a LPC or a licensed tradesperson or apprentice under the direction and control of a LPC.

In keeping with the national trend to place greater accountability on LPCs, the Plumbers Licensing and Plumbing Standards Regulations 2000 sets out a system of self-certification as the basis of the regulatory framework.

LPCs must notify the Board of the work they are doing and in some cases this must be done before the plumbing work is carried out. They must also certify that work is complete and complies with all of the relevant regulations and standards. LPCs are responsible for the standard of plumbing work they and their employees perform for a period of six years from the time the work is completed.

All major plumbing work, except emergency work (submitted upon completion), will require the lodgement of a Notice of Intention (NOI) to the Board at least 24 hours prior to any plumbing work being undertaken. A LPC must not carry out or permit or arrange for major plumbing work to be carried out unless a NOI for the work has been lodged with the Board. This system communicates to the Board where major plumbing work is being carried out so that it may be inspected as part of the Board's compliance monitoring activities.

When major plumbing work is completed, the LPC who lodged the NOI for the work must, within 5 working days of completing the work:

- Give the Board a completed Certificate of Compliance (COC) for the work;
- Give a copy of the COC to the owner or occupier of the place where the work was carried out;
- Give a copy of the COC to the local government authority of the district in which the work was carried out if the work is drainage plumbing and the drainage plumbing is not, and is not intended to be, connected to a sewer;
- Give the Board a drainage diagram with the COC when drainage plumbing has been carried out as part of the work; and
- Keep a copy of the COC at his or her principal place of business for at least 6 years.

All minor plumbing work carried out must be certified by LPCs on a Multi-entry Certificate of Compliance (MEC). A MEC will record up to 25 individual jobs and will need to be lodged with the Board within 5 working days after the end of each calendar month. It must only contain that particular month's minor plumbing work.

The scheme established to monitor the plumbing industry in Western Australia is funded via a combination of occupational licence fees and the purchase of forms required for submission of NOIs, COCs, MECs and the payment of new installation fees at the time of submitting the NOI on major plumbing work for a new building or extension that includes at least one new fixture.

Previous targeted certification audit program 2014

In 2014, the Building Commission undertook a similar program focusing on LPCs who were actively advertising for plumbing work and not submitting the above certifications.

The program resulted in those LPCs receiving 40 formal cautions and 35 infringement notices.

Targeted certification audit program 2017

The Building Commission on behalf of the Board is currently targeting the obligation of LPCs to provide to the Board the following:

- Notices of Intention (major plumbing work)
- New installation fees (major plumbing work)
- Certificates of Compliance (major plumbing work)
- Multi-entry Certificates of Compliance (minor plumbing work)

If you have not been submitting the above, expect a telephone call from the Building Commission.

Any efforts made to lodge late and previously un-submitted NOIs, COCs, MECs and new installation fees will be taken into account when determining enforcement options.

Enforcement options

Enforcement options include a formal warning, issue of an infringement notice(s), prosecution and/or disciplinary action.

Offences carry penalties ranging from \$2,000 to \$5,000 with modified penalties (infringement notices) ranging from \$200 to \$1,000.

Non-compliance can also be dealt with by the Board or the Board can make an allegation about a disciplinary matter to the State Administrative Tribunal. Fines up to \$5,000 may apply and in serious cases may result in cancellation of a LPCs plumbing 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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