

Non-compliance in roofing (stormwater) work

Online survey

An online survey of 1,579 building and plumbing practitioners provided useful information about non-compliance with roofing (stormwater) work in Victoria. During the survey, practitioners were asked to respond to a series of questions relating to the following topics:

- whether their work had been found to be non-compliant following an audit or inspection;
- whether they were aware of any non-compliance with standards on jobs they had worked on;
- causes of non-compliance;
- the use of performance solutions to meet the requirements of the Plumbing Code of Australia (PCA);
- familiarity with VBA factsheets to assist with their understanding of plumbing requirements; and
- ways in which to improve compliance.

The VBA thanks all practitioners who participated in the survey, which has helped inform research on this issue. The VBA is now undertaking further research into contributing factors to develop an evidence base and appropriate responses to identified issues.

Survey results

A summary of key findings from the online survey is set out in the table below.

Topic	Key findings
Extent of non-compliant roofing (stormwater) work	Fifteen per cent of plumbers said their work had been found (through audits and inspections) to be non-compliant with the PCA or standards. When asked “Aside from audits and inspections, are you aware of any cases of non-compliance with the standards on the jobs you have worked on?”, the identified non-compliance rate increased to around 25 per cent.
Value and quality of standards	There is strong support (98 per cent) of the need for various standards for roofing work. However, almost one third of respondents expressed the view that the current standards are outdated or do not reflect modern building designs and practices.
Knowledge of standards	Knowledge of plumbing standards and their application is uneven. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around 10 per cent of plumbers do not think the standards in the PCA or the Plumbing Regulations apply to their work, or do not know which standards apply. • Almost 30 per cent of plumbers reported that a reason for non-compliance in plumbing work was not knowing the latest changes to standards. • More than half of plumbers consider that better education and information about current standards would help address non-compliance.

Cost and accessibility of the standards	Several respondents mentioned the cost and accessibility of the standards themselves. Only around half of plumbers reported that the current standards are easy to understand and apply, and can be readily checked when working on a particular job.
Building and plumbing	<p>There is potentially a disconnect between building and design on the one hand, and plumbing compliance on the other.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The highest reported cause of non-compliance was an inability to comply with the standards due to the design/construction of the relevant building. • Some plumbers reported pressure from builders to undertake non-compliant work.
Performance solutions	Less than 30 per cent of survey respondents reported relying on performance solutions to meet Code requirements, with 45 per cent of respondents relying strictly on deemed-to-satisfy solutions to meet performance requirements. Fifteen per cent of respondents never used performance solutions because these were considered too hard to assess.
Training	Two thirds of plumbers think the quality of training through Registered Training Organisations has declined. More than one third of respondents considered that non-compliance could be improved through better training in relation to the standards.
Audits and investigations	Around 30 per cent of plumbers think that non-compliance should be addressed through more and better audits and investigations conducted by the VBA.

Performance solutions – VBA resources

One key finding of the survey is that practitioners do not often rely on or use performance solutions to meet the performance requirements for roofing (stormwater) work. The VBA has several resources to help practitioners improve their expertise in developing performance solutions, including:

- the [Industry Guide on Performance Solutions for Plumbing Installations](#); and
- the VBA's online video on [Developing a Performance Solution](#).

Practitioners are encouraged to use these resources.