

Introduction to the *Plumbing Regulations 2018*

Why are the *Plumbing Regulations 2008* expiring?

In Victoria, regulations—statutory rules made under the authority of an Act—automatically expire (“sunset”) after ten years. The current *Plumbing Regulations 2008* are due to sunset on 18 November 2018, and the *Plumbing Regulations 2018* will replace them.

What has changed in the *Plumbing Regulations 2018*?

The *Plumbing Regulations 2018* largely reflect the *Plumbing Regulations 2008*. The main changes in the new Regulations are:

- the introduction of an additional two-year period of practical experience requirement to be eligible for licensing;
- reclassifying two current specialised classes of work as main classes;
- clarification that routine service work on fire protection equipment is regulated under the fire protection class;
- the creation of a new specialised class – ‘thermostatic mixing valve work’;
- the introduction of new technical requirements for:
 - o the laying of sanitary drains under buildings, and
 - o backflow prevention devices where a hand-held spray may be used next to a water closet.

For further information about these and other changes, please see below.

New minimum experience requirement for licensing

From 18 November 2018, there will be an additional two-year period of practical experience required to be eligible for licensing in a class of plumbing work. This means that following the completion of an apprenticeship, two further years of practical experience must be gained prior to making an application for a licence. Persons applying from a non-apprenticeship background must also present this additional period of practical experience.

Reclassification of specialised classes

Previously classified as specialised classes under the *Plumbing Regulations 2008*, both Type B Gasfitting work and Refrigerated air-conditioning work will be reclassified as a main class of plumbing work from 18 November 2018. This change means that practitioners will no longer be required to be registered in the class of Gasfitting work to be eligible for registration/ licensing in Type B Gasfitting work. Similarly, practitioners will no longer need to hold the Mechanical Services work class in order to be eligible for registration/ licensing in Refrigerated Air-Conditioning work.

Clarification regarding routine service work on fire protection equipment

A specific reference to ‘routine servicing’ has been included within the definition of fire protection work. This is not a material change; it just removes the ambiguity regarding this work in the *Plumbing Regulations 2008*. The updated definition clarifies the requirement that the routine servicing of fire protection systems and equipment must be carried out by a person registered or licensed in Fire Protection work. It is likely that one or more forms of a restricted class of fire protection work will be created to transition current, unregistered but competent providers to compliance with the regulatory requirements.

New specialised class - Thermostatic mixing valve (TMV)

Thermostatic mixing valve work is a new specialised class of work that includes the repair, alteration, maintenance and testing of a thermostatic mixing valve. This new specialised class is subject to a delayed 12-month implementation and will only commence on 18 November 2019.

Changes to definitions of classes of work

The Plumbing Regulations 2018 also contain changes to the definitions, or ‘scopes of work’, for most of the classes and specialised classes of work. The majority of these changes aim to improve the readability and clarity regarding what work is regulated under each class. Learn more about the new definitions on the VBA website.

Changes to approved units of competency

The *Plumbing Regulations 2018* prescribe the qualifications required for registration and licensing in each class of work. These requirements include completion of the VBA’s approved units of competency. The VBA’s approved units of competency will be updated to coincide with the commencement of the *Plumbing Regulations 2018*. More information about these changes will be available on the VBA website closer to the commencement date. In addition, the *Plumbing Regulations 2018* now require completion of the approved units of competency for both registration and licensing in all classes and specialised classes of plumbing work (in addition to completion of the VBA examination).