



# Plumbing: Drainage inspections

This webinar will start shortly to allow participants to join.



*The VBA respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water upon which we rely. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.*

*We recognise and value the ongoing contribution of Aboriginal people and communities to Victorian life.*

*We embrace the spirit of reconciliation, working towards equality of outcomes and an equal voice.*

# Welcome

## Today you will hear from:



**Adam Falconer**

Team Leader,  
Inspection Services (Plumbing) Audit & Inspections

**Practitioner  
Education  
Series**



As Victoria's Building and Plumbing Regulator, we **safeguard Victoria's future liveability, promoting safe, compliant buildings, built to last**

Our role is not to set policy, but to **support industry to understand and comply with the rules.**

Our Practitioner Education series **helps support the industry by providing practical insights, evidence-based strategies and useful resources.**

# Housekeeping



Today's session will be recorded and will be available on the VBA website.



Questions can be submitted via the Q&A function. For any questions that we don't have time to answer during the session, the questions and answers will be emailed to you after the webinar.



We will be conducting live polls today. These will appear on your screen.



This webinar is scheduled to run for 60 minutes, however in some cases we may run over time in order to cover all content.

# Webinar questions



We will do our best to answer as many of your questions as we can during the webinar.



However, due to the high volume of questions that we receive, we may not be able to answer your question during the webinar time.



Approximately two weeks after this webinar, you will receive an email with answers to all of the questions that were asked in this webinar.

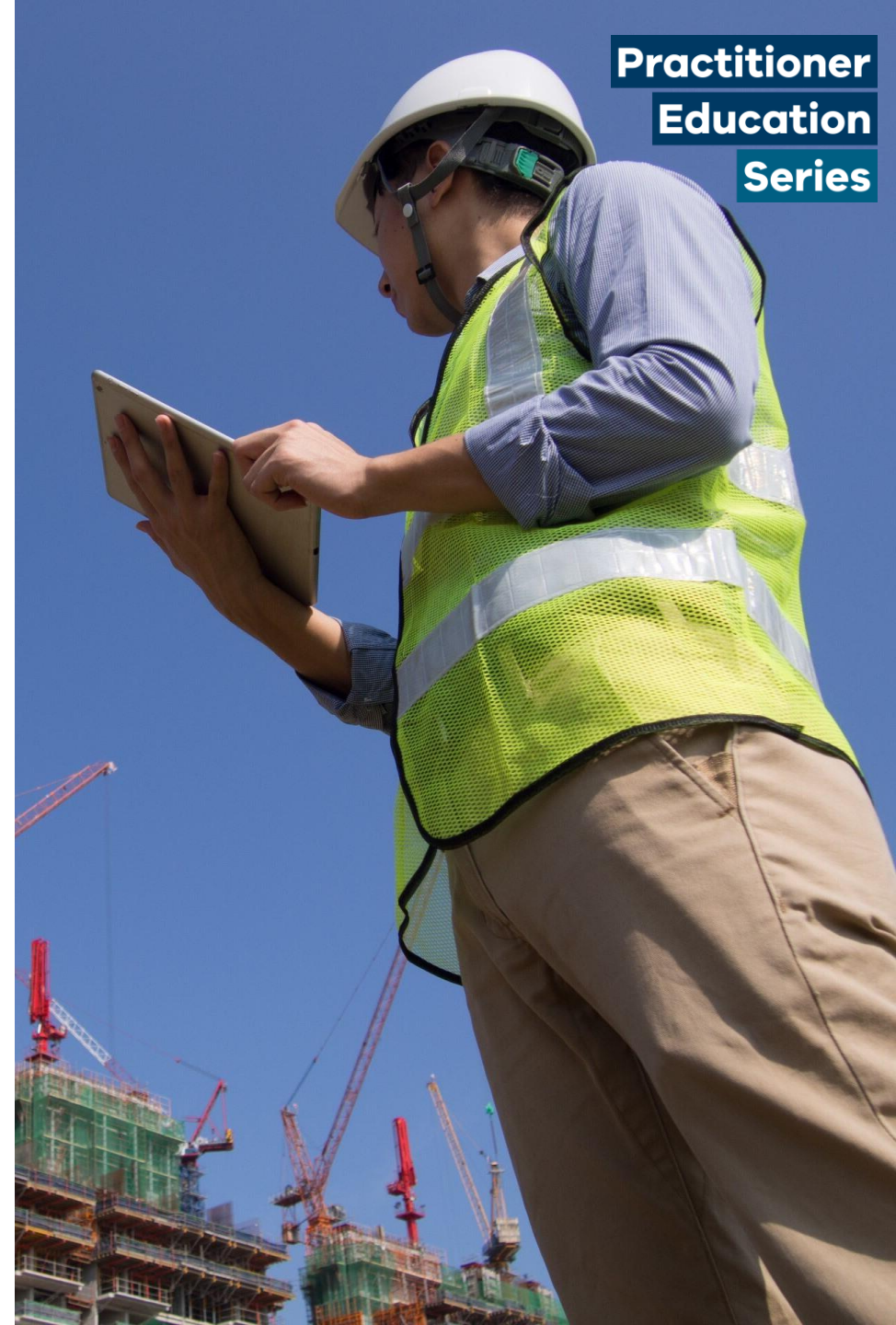
**We thank you for your patience.**

# Purpose of the webinar

## Why is this webinar important?



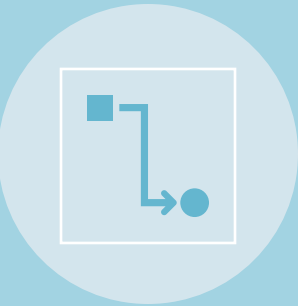
This webinar aims to educate practitioners about their obligations when booking drainage inspections and to give an overview of commonly observed faults.





# Learning goal

After this webinar, you should be able to:



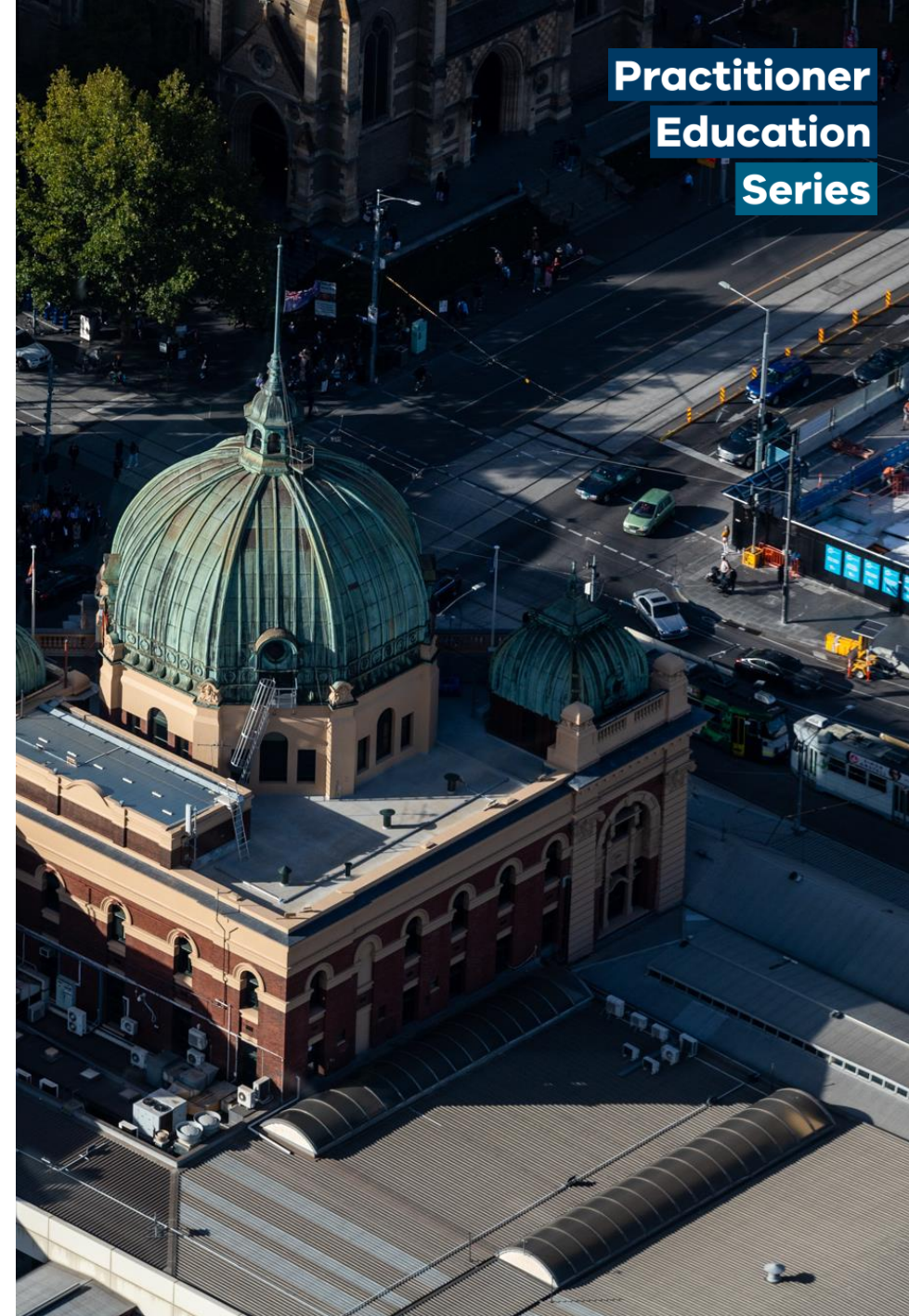
To have a better understanding of your obligations as a plumber when presenting a drain for inspection.





## This webinar will cover:

1. Building Act Requirements
2. Water Corporations requirements
3. VBA's expectations
4. Not ready drains
5. Infringement notices
6. Failed drainage inspections
7. Top 3 plumbing faults
8. Re-bookings and cancellations
9. Urgent Drain repairs
10. Test prior drainage inspections
11. Referral to plumbing investigations



# Building Act requirements





## As per The Building Act 1993 Part 12A, Section 221ZP

- Sanitary drainage and other work must be made available for inspection **before** being covered

If a licensed plumber

- **constructs, installs or alters** any **below ground sanitary drain or associated gullies**, or **supervises** any such work;

or

- **carries out any other plumbing work** that the regulations state is work **to which this section applies.**





The plumber **must not cover** any **pipes or pipework** involved in the work **unless**:

(a) he or she has **advised the Authority** in the manner specified by the Authority **of the time at which the work will be ready for inspection**

**And**

(b) Either

i) a **person authorised** by the Authority **has inspected the work** and **authorised** the plumber to cover the work

or

ii) **no person authorised** by the **Authority arrives to inspect the work** and at **least half an hour** has elapsed since the time referred to in paragraph (a).



Unless he or she has a reasonable excuse for not doing so, **the plumber:**

- **must ensure that the work is ready to be inspected at the time given** to the Authority under subsection (2)(a);

and

- **must be present** at that time at the place where the work was carried out.





**Water Authority requirements  
prior to drainage work:  
Consent to connect and  
Test prior**



## Consent to Connect

What is  
Consent to  
Connect?

A letter from the Water Corporation stating that the **connection works can commence**, in line with the conditions to connect

What are the  
conditions of  
connection?

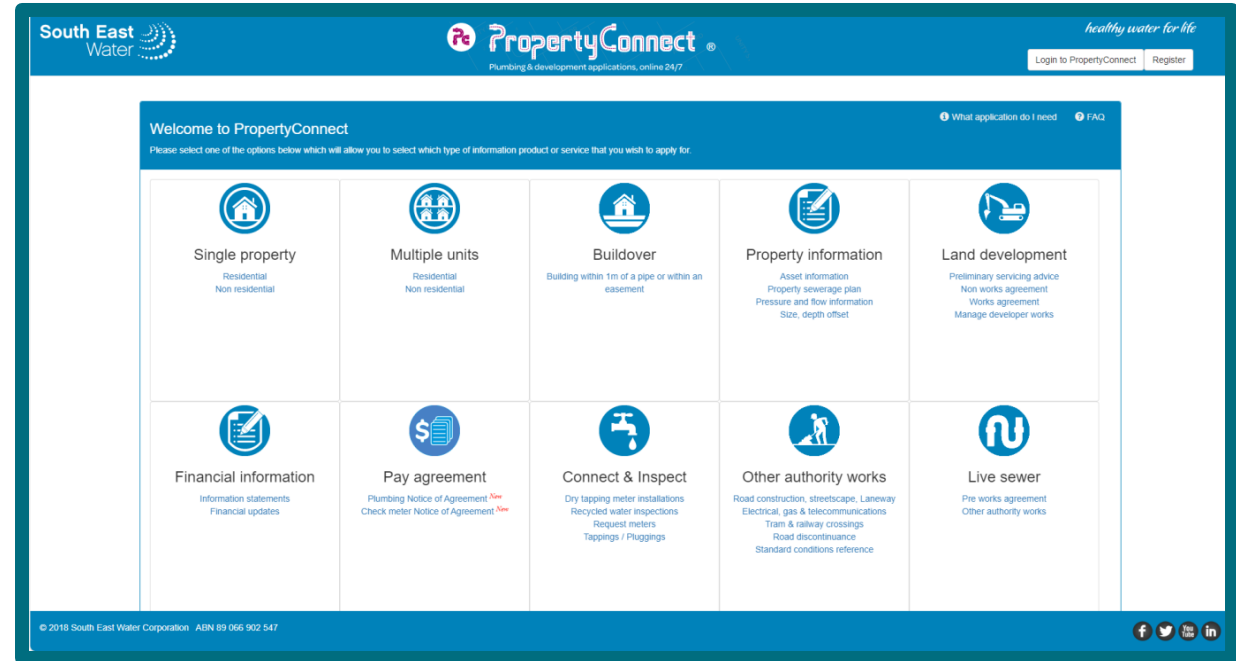
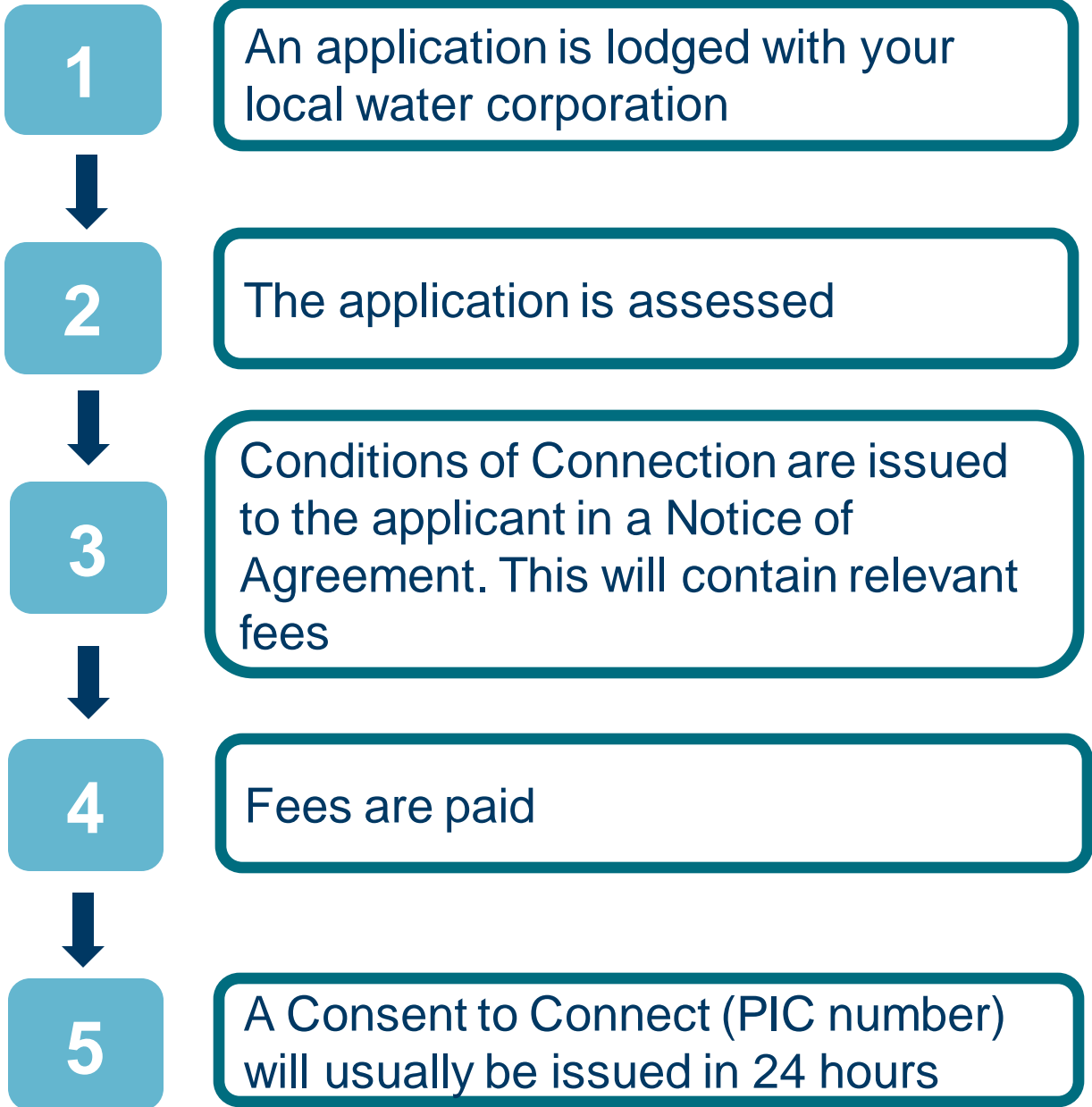
They explain what plumbers **can and can't do**, and any **additional requirements** from the agreement between the builder / plumber and the Water Authority

Who can  
apply for  
Consent to  
Connect?

Owner / builder / plumber



# Consent to Connect: process





## Consent to Connect: delays



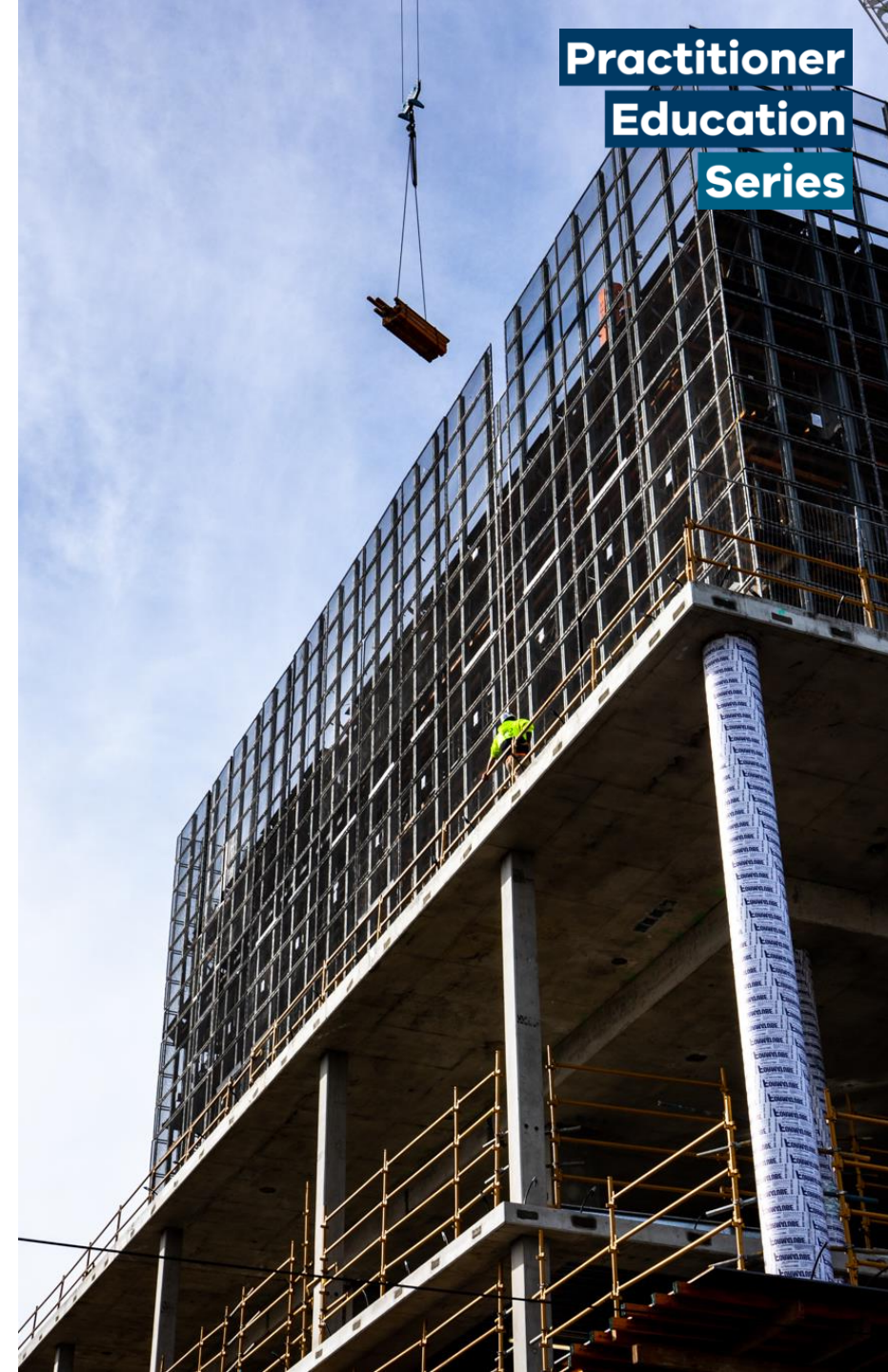
**Delays may occur** when construction is needed for future connections (i.e., building new sewer or water systems). A Consent to Connect won't be issued until that work is completed.



Contact your local water corporation for further information



Find your water corporation



# VBA's expectations





# Drainage Inspection process: paperwork

Paperwork  
required at  
inspection

Copy of the Conditions to Connect



As-laid drainage plan



Soil classification report (If soil is highly / extremely reactive, you require a recognised expert's report advising any additional installation requirements)



*If applicable:* The relevant urgent repair documentation.



VBA Drain inspections booking

## Drainage Inspection process: at the booking time

At the booking time you must

Be on site with all relevant paperwork

Have installed your installation in accordance with relevant standards, regulations and local laws, and any additional expert requirements

Have the offered drainage on test

**Have all the below-ground sanitary drainage work made available for inspection prior to backfilling (meters offered).**

Trenches or excavations must not be backfilled for 30 minutes after the initial booking time.



Practice Note Drainage DR 04  
Drainage in reactive soil



## Drainage Inspection process: relined below-ground sanitary drainage requirements



Consent to Connect



Drainage inspections booking



The licensed plumber or a representative must be onsite with a CCTV camera system / device that will enable the Inspector to view the completed works.



## What our inspectors expect to see:



That the drain has been finished.



Concrete installed where required.



The air test is applied and ready.



**If you can't have the drain ready in time, cancel the booking**

Up to 1 hour before the plumbers nominated time via VBA 360, email or phone.



**Not Ready drains**





# Not ready drains: what are they?

## No work started

Nothing onsite: work has not been started.

## Not complete but underway

The drain is in the trench, screenings installed but some branches and/or concrete to be completed.

## Built over site\*

A concrete slab or more constructed over the drain: not possible to offer the drain for inspection.



**\*Built over results will be forwarded to Plumbing Investigations for their consideration**





# Quick quiz

What is the status of this drain?

- A. No work started
- B. Not complete, but underway
- C. Built over site





# Quick quiz

What is the status of this drain?

**B. Not complete, but underway**



# Infringement notices





## What is an infringement notice?

221ZP 3 of the Building Act states

(3) **Unless he or she has a reasonable excuse** for not doing so, the plumber—

(a) **must ensure that the work is ready** to be inspected **at the time given** to the Authority under subsection (2)(a); and

(b) **must be present** at that time at the place where the work was carried out.



If these requirements are not met, an infringement notice may be issued

# Infringement notices

In which situations could an infringement notice issued?

If the booking is not cancelled and we attend within the inspection window, and **the drain is not presented as expected**, you may be issued with an infringement notice

Who manages infringements?

**Fines Victoria** (external to the VBA).

What is the penalty?

3 penalty units (rounded up) = \$ 577.00

## INFRINGEMENT NOTICE

Offences under the Building Act 1993

### INFRINGEMENT NOTICE

Agency Code Infringement number

**V000-V000000**

Offence Code: 9975

Infringement Penalty:

Payment due: 26 January 2023



### OFFENCE DETAILS

Name:

Date of birth:

Practitioner type/number/status: |

Date of offence:

Time of offence:

Offence location:

**Infringement offence:** Section 221ZP(3) of the Building Act 1993

**Description of offence:** Plumber failed to ensure sanitary drainage/other plumbing work is ready for inspection at the date and time scheduled for inspection.

**Details of offence:** Sanitary drainage/plumbing work was not ready to be inspected by the VBA as scheduled.

**Issued by:** NUL, Authorised Officer



### YOUR OPTIONS

PAY

ASK FOR PAYMENT PLAN

ASK FOR INTERNAL REVIEW

ASK FOR COURT HEARING

## You may apply to have your infringement internally reviewed

In which situations you can apply for an internal review?

If the infringement notice was contrary to law or involved a mistake of identity, special circumstances apply\*, your conduct for which the infringement notice was served should be excused because of exceptional circumstances, or because your fine results from family violence.

How do you apply for an internal review?

Complete an application form and post to Fines Victoria, GPO Box 1916 Melbourne Vic 3001. (Form is available via the QR code)



What do you need to include in your application?

Your internal review application should include a statement and any evidence such as medical, psychological, or case worker reports.

\* such special circumstances may result in VBA initiating action to suspend, vary, or cancel your registration or licence, including on grounds the practitioner is no longer a 'fit and proper person'.



## You may ask for a Magistrate’s court hearing



Complete the form on the 2<sup>nd</sup> page of your infringement notice and post to Fines Victoria, GPO Box 1916, Melbourne Vic 3001



For more information about court hearings, scan the QR code



### IF YOU WISH TO ASK FOR A COURT HEARING

For more information, visit [www.fines.vic.gov.au/Go-to--court#more-info](http://www.fines.vic.gov.au/Go-to--court#more-info).

To request that your matter be heard in a Court, fill in the form below and send it to Fines Victoria, GPO Box 1916, Melbourne Vic 3001. Do not make payment if submitting this form.

*Fill in details below*

I, \_\_\_\_\_ being the person to whom this infringement notice was issued, want to have the matter heard and determined by a Court. I understand I may receive a summons for this offence.

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Drivers licence number: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (Court summons will be sent here): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Agency code Infringement number

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ **V044-V0001332**

**Please note if you chose to apply for a court hearing:**  
If you elect to have this matter heard in court, the Victorian Building Authority may prosecute the offence itself and the higher penalty for the offence applies. Consequently, you may be subject to a penalty that is substantially greater than the infringement penalty amount, including daily penalties where the offence is continuing in nature, and you may also be liable for court costs and reasonable legal fees if you are unsuccessful. In addition, successful prosecution of the offence may result in a conviction recorded against you.

# Quick quiz

**Q1: Once a drain booking is made, it cannot be cancelled.**

- A. True**
- B. False**

**Q2: If I am issued an infringement notice, do I have an option for review?**

- A. Yes**
- B. No**



# Quick quiz

**Q1: Once a drain booking is made, it cannot be cancelled.**

**B. False**

**Q2: If I am issued an infringement notice, do I have an option for review?**

**A. Yes**





# Failed drainage inspections



# Failed drain obligations and process

1

If non-compliance is found and can't be fixed immediately, it will result in a failed drain.

2

A rectification notice will be issued (under Section 221ZW of the Building Act)

3

You have **14 days** to rectify the non-compliant items and rebook the drain.

4

You must contact the VBA scheduling department (1300 108 112) to arrange a mutually agreeable time for reattendance and rebook the agreed time on VBA 360.



**Drain must be reinspected to clear the rectification notice**  
**Same obligations in metro and regional areas**

The Building Act states that:

A person:

(a) **must comply** with any requirement made by an inspector or auditor in a rectification notice;

and

(b) **must not ask for, or receive**, from the person for whom the work was originally carried out (or any agent of that person) **any money** in respect **of any cost arising** from anything the person does **in complying with a rectification notice**.



Same obligations in metro and regional areas



# Top 3 plumbing faults





3

Bedding material

Bedding material

**AS/NZS 3500.2:2021**

**5.4.2-** Crushed rock, gravel screenings or similar recycled materials of nominal size between 7mm and 10mm.

What are the consequences?

**Potential ramifications:**

dips and rises in the drain, holding water, and potential breakage / blockages

## 2

### Concrete support

Concrete support

AS/NZS 3500.2:2021  
Clause 5.3 outlines  
concrete pad  
specifications

What are the  
consequences?

**Potential ramifications:**  
Damage to bends when  
using tools to clear  
blockages, dipping in  
drains, lack of support,  
damage to risers or gullies

1

Air tests

Air tests

AS/NZS 3500.2:2021  
Clause 15.3

What are the  
consequences?

**Potential ramifications:**  
Sewer leaks of black water  
under buildings, smells,  
soil movement, ground  
water contamination, rising  
damp.

# Quick quiz

**Q1: A person authorised by the VBA to inspect the drain may arrive any time within 30 minutes after the nominated booking time.**

- A. True
- B. False

**Q2: Our inspectors do not expect to see that the air test is applied and under test.**

- A. True
- B. False





# Quick quiz

**Q1: A person authorised by the VBA to inspect the drain may arrive any time within 30 minutes after the nominated booking time.**

**A. True**

**Q2: Our inspectors do not expect to see that the air test is applied and under test.**

**B. False**



# Re-bookings and cancellations



# Re-book button



- When should I use the re-book button?**

When you get a Not Ready result or a failed outcome
- Where is the re-book button located?**

In the initial booking offered in VBA360
- Why must the initial and subsequent bookings be linked?**

So that you can lodge your compliance certificate upon a passed outcome.
- What happens if you don't use the rebook button?**

You will not be able to lodge your compliance certificate

| Booking 3     |                     | Length 20 metres |           |                                   |
|---------------|---------------------|------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| Booking ID    | Booking Date/Time   | Outcome          | Status    | Action                            |
| DRAIN00609542 | 21/05/2021 08:00 AM | Not Ready        | Not Ready | <a href="#">Book Reinspection</a> |
| DRAIN00759171 | 16/08/2023 01:30 PM | Cancelled        | Cancelled | N/A                               |

# Drain booking cancellations



When and how do I cancel my drain booking?

Before 4pm the day prior to the inspection.  
In VBA 360.

Under reasonable circumstances, you may cancel a drainage inspection booking on the same **day up until one hour prior** to the booking time. Contact the VBA Audit Department on 1300 108 112 (Monday to Friday, from 7.30am - 4.15pm).

How do I cancel a **booking** due to take place **on a Saturday**?

Email: [drainagecancellations@vba.vic.gov.au](mailto:drainagecancellations@vba.vic.gov.au) on the Saturday or phone 1300 108 112 Monday to Friday, from 7.30am - 4.15pm.

Do **metro** and **regional** areas have the same obligations?

Yes, **metro** and **regional** areas have the same obligation.





# Urgent drain repairs



# Urgent drain repairs



When can a drain be backfilled prior to offering an inspection?

In a **rare case** when leaving an exposed trench may **impact public health and safety**.

It may be necessary to **backfill** the drain **before** you book the **inspection**

Check the VBA's website for further information.



When a drain **can** be backfilled prior to offering an inspection

A repair on the footpath of a main street

A repair on the driveway to a block of units

A repair in a public carpark

When a drain **cannot** be backfilled prior to offering an inspection

A repair in a secured private backyard

A fenced-off controlled building site



## Before the repair

Obtain consent using an **Urgent Repair Notice** with the relevant water corporation

Inform the VBA of an urgent repair **as soon as possible** during operational hours, Call 1300 108 112 (Monday to Friday, from 7.30am – 4.15pm).

Make a drain inspection booking using VBA360 for an inspection for the next available day.

The licensed plumber or a representative must be present at the booking time.

**If deemed a health and safety risk** and the drain has been backfilled, you are expected to provide photos of the completed works as evidence of the works undertaken. If a Plumbing Authorised Officer attends, photos and all relevant documentation will be requested.

## After the repair



# Test Prior drainage inspections

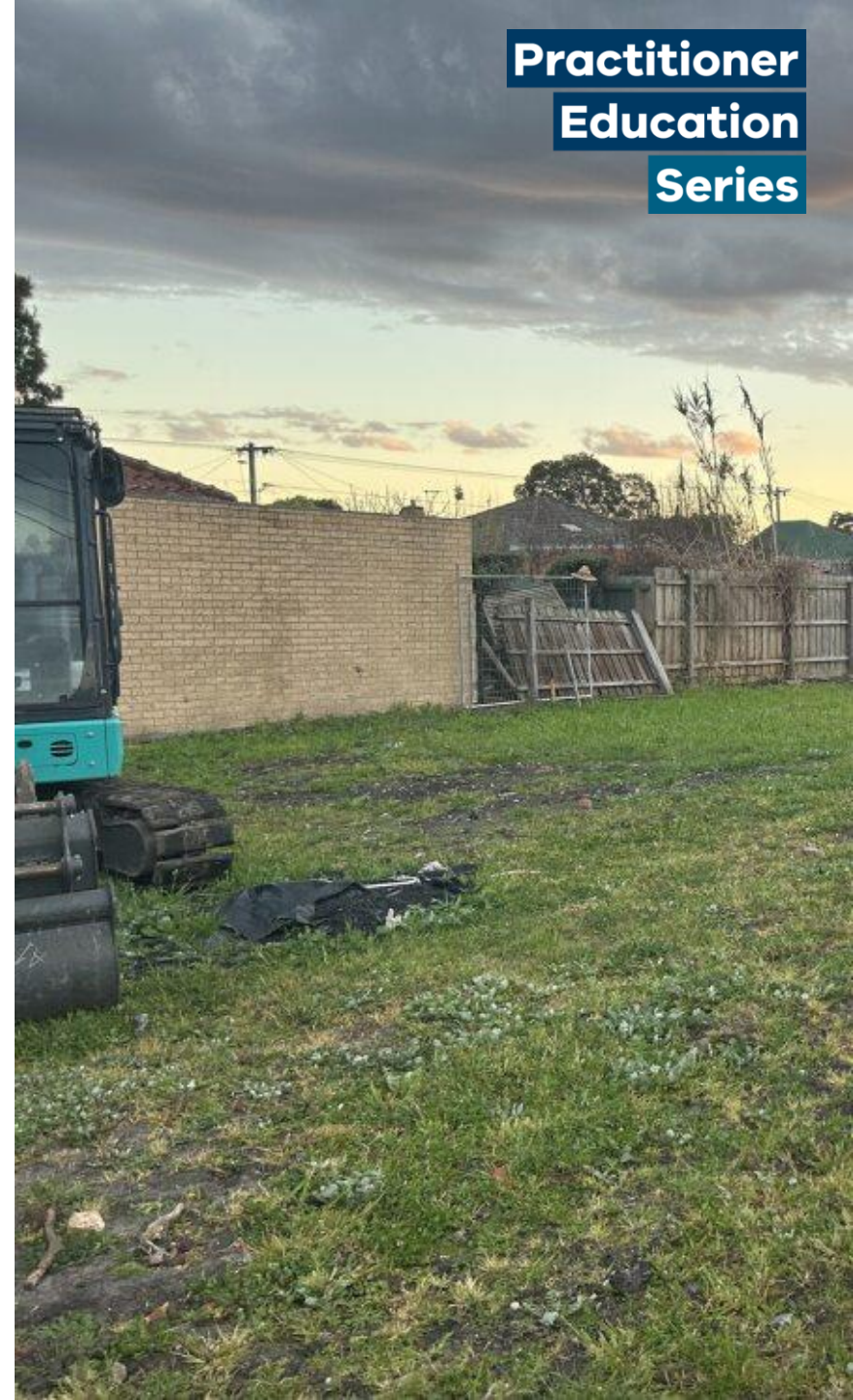


What happens when a **Consent to Connect** is not given?



If a water corporation can't approve service connection, **you may still be allowed to perform regulated plumbing and drainage work** on the site.

Approval must be granted through a **Test Prior advice form**.



## Test prior drain inspections: process

1

If you get the approval for a test prior advice form you must inform the VBA

2

You will need to have a compliance certificate ready before you schedule the Test Prior inspection

3

Call the VBA Audit Department at 1300 108 112 to schedule a Test Prior inspection nominating a date and time.

4

An Authorised Officer may attend to inspect the work any time within 30 minutes of the initial booking

5

If the Authorised Officer doesn't attend the inspection time within 30 minutes, you can go ahead and backfill the work



# Quick quiz

**Q1: Who decides which repair is deemed an urgent repair?**

- A. The water corporation
- B. The Authorised Officer
- C. The property owner

**Q2: If a Consent to Connect is not issued, no plumbing or drainage work can be performed on the site.**

- A. True
- B. False





# Quick quiz

**Q1: Who decides which repair is deemed an urgent repair?**

**A. The water corporation**

**Q2: If a Consent to Connect is not issued, no plumbing or drainage work can be performed on the site.**

**B. False**



# Referral to plumbing investigations



# Drain Readiness legislative requirements

Section 221ZP of the Building Act requires that **sanitary drainage and other work must be available for inspection** before being concealed or covered.

If, at the designated time for inspection as nominated by the Licensed Plumber, the drain is concealed or covered by formwork, a slab, or a building, **the Building Act** has been breached.

If the drain cannot be made available for inspection (such as the drain has been built over), it will be referred to plumbing investigations for further consideration.







# The built over Not Ready drain referral process

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What happens when a built over Not Ready drain is identified?

The matter is escalated to the **Plumbing Investigation Department** for further consideration.

Once the matter is referred it will be assigned to a nominated Plumbing Investigator to make their enquiries.



# Conclusion

## Today we have covered:

- Practitioner obligations around drainage inspections
- Processes and requirements of drainage inspections
- Obligations to obtain consent to carry out regulated drainage plumbing work

We hope that this webinar has given you a better understanding of your obligations as a plumber when booking and presenting a drain for inspection.



# Q & A



# Pre-submitted questions

Q1) Under what circumstances are you allowed to offer a drain on a water test?

Q2) What are the VBA's expectations for on-site wastewater management system installations? E.g., Septic tank installations.

Q3) If I have offered a drainage booking for today and I want to change the amount of drain that has been offered (metres), is this possible?

Example: Offered 15m and you have 30m available for inspection.

Q4) Can I book inspections for the same day that works are being conducted onsite?

# Pre-submitted questions

Q5) What must I consider when installing a Trade Waste System?

Q6) If I book 30m of drain and I have laid 40m of drain, what would be inspected upon attendance of an Inspector?

Q7) Who do I contact if I have issues with a drain booking in VBA 360 ?





# Thank you!

## After this webinar:

### Later today

We'd love your feedback!

You'll receive an email with a quick survey

You'll receive your attendance certificate via email

### In approximately 2 weeks

You'll receive an email with the answers to all of today's questions that we didn't get to, as well as those that we did

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