

# CHANGES TO MECHANICAL SERVICES AND REFRIGERATED AIR-CONDITIONING WORK

## AIM

The purpose of this Fact Sheet is to outline the Victorian regulatory requirements for Mechanical Services work and Refrigerated Air-conditioning work, following changes introduced by the *Plumbing Regulations 2018* (the Regulations).

## CHANGES IN THE *PLUMBING REGULATIONS 2018*

The Regulations commenced on **18 November 2018**, replacing the *Plumbing Regulations 2008*. Several changes were made to the Mechanical Services and Refrigerated Air-conditioning work classes, including:

- conversion of Refrigerated Air-conditioning work from a specialised class of work into a main class;
- alteration to the scopes of work captured as mechanical services and refrigerated air-conditioning; and
- amendments to the qualifications and experience required for registration or licensing in these classes.

## REFRIGERATED AIR-CONDITIONING WORK NOW A MAIN CLASS OF WORK

Refrigerated Air-conditioning work is now a main class of plumbing work. This means applicants for registration or licensing in this class no longer need to be registered or licensed in Mechanical Services work as an eligibility requirement. This reflects the fact that Refrigerated Air-conditioning work and Mechanical Services work are separate sectors, despite overlapping in some respects.

## CHANGES TO THE DEFINITION OF MECHANICAL SERVICES WORK

### Servicing of single-head split systems

From **18 November 2019**, the *service, maintenance and repair of single-head split systems* will no longer be included under the Mechanical Services work class. This change was made because the prescribed training requirements for Mechanical Services work only includes the installation and commissioning of single-head split systems (not servicing, maintaining or repairing).

This change affects all mechanical services plumbers, including those who held this registration/licence class prior to the start of the new Regulations and those who currently hold *Mechanical Services – restricted to single-head split systems*. The 12-month transition period enables current mechanical services plumbers to apply to the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) for the appropriate registration or licence to continue this servicing work after November 2019.

The VBA will provide details of the application process to all mechanical services plumbers in mid-2019.

### Inclusion of certain work on ceiling cassette systems and add-on units for ducted systems

From **18 November 2019**, the installation and commissioning of ceiling cassette systems and add-on condenser units for ducted systems will be included in the definition of Mechanical Services work. This change aligns the scope of Mechanical Services work to the skills and knowledge delivered under the prescribed training requirements.

### Other changes to Mechanical Services work

- Clarification that Mechanical Services work does not include:
  - the treatment of heating water;
  - the cleaning of cooling towers; and
  - the disassembly and reassembly of a flue terminal to gain access a solid fuel heater for cleaning.
- Clarification that medical gas systems are still regulated under the Mechanical Services work class, even though this work does not relate to the heating, cooling or ventilation of a building.

### CHANGES TO THE DEFINITION OF REFRIGERATED AIR-CONDITIONING WORK

- Clarification that regulated work only applies to refrigerated air-conditioning equipment and components of systems associated with the heating or cooling of a building.
- Inclusion of examples of refrigerated air-conditioning equipment and components of systems.
- Inclusion of work on split-system heat-pump water heaters (except the connection and disconnection of the system from the water supply, which is Water Supply work).
- A revised reference to ductwork included under this class to “any ductwork that is necessary for the purpose of any work described in this paragraph”.

### CHANGES TO QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED FOR REGISTRATION OR LICENSING

The Regulations now require two additional years of practical experience to be gained before a plumber becomes eligible for licensing in any class of work. This is intended to ensure that plumbers gain greater experience working as a registered practitioner before becoming eligible for a licence, so they are better prepared to take on the additional responsibility of working at the licence level.

Aside from this, the eligibility requirements for registration and licensing in the Mechanical Services and Refrigerated Air-conditioning work classes remain broadly unchanged. The qualifications and experience requirements for these classes are set out in **Appendix 1**.

## APPENDIX 1

The qualifications and experience required to be eligible for registration or licensing in Mechanical Services work or Refrigerated Air-conditioning work are prescribed in Schedule 4 of the Regulations:

### Mechanical services work

Registration		Licensing	
Qualifications	Experience	Qualifications	Experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful completion of a Certificate III course relating to plumbing that includes the approved competency units for mechanical services work</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful completion of the VBA's examination of registration competencies for mechanical services work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful completion of an apprenticeship under the supervision of a plumber licensed in mechanical services work</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 4 years of practical experience in mechanical services work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful completion of the approved competency units for licensing in mechanical services work</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful completion of the VBA's examination of licensing competencies for mechanical services work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 2 years of practical experience in mechanical services work and the successful completion of an apprenticeship under the supervision of a plumber licensed in mechanical services work</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 6 years of practical experience in mechanical services work</li> </ul>

**Note:** A list of competency units approved by the VBA was published in the *Victoria Government Gazette* on Friday, 16 November 2018. Further information regarding the approved units for all classes of work is [available on the VBA website](#).

**Refrigerated air-conditioning work**

Registration		Licensing	
Qualifications	Experience	Qualifications	Experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A restricted electrical worker’s licence (Class 2) AND</li> <li>• Successful completion of a Certificate III course relating to plumbing that includes the approved competency units for refrigerated air-conditioning work AND</li> <li>• Successful completion of the VBA’s examination of registration competencies for refrigerated air-conditioning work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful completion of an apprenticeship under the supervision of a plumber licensed in refrigerated air-conditioning work OR</li> <li>• At least 4 years of practical experience in refrigerated air-conditioning work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A restricted electrical worker’s licence (Class 2) AND</li> <li>• Successful completion of the approved competency units for refrigerated air-conditioning work AND</li> <li>• Successful completion of the VBA’s examination of licensing competencies for refrigerated air-conditioning work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 2 years of practical experience in refrigerated air-conditioning work and the successful completion of an apprenticeship under the supervision of a plumber licensed in refrigerated air-conditioning OR</li> <li>• At least 6 years of practical experience in refrigerated air-conditioning work</li> </ul>

**Note:** A list of competency units approved by the VBA was published in the *Victoria Government Gazette* on Friday, 16 November 2018. Further information regarding the approved units for all classes of work is [available on the VBA website](#).