

## Regulatory requirements for the laying of sanitary drains under buildings

### Aim

The aim of this fact sheet is to inform plumbers about amended requirements for the laying of sanitary drains under buildings.

The changes came into effect on 18 November 2018, as part of the *Plumbing Regulations 2018*.

### Relevant standard

The requirements for the design and installation of sanitary plumbing and drainage systems are contained in AS/NZS 3500.2 Plumbing and drainage Part 2: Sanitary plumbing and drainage.

Clause 3.2 of AS/NZS 3500.2 sets out the requirements for the location of drains and specifies that a drain located under or inside a building should only serve fixtures within that building. It also notes that sanitary drains must be located external to a building, wherever practicable.

The purpose of Clause 3.2 is to:

- localise any sanitary drainage failure that may occur to the building it serves, thereby minimising impact to other dwellings;
- provide for greater ease of access to the affected drainage system; and
- provide a cost-effective means of rectifying the drainage failure.

The types of drain to which Clause 3.2 may apply include:

- property service drains;
- shared property service drains;
- combined property service drains; and
- encroaching property service drains.

### How the new requirements work in practice

The *Plumbing Regulations 2018* set out the requirements for the laying of a sanitary drain under a building, where the drain will service another building.

The Regulations specify that work in relation to a below-ground sanitary drain must comply with Clause 3.2 of AS/NZS 3500.2.

However, the new Regulations provide an exemption from Clause 3.2 where a drain is unable to comply if certain conditions are met.

To qualify for the exemption, the drain must:

- a. be laid in a straight line under the building, with no branches or changes in direction; and
- b. be constructed of a material that complies with Section 2 of AS/NZS 3500.2; and
- c. have inspection openings with shafts terminating at the finished surface level, installed in permanently accessible positions, in the open air at the upstream entry and downstream exit points.

Provided that the drain meets these requirements, plumbers will no longer need to apply to the VBA for a modification.

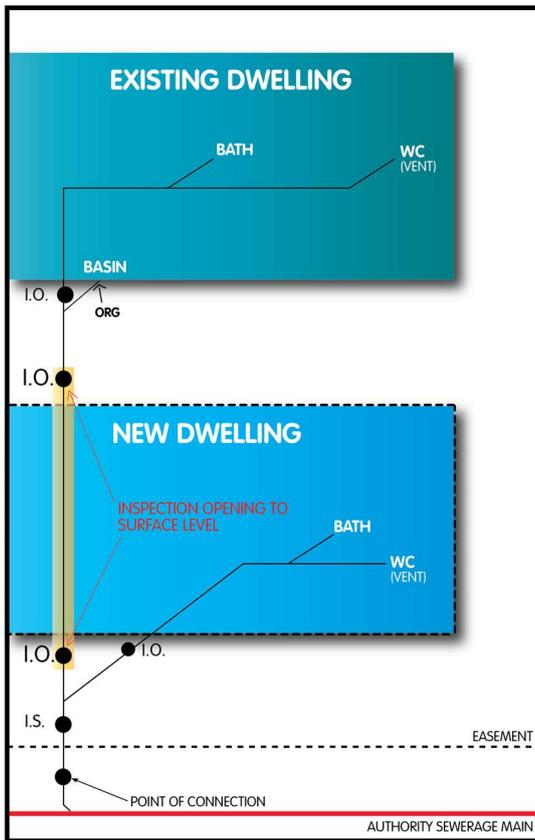
### Diagrams

The diagrams on page 2 should assist plumbers to comply with the new provisions.

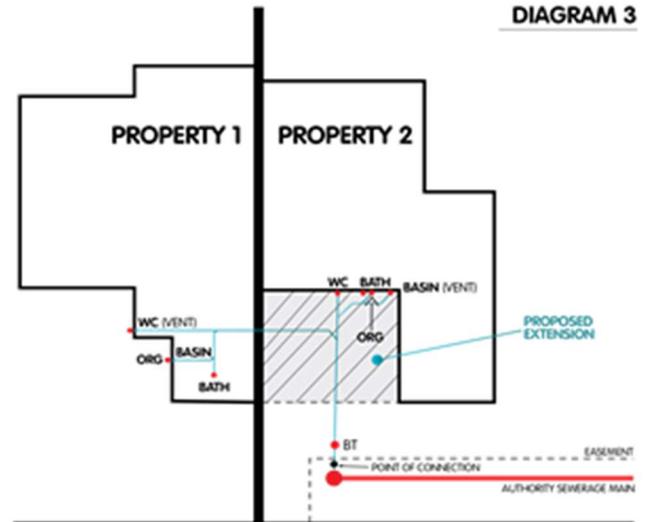
**Diagram 1** and **Diagram 2** are examples of sanitary drain installations that comply with the new requirements. Submission and approval of a modification application is not required in these cases.

**Diagram 3** shows the installation of a sanitary drain under a building that does not comply with the new requirements, as there is a branch and change in direction under Property 2. In this case, the plumber must apply to the VBA for a modification. (The work could only proceed if the VBA granted a modification before commencement of the work).

**DIAGRAM 1**



**DIAGRAM 3**



**If uncertain, seek advice from the VBA**

The amended requirements for the laying of sanitary drains under buildings come into effect on 18 November 2018.

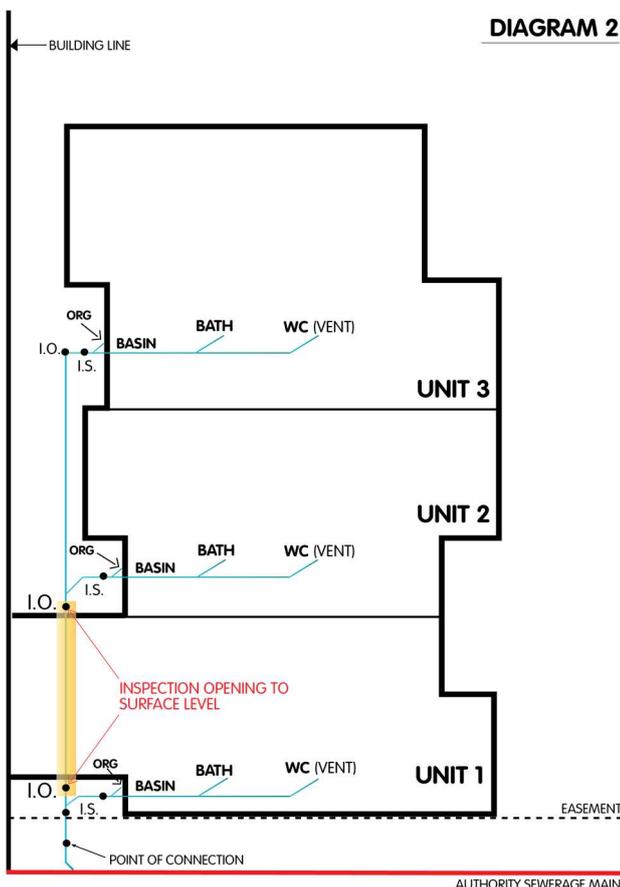
Work undertaken on a below-ground sanitary drain from this date will not require a modification if the work complies with the new requirements listed above.

If, however, the work does not comply with the new requirements, plumbers must apply to the VBA for a modification.

**Note:** The modification application must be approved by the VBA prior to work commencing.

If plumbers are uncertain whether their work complies with the new requirements, they should contact the VBA for further advice prior to commencing the work.

**DIAGRAM 2**



**Want to know more?**

If you have a technical enquiry, please email [plumbingtechnicaladvice@vba.vic.gov.au](mailto:plumbingtechnicaladvice@vba.vic.gov.au) or call 1300 815 127.

Victorian Building Authority  
 733 Bourke Street, Docklands VIC 3008

[www.vba.vic.gov.au](http://www.vba.vic.gov.au)