

Drainage | DR 03 | Property Sewer Drains

Audience

The audience/s for this Practice Note include/s:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architects/ Designers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Owner Builders |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Builders | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plumbers |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building Surveyors/ Inspectors | <input type="checkbox"/> Real estate management agents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineers | <input type="checkbox"/> Trades and Maintenance (inc. Electricians) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Home Owners / Residential Tenants | |

Purpose

This Practice Note provides guidance on the requirements for below ground property sewer drains.

The content and figures below provide guidance on:

- Obtaining consent to start below ground sanitary drainage work
- Information required to book a drainage inspection
- Lodging compliance certificates
- Building over property sewerage drains
- Building over a boundary trap riser or inspection shaft at the property connection point
- Redeveloping and renewing drains



For guidance on the plumbing regulatory framework for Sanitary Drainage refer to Plumbing Practice Note RF-01 Plumbing Regulatory Framework - NCC

Abbreviations & Definitions

The abbreviations and definitions set out below are for guidance only. They are not intended to vary those set out in the Building Act 1993, Plumbing Regulations 2018 or the National Construction Code.

- **AS/NZS** – Australian/ New Zealand Standard
- **PCA** – Plumbing Code of Australia (National Construction Code, volume 3)
- **Regulations** – Plumbing Regulations 2018



Obtaining consent to start below ground sanitary drainage work

Prior to starting any below ground sanitary drainage work, or the connection of a water service to a water authority asset, plumbers must first have the consent of the water authority which will prescribe Conditions of Consent.

For work involving below ground property sanitary drains, whether it be a new installation, an alteration to an existing drain or a replacement or repair, the water authority will also allocate a consent number (PIC number) as part of their consent.



It is important that practitioners contact the appropriate authority and obtain a consent number before any below ground sanitary drainage work commences, this may require contact with the local water authority in urban areas, or the local Council in regional areas



Septic tank & Wastewater treatment systems installations require an application to be submitted to the Local council and a preliminary and a final inspection by the council's Environmental Health Officer prior to backfilling to ensure the installation complies with AS/NZS 1547 On-site domestic wastewater management

Information required to book a drainage inspection

All below ground sanitary drainage work must be offered to the Authority by way of a drain inspection booking prior to it being covered up. Below ground sanitary drainage inspections must be booked in the VBA360 system. Plumbers will need to nominate a future date and time and the length of drain for the offered booking. Drainage inspections will not be conducted on the same day that the booking is made.

The licenced plumber must be in attendance on-site at the time of the booked inspection and must have in their possession a copy of the Conditions of Consent, an accurate and legible 1:500 As-Laid Property Sewerage Plan, and a copy of the soil classification report.

When booking inspections, the following information is required:

- Plumbers licence number.
- PIN.
- Compliance Certificate that used to obtain the Consent number; and
- Consent Number issued by the Water Authority.



Under the Building Act 1993 plumbers who perform below ground sanitary drainage work have an obligation to offer the drain to the authority for inspection.
<https://www.vba.vic.gov.au/plumbing/renewals-other-requirements/drain-inspection-bookings>

Lodging compliance certificates

All below-ground sanitary drainage work must be stated on a compliance certificate along with the details of the work performed. All details on compliance certificates need to be accurate and not contain a misstatement of fact.

The As-Laid Property Sewerage Plan must be forwarded to the water authority that issued the consent, and this must be confirmed by placing a tick in the relevant box on your compliance certificate before lodging the certificate to indicate that the plan has been sent.



Compliance certificates are lodged through the VBA360 system via the VBA website, and a copy provided to the person for whom the works were carried out, within five days of completion of plumbing work.



Under the Building Act 1993 plumbers who perform below ground sanitary drainage work are required to issue a compliance certificate for that work.

Building over property sewerage drains

When building over property sewerage drains, two frequently asked questions are:

- Can I lay a property sewerage drain under a building?
- Can I build over an existing drain?

The answer to both is yes. However, there are a number of requirements that need to be met prior to building over a drain and you will need to consider the following:

- Whether you can divert the drain around the building.
- Whether the drain serves fixtures other than in that building.
- Whether the drain is a combined or shared drain with other properties connected.
- The material that the existing drain is made from.

If it is practical to divert the drain around the building, the drain shall be diverted. However, if it is not practical to divert the drain, then drains may be laid or retained under the building subject to certain conditions.

For guidance on the considerations above refer to the following deemed-to-satisfy clauses from the AS/NZS 3500.2.

3.2 Location Of Drains

4.4 Inspection shafts and boundary traps

4.6.5 Disconnecter gullies inside buildings

3.8 Building over drains

4.5 reflux valves

4.6.6 Overflow relief gullies



Where clause AS/NZS 3500.2, clause 3.2 Location Of Drains cannot be complied with, Division 1, Part 1, Schedule 2, r1 of the Plumbing Regulations 2018 provides for an exception, subject to the requirements of subregulation (2)

Building over a boundary trap riser or inspection shaft at the property connection point

Boundary traps and inspection shafts must be located clear of easements and within the property boundary. You cannot build over a boundary trap riser or inspection shaft if they are part of a combined drain or where more than one building is connected.

- Where necessary, a boundary trap or inspection shaft must be relocated clear of the building. If the building is to be constructed up to the property boundary, the boundary trap riser or inspection shaft will need to be recessed into the external wall to allow access for maintenance and clearance of blockages.
- Alternatively, and subject to approval by the relevant authority (or council where applicable), the boundary trap or inspection shaft may be relocated to the basement, footpath or right of way. Where installed in an easement, footpath or right of way, a heavy cover must be used. Note that some authorities require that the heavy cover be located at a specified depth below surface level.
- If a low-level vent (ground vent) is required to be fitted to a boundary trap riser, the DN100 vent must be recessed in the wall.



- Where the boundary trap or inspection shaft is not part of a combined drain or unit development, you may build over either riser or shaft.

In the case of both concrete slab and timber floors, the riser or shaft:

- Must have an inspection cap installed at ground or floor level.
- Must be readily accessible for inspection, and clearance of blockages with at least 1m vertical clearance above the ground or floor level.
- Must have overflow provision to protect the property against sewerage surcharge.
- In the case of boundary traps, include provision for downstream ventilation as required.
- Must be at least DN100 and in the case of slab floors (not subject to vehicular traffic) finish with an approved access cap or fitting.

For deemed-to-satisfy guidance on building over a boundary trap riser or inspection shaft at the property connection point refer to AS/NZS 3500.2, clause 4.4 Inspection shafts and boundary traps.

Redeveloping and renewing drains

When redeveloping and renewing drains, two frequently asked questions are:

1. If a site is to be redeveloped, can I use the existing drains?
2. If a building is to be demolished and it is serviced by a combined drain, who is responsible for renewal of the drain?

In either case, if the existing drain is a mortar jointed clay drain then the drain must be replaced as follows:

- For other than a combined drain – back to the authority's sewer connection point.
- For combined drains – from property boundary to property boundary.

If a boundary trap and riser has been previously renewed in either PVC-U or cast-iron pipe, or if an existing drain is in a material other than mortar jointed clay, then the installation may remain provided the drains conformance with all relevant requirements of the Plumbing Code of Australia (PCA) can be verified.

If conformance cannot be verified the site developer or property owner is responsible for replacement of the drain (see Figure 1).

For guidance on the deemed-to-satisfy re-use of existing sanitary drains refer to AS/NZS 3500.2 clause 3.16

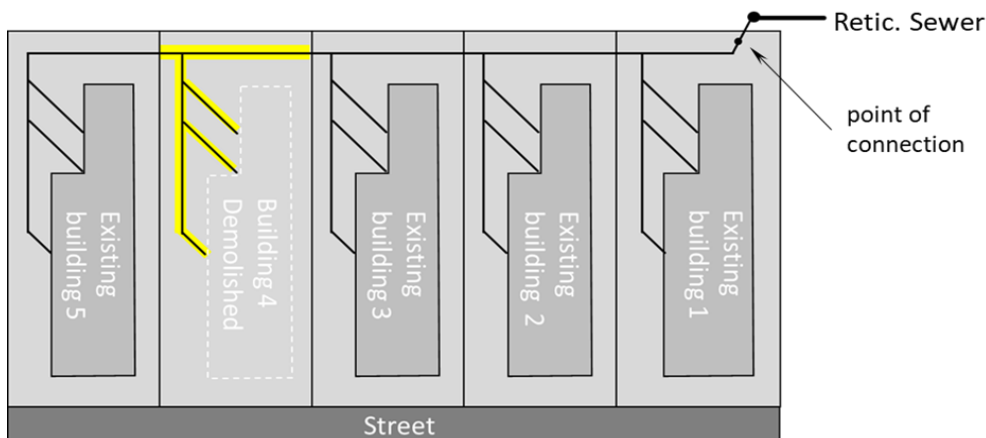
Note: When seeking guidance from AS/NZS 3500.2, Victoria also has a number of additions and variations to this standard listed at Schedule 10, Vic Part C2- Sanitary drainage systems, NCC 2022 Volume Three - Plumbing Code of Australia.



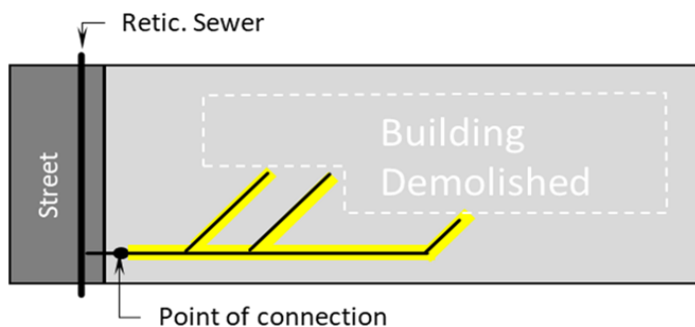
For the laying of a combined sanitary drain, you may want to issue a protection works notice to the owner of the adjoining property. <https://www.vba.vic.gov.au/consumers/home-renovation-essentials/protecting-adjoining-properties>



COMBINED PROPERTY DRAIN



INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY DRAIN



All highlighted parts of these drains must be renewed or conformance with the PCA verified

Figure 1 - Example of a redevelopment site

VBA owned images

Related Documentation

- Building Act 1993
- Plumbing Regulations 2018
- National Construction Code 2022 Volume Three - Plumbing Code of Australia
- AS/NZS 3500.2:2021 – Part 2: Sanitary Plumbing and Drainage

List of Amendments

- Update format and content review
- References to Plumbing Regulations 2008 removed and reference to 2018 included.
- Topics have been refined to improve readability
- Figures have been removed where no longer current



Document history

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Contact Us

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