

# Plumbing Compliance Certificates – Obligations and common enquiries

## Q&A

*The following answers have been provided to questions asked during the Plumbing Compliance Certificates – Obligations and common enquiries webinar on 25 May 2023.*

*The answers provided are correct as of 21 June 2023.*

*Some questions have been consolidated to avoid duplication.*

### **Where can I find a copy of the presentation slides?**

A copy of the presentation slides and recording of the webinar are available from the [VBA website](#).

### **What is the first course of action if a plumber refuses to issue a compliance certificate?**

Where a compliance certificate is required, a plumber is required by law to provide a copy of the compliance certificate for any plumbing work that they carry out or supervise. The plumber is also required to lodge a copy of the compliance certificate with the VBA. It is an offence under the Building Act 1993 to not do so.

If the plumber refuses to provide you with a copy of the compliance certificate, contact the plumber by email or letter and request a copy of the certificate. If you don't receive an adequate response, you can lodge a complaint on the VBA website (via VBA360).

### **Can a building owner undertake plumbing work, such as stormwater, sanitary, gas and roofing, on their own house without a compliance certificate?**

No. All regulated plumbing work must be carried out by an appropriately registered or licensed plumbing practitioner. Work that is carried out by an unqualified person can be dangerous and is not covered by insurance, this is why it is an offence under the *Building Act 1993* for an unregistered or unlicensed person to carry out regulated plumbing work. Furthermore, a person without the appropriate qualifications and training attempting to carry out this work may cause significant harm to their own and other building occupants' health and safety, as well as major property damage.

### **What is the timeline for rectifying non-compliant plumbing work?**

Where non-compliance has been identified as the result of a routine audit or inspection the work must be rectified within 14 days.

### **What is six-year rule / ten-year guarantee?**

All regulated plumbing work is covered by insurance for six years under a compliance certificate. However, plumbing action may be brought for defective work for up to ten years from the date the compliance certificate was issued.



**If a roof plumber fails to issue a compliance certificate due to a dispute with the owner and the owner obtains a compliance certificate from another roof plumber who didn't undertake the works, can the relevant building surveyor accept that compliance certificate?**

A plumber is able to complete and certify work started by another plumber, provided, the second plumber has inspected the work prior to and carried out any further work necessary to complete the project, before certifying their work.

**How do I get any non-compliant work rectified?**

The VBA recommends that you first attempt to resolve any issues with the practitioner directly. If that fails, you can submit a complaint to the VBA, which may require you to provide an independent report identifying the alleged defects and any other evidence, such as photos.

**Does a "cooling tower" include a domestic evaporative cooler?**

No. Although an evaporative cooler is not a cooling tower, it is still subject to the compliance certificate requirements if the total value of the work is valued at \$750 or more.

**If it involves mechanical services work but not cooling tower, does it need a compliance certificate?**

Any regulated mechanical services work valued at \$750 or more (for materials and labour) is subject to a compliance certificate.

**Is a compliance certificate needed for Backflow Prevention testing?**

A compliance certificate is required if the total value (materials and labour) of the work is \$750 or more.

**If a plumber has undertaken plumbing work where non-compliance is identified during the handover stage, who is responsible for the repair – the builder or the plumber?**

The plumber is responsible for any plumbing work which they have undertaken or supervised.

**Is there a restriction on what a plumber can charge a customer for a compliance certificate?**

Yes. The fee for a compliance certificate is \$37.20 (for 2022/3). The cost increases by a small amount on 1 July each year.

Any additional amounts charged by the plumber to the customer as administration costs is separate to a compliance certificate.

**Who is responsible for rectifying defect plumbing works during construction and after an occupancy permit has been issued?**

The practitioner that carried out or supervised the works is responsible for those works. A practitioner carries liability for the installation of plumbing work for a ten-year period from the time the compliance certificate was issued.

**If a plumber fails to properly fill out a compliance certificate, who is liable when a claim is made?**

The plumber that undertakes or supervises the work is responsible for that work and for completing the compliance certificate. Compliance certificates are required to be accurate, and amendments can be made to a compliance certificate via VBA360, which will appear as Version 2.

**What happens if a customer asks for a compliance certificate for the servicing of their gas ducted heater and are willing to pay for it?**

A compliance certificate can be issued for any thing defined as plumbing work; however, it is not mandatory to issue a compliance certificate for service work only. Compliance certificates are only



mandatory if the total value of plumbing work is \$750 or more. A gas servicing record is legally required to be provided to the VBA and is issued to the customer every time gas servicing work is carried out.

**If I invoice a real estate agent \$1200 for work done at three properties, can I issue one compliance certificate?**

No - compliance certificates are required for each separately metered property address where the total value of plumbing work is \$750 or more, includes below ground sanitary drainage work or certain types of gasfitting work.

**How can the plumber include the total cost of labour and materials if the builder purchased the materials?**

Plumbers are expected to estimate the value of the material where the material is supplied by the builder or property owner.

**What happens if a plumber refuses to repair defective works?**

You can lodge a detailed complaint via VBA360.

**Are plumbers required to print off and keep compliance certificates for ten years?**

The *Building Act 1993* states that the plumber should keep records for ten years. These can be kept digitally for your own records and in the VBA360 system. There is no requirement to print a hard copy.

**If an electrician does the plumbing for a split system air conditioner, and is authorised to do so, do they issue a plumbing compliance certificate?**

The electrician must hold the appropriate VBA issued plumbing licence for installing split systems and must issue a plumbing compliance certificate for plumbing work valued at \$750 or more. They may also be required to give the customer a Certificate Of Electrical Safety (COES) for any electrical work that is incidental to the installation.

**I would like to know a little more detail when it comes to compliance certificates and roof maintenance.**

Some types of roof maintenance work are not defined as plumbing work and therefore do not require a compliance certificate. The Plumbing Regulations 2018 (Regulation 25) define Roofing (Stormwater) work. The definition includes what is and what is not Roofing (Stormwater) work. The Plumbing Regulations 2018 can be downloaded free of charge from the [Legislation Victoria website](#).

**Is it necessary to supply certification for sheet roofing for carports (and other Class 10's)? If so, why?**

A freestanding Class 10a building that has a floor area not exceeding 10 m<sup>2</sup> may be exempt from the compliance certificate requirements, except where the Class 10a building requires connection to a below-ground drain or retention tank. If the carport or shed exceeds 10 m<sup>2</sup> and the total value of plumbing work is \$750 or more, then a compliance certificate is required.

**Is a compliance certificate required when completing testing and inspections of fire services valued at \$750 or more?**

Yes - if routine servicing, maintenance, testing or commissioning of any part of a water service used for firefighting is performed and the total value of plumbing work is \$750 or more.

**Are we supposed to provide all model and serial numbers of every appliance we install?**

This is up to the individual practitioner. It is advisable and would be good practice to include the model and serial number of every appliance, as this may protect both the customer and the plumber.

**Does all gas work still need a compliance certificate?**

No, only gasfitting work covered in section 221ZH (1b, 1ba, 1bb) of the *Building Act 1993*, or where the value of the work is \$750 or more requires a compliance certificate to be issued. For complex gasfitting work, contact Energy Safe Victoria (ESV). The *Building Act 1993* is free to download from the [Legislation Victoria website](#).

**Do you need a compliance certificate when capping off a type A gas appliance? For example, when repairing ten toilets at a school for \$800.**

Yes - capping a gas line and/or branch line requires a compliance certificate as it is deemed a modification/alteration to a gas service, however, if the Type A appliance is located in a school it is considered a Complex Gas Installation and you should seek advice from Energy Safe Victoria.

**Where can I find sample compliance certificate?**

Head to the [VBA website](#) to find a sample compliance certificate.