Media Release

For general release

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Do-it-yourself plumbing is likely to be illegal

Did you know that you are breaking the law if you carry out do-it-yourself plumbing work?

The Victorian Building Authority, the state’s regulatory watchdog, says the regulations make it clear that it is illegal to carry out home plumbing work if you are not a licensed or registered plumber.

“Licensed Victorian plumbers are highly skilled and professional tradespeople,” the VBA’s Director of Compliance and Performance, Murray Smith, said.

“They are equipped to carry out plumbing work to meet health and safety standards and are obliged to ensure the work complies with the regulations.”

In Victoria, licensed plumbers must certify that their plumbing work meets relevant legislation and standards with the issue of a compliance certificate to homeowners for work valued at $750 or more. Most below ground sewer work and gas-fitting also requires a compliance certificate, irrespective of the value of the work.

In the 2012-13 financial year 318,469 compliance certificates were lodged.

Mr Smith explained “the compliance certificate verifies that the job has been done in accordance with the plumbing laws. It must be issued within five days of the work being completed and then reported to the VBA. The work may then be the subject of a random audit by the VBA.

“Random audits are a safeguard for consumers and confirmation for plumbers that work performed by them is healthy, safe and compliant.

“During an audit, plumbing work is inspected by an independent third party. This process is designed to ensure plumbing and gas-fitting work is of a high standard to protect public health and safety.”

Mr Smith said that an added measure of consumer protection in Victoria is that plumbers must have the required minimum insurance cover to hold a licence.

“Do-it-yourself plumbing is not covered by insurance and does not comply with the requirements in the plumbing code, regulations and standards.

“Penalties for performing illegal work, or for performing plumbing work while not registered or licensed, are substantial.”

ENDS

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