Victorian Building Authority

Virtual Audits/Inspections

We regulate Victoria's building and plumbing industries – protecting the community and empowering practitioners

VICTORIAN BUILDING AUTHORITY
BUILDING CONFIDENCE

VICTORIA State Government

Introduction

The Victorian Building Authority's (VBA's) Regulatory Approach establishes our strategy to regulate Victoria's building and plumbing industries and sets out the goals and outcomes we are committed to working towards.

Our Regulatory Approach provides industry, the public, other regulators, government and our staff with a clear statement of how we aim to perform our role and what Victorians can expect from the VBA.

The Regulatory Approach also guides how we set priorities, make resource allocation decisions and develop policies that guide our operations.

Our mission and outcomes

Our mission is to regulate for a quality-built environment in Victoria.

Our vision is for:

1. **A trusted regulator**
2. **A respected industry**
3. **Transparent**
4. **Responsive**

Strategic Objectives

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- Protect our community
- Empower industry, practitioner's and consumers
- Respond to risks and concerns
- Influence industry and key decision makers
- Improve our culture and capability

Pro active vs Audits

Plumbing Audit Program

- The VBA conducts risk-based compliance audits and below ground drainage inspections of plumbing work throughout Victoria.
- Compliance Auditors conduct on-site audits to sample performed plumbing work based on the lodgment of compliance certificates. The Auditor's role is to ensure that the plumbing work complies with all relevant plumbing laws and standards.
- The compliance certificates to be audited each month are selected using risk-based criteria.

Proactive Inspections Program

- The Victorian Building Authority (VBA) Proactive Inspections Program (PIP) involves teams of building and plumbing inspectors who are VBA Authorised Officers inspecting building and plumbing works under construction throughout Victoria, with the purpose of reducing non-compliant construction work.
- By inspecting work under construction, the VBA can address significant failures early, resulting in better outcomes for all involved; rectification is often easier, (where the cost of rectification is covered by practitioners not the owner) and it avoids impacting the safety, health, and amenity of future residents if the non-compliance had remained undetected.

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Technology

- The VBA utilises the digital meeting platform MS TEAMS to conduct Virtual Audits.
- Trial and Testing was completed and a slide pack created to assist the audit and scheduling staff walk practitioners through, step by step, what they should be seeing on their phones/iPads and how to navigate to the app.
- Powers of Entry.
- As an authorised person under the Building Act 1993, 228E-Entry for monitoring and other purposes, a VBA inspector/Compliance Auditor must obtain written consent, via our Powers of Entry documents, from the building occupier to enter and inspect the building/plumbing. DocuSign has been utilised for the Powers of Entry form with templates made for the schedulers to send to plumbers, homeowners and auditors.

Keeping it simple, phones and tablets, cost.

The VBA didn’t want to increase costs for practitioners by asking them to purchase expensive video equipment to use in our Virtual Audits Program. Mobile device’s such as phones and tablets are in everybody's tool kit.

Be mindful of battery power whilst conducting Virtual Audits, tablets do provide a larger battery capacity and a better viewing screen.

Guidelines & Process

Heads up and Safety- 5 mins prior, Call LP to ensure meeting is to take place at scheduled time and they are present onsite.

Introduction/identification- Once good connection is established, introductions and identifications exchanged and confirmed, including property address.

Reinforce safety- Remind the LP of OH&S and not to walk around the site looking through his phone.

Legal- Advising LP/REP the audit or rectification is going to be recorded, and then read out a disclaimer/warning against self-incrimination. Advising the LP/REP to direct to works that have been completed on the certificate and that screenshots will be taken of areas if required.

Audit- Questions to be directed to the LP/Rep of installations/Plumbing works to gain more knowledge of potential Plumbing noncompliance.

Follow up- Advising the LP you will contact them via Mobile to discuss the result of the audit and faults identified and he in turn can notify owner / occupier. And any questions/inquiries of fault items are to be directed to VBA's technical email address.

Completed- Audit results finalised via VBA audit application. Video stored in Stream.

Learnings

What Has not worked and why

- Roofing Auditing – Safety Concerns.
- Drainage Inspections – Risk type of testing required.
- Carbon Monoxide Auditing – Risk type of testing required.
- Phone IT connection – Poor Vision or no connection.

WHAT'S WORKED

APPLIANCE AUDITS

GAS APPLIANCE AUDITS

RENOVATION AUDITS

RECTIFICATION

GREATER REGIONAL REACH

Progress and results 2020-2021

Program developed for the Covid-19 environment to continue with our regulatory function, minimize movement within the community and extend reach

1898 Virtual Audits/Inspections completed 2020/21

Rectification notices reduced by 135%, nothing outstanding 30 days

Training and Fluid Improvement of systems

“360 look”

Next steps For VBA

Increase	Increase Focus on Regional reach using Virtual Auditing
Balance	Balance approach to field Vs. Virtual Auditing based on Risk
Use	Use Digital where it makes sense for Rectification
Improve	Improve capability of the team “Auditors and Inspectors to be up skilled”

Q & A

Thank you