



Plumbing Newsflash

Building Certifiers

Building Designers

Plumbing Inspectors

Council inspections of plumbing and drainage installation

Purpose:

The purpose of this newsflash is to remind council plumbing inspectors of the legislative requirements in regard to carrying out inspections of plumbing and drainage work. For example, inspectors need to inspect the installation of polyethylene pressure pipes below ground for water services within a private property.

Background:

There are concerns that incorrect installation of polyethylene pressure pipes below ground is leading to the failure of products, water wastage and unnecessary costs to homeowners. For example, recent media reports from the Gold Coast claim that millions of litres of water are being lost through broken poly pipes.

Legislative requirements:

- Section 43 (1) of the Standard Water Supply Law requires that a person who performs water-plumbing work (other than minor necessary work) must not cover the work before an inspector inspects it.
- Section 43 (4) also requires an inspector of the local government to inspect the water plumbing and, if necessary, have it tested as well.
- Section 49 of the Standard Sewerage Law requires similar provisions for sanitary plumbing and drainage.
- The National Plumbing and Drainage Code AS/NZS 3500.2.2 requires that polyethylene pipes and fittings must be manufactured to Australian Standard and certified by Quality Assurance Services (QAS) with a MAP certification.
- Polyethylene pressure pipes below ground must be installed in accordance with AS/NZS 3500.1.2 (Water Supply – Acceptable Solution) and AS 2033 (Installation of polyethylene pipe systems).

Interpretation

The Department advises that in regard to polyethylene pressure pipes below ground, the requirements set out in the Standard Sewerage Law, including AS/NZS 3500.1.2 and AS 2033, must be followed as listed below:

- Only pipes and fittings certified by QAS having a MAP certification must be used.
- The water service must be surrounded with not less than 75 mm of compacted sand, or fine grain soil, with no hard-edged objects coming in contact with or resting against the polyethylene pipes or fittings in accordance with Section 1.2 of AS/NZS 3500.1.2.
- Any back fill within 300 mm of the top of the pipe must be free of builder's waste, bricks, concrete pieces, rocks or similar material that would be retained on a 75 mm sieve.
- Trench width must be as narrow as possible but not less than twice the outside diameter of the pipe for pipes smaller than 125 mm.
- Water services must not show any leakage when tested to a hydrostatic pressure of 1500 kPa for a period of not less than 30 minutes. The test must be performed on installed piping prior to burial or if buried, the joints must be exposed until completion of the test.
- Where water services are installed below ground in private properties, the minimum cover in accordance with section 5 of AS/NZS 3500.1.2 shall be as follows:

Location	Minimum cover measured below ground surface level, mm
Subjected to vehicular traffic	300
Under house or concrete	75
All other locations	225

Note: Water services with flexible joints laid below ground in sandy conditions, may require a minimum cover of 600 mm.

Please contact Kris Nangia on (07) 323 71114 should you require further information regarding these matters.