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HOT WATER DELIVERY TEMPERATURES

Which buildings are affected?

The new *Standard Water Supply Law* under the *Sewerage and Water Supply Act 1949* commenced on 30 April 1998. The Law requires residential, institutional and some assembly buildings to have hot water delivery temperatures at fixtures used for personal hygiene, regulated to the maximum temperatures specified in AS/NZS3500.1.2. Fixtures used for personal hygiene include a shower, bath and handbasin, but do not include a kitchen sink or laundry tub.

The purpose of these limitations is to prevent accidental scalding of persons, particularly young children and aged persons. Because the young and the aged are most at risk, a Queensland variation to the Australian Standard in section 38(3) of the *Standard Water Supply Law*, applies the temperature limitations only to those classes of buildings where these persons are most likely to be scalded. Commercial and industrial buildings have been excluded.

How are the limitations applied?

Clause 1.6.2(a) of AS/NZS3500.1.2 specifies a maximum hot water delivery temperature of 45°C, at the personal hygiene fixtures in nursing homes, schools, early childhood centres and other similar facilities.

Clause 1.6.2(b) is varied by the *Standard Water Supply Law* and limits the maximum delivery temperature of 50°C to Class 1, 2, 3 and 4 buildings.

The Standard is not specific on how the limitations are achieved. A person may decide to have devices fitted in the hot water line to reduce the temperatures. Such in-line devices must only be fitted by a licensed plumber. Alternatively, a person may fit end-of-line devices at the hot water outlet.

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When do the maximum delivery temperatures apply?

The Standard applies only to new hot water installations and like the *Standard Water Supply Laws* is not retrospective. If it is only the water heater that is to be replaced, the new requirements to limit delivery temperatures do not apply.

For example, in the case of an existing dwelling, the water heater and the hot water reticulation would have to be replaced, or new reticulation to another bathroom or ensuite installed, for the temperature limitations to apply. Standards Australia will shortly publish a ruling which supports this interpretation.

Who is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Standard?

The licensed plumber who installs the hot water reticulation must ensure that on completion of the work, the delivery temperatures at the specified outlets comply with the Standard.