



Building and plumbing newsflash number 482

Proposed plumbing and building reforms and revised pools guideline

Purpose

To advise proposed amendments to plumbing and building laws are included in the Sustainable Planning and Other Legislation Bill 2011 (the Bill) that was introduced into the Legislative Assembly on 11 October 2011 and a new guideline for pool owners and property agents is available.

Background

The objectives of the Bill include:

- reducing red tape and compliance costs for routine plumbing work
- aligning *Building Act 1975* (BA) terminology for certifiers with the National Accreditation Framework
- clarifying the relationship between local planning instruments and building assessment provisions.

A new guideline for pool owners and property agents is available from the department's website to provide comprehensive and current information on pool safety compliance.

Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 (PDA) amendments

The Bill proposes amendments to the PDA to augment the powers of the Plumbing Industry Council and provide a framework for expanding the scope of 'notifiable minor work' (NMW) which will be renamed 'notifiable work' (NW).

At present, plumbers are required to apply for an approval from local government for regulated plumbing work and pay a lodgement fee when submitting an application—typically between \$300 and \$1600. The application and inspection process can result in delays of up to eight days or more.



Under the existing system, NMW can be performed by a licensed plumber or drainer without having to first obtain a compliance approval from local government. Instead, the work is notified to local government on completion by lodgement of a Notifiable minor work—Form 4.

The proposed expanded NW category will include all plumbing work after the initial construction of a house. Examples are additional fixtures installed in bathrooms and kitchen refurbishments. Plumbing and drainage related to new buildings will continue to require an approval and be renamed 'compliance assessable work'. Also, the term 'Other Minor Work' will be changed to 'Minor Work' (MW). A regulation is proposed to specify the work for each class of building that is subject to the new NW and MW categories.

Licensees will be required to notify NW to Queensland's plumbing regulator, the Plumbing Industry Council, instead of to local government. Licensees will be able to lodge forms manually or by using an online lodgement service. The Plumbing Industry Council's regulatory role is proposed to be expanded to include undertaking auditing and training programs, and maintaining a state-wide electronic database of NW forms. A state-wide fee structure is expected to deliver cost savings to plumbers as well as to consumers.

Building Act 1975 (BA) amendments

National Accreditation Framework for Building Surveyors

It is proposed to amend the BA to align the terminology used for building certifiers with the 'National Accreditation Framework for Building Surveyors'. The proposed amendments replace the terms:

- 'building surveyor' with 'building certifier-level 1'
- 'assistant building surveyor' with 'building certifier-level 2'
- 'building surveying technician' with 'building certifier-level 3'

This will improve consistency of terminology used across the industry and clarify terms for building practitioners. The Bill includes transitional arrangements for people currently licensed under the BA.

Clarifying the relationship between building and planning instruments

Proposed amendments to the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* (SPA) and the BA will clarify the relationship between building assessment provisions and local planning instruments, local government resolutions and local laws, so that the building assessment provisions are not overridden by these instruments. The proposed amendments are intended to reduce delays and costs resulting from conflicts.



New pools guideline

The new guideline for pool owners and property agents provides direction on:

- selling and leasing
- neighbouring properties and dividing fences
- compliance considerations for fences and gates, including the management of trees, bushes and shrubs
- the pool safety register
- the pool safety inspection process
- repairing a pool barrier
- the Pool Safety Council
- local government's role
- exemptions and variations
- offences and penalties
- immersion reporting and inspections.

It is available from www.dlgp.qld.gov.au/resources/guideline/pool-safety/guideline-for-pool-owners-and-property-agents.pdf

Further information

The Sustainable Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011 and Explanatory Notes can be viewed at www.parliament.qld.gov.au/en/work-of-assembly/bills-and-legislation/whats-new

Contact for further information

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