

Water efficient fixtures in new houses, townhouses and units

What water efficient fixtures are required in new dwellings?

The following water efficient fixtures need be installed in new houses and townhouses (class 1 buildings) and units in multi-unit residential buildings (class 2):

- **Toilets**—minimum 4-star dual flush, as rated under the Water Efficiency and Labelling Standards scheme (WELS)
- **Tapware**—minimum 3-star WELS rated for kitchen sinks, basins and laundry troughs
- **Showerheads**—minimum 3-star WELS rated showerheads.

The standards for water efficient fixtures in dwellings have been required since 1 March 2009 under the *Queensland Development Code 4.1—Sustainable buildings* (QDC 4.1).

Do garden irrigation systems need to be water efficient?

New and replacement garden irrigation systems on properties with these dwellings need comply with the “Efficient irrigation for water conservation guideline”, which provides the standard for efficient irrigation systems. This guideline is available on the department’s website (www.hpw.qld.gov.au).

Water efficient garden irrigation systems are required under the Queensland Plumbing and Wastewater Code.

Check with your local council for other possible irrigation and water restrictions that may apply in the area.

How have these standards changed when renovating an existing home?

Since 1 November 2012, the requirement to install water efficient toilets, tapware and/or showerheads with the renovation of an existing dwelling no longer applies.

If a garden irrigation system is to be replaced it needs to be water efficient and comply with the current standard.

How do these water efficiency requirements apply to rental properties?

Since 1 April 2008, landlords of rental properties have been able to pass on full water consumption costs to tenants where the building has been individually metered and water efficient fixtures—showerheads, toilets and tapware to kitchen sinks, basins and laundry tubs—are installed. Charging arrangements must be stated in the tenancy agreement.

Who can install water efficient fixtures?

Toilets and tapware must be installed by a licensed plumber. Showerheads may be installed by the homeowner.

A landscaper or homeowner can install a garden irrigation system.

What are the benefits of water efficient fixtures?

Installing water efficient fixtures around the home not only saves water, but can also provide ongoing savings with household water bills.

Despite successful efforts of householders to reduce their average water use in recent years, water conservation remains essential with Queensland's growing population, especially given that rainfall conditions can be highly variable.

These standards can also reduce demand on water resources and infrastructure as it encourages more efficient use of water around the home.

What are the key features of a water efficient garden irrigation system?

If you decide to install a garden irrigation system, the following fittings should be considered to improve its water efficiency:

- a tap timer
- rain sensor
- soil moisture sensor
- number and type of water spray emitters.

What size rainwater tank pump is needed if a rainwater tank supplies water for the garden irrigation system?

Check with your rainwater tank supplier or garden irrigation system retailer about the best pump size for servicing the garden irrigation system, as well as the property's other water connections, that may be drawn from the rainwater tank. Consideration should especially be given if the rainwater tank is plumbed internally, such as toilet(s) and the cold water outlet of the washing machine.

For more information

For more information about water efficient fixtures in new houses, townhouses and units refer to the Department's website at www.hpw.qld.gov.au.