

# Plumbing newsflash number 390

## Plumbing and drainage licence endorsements

### Purpose

To advise of plumbing regulation amendments to allow provisional plumbers and provisional drainers to hold endorsements, introduce a new endorsement for installing solar and heat pump hot water systems (SHPs) and classify the installation of SHPs as notifiable minor work where an installer holds an endorsement.

### Background

#### Endorsements on licenses

The Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2003 (PDR) provides the qualifications and practical experience required for particular endorsements on plumber's licenses and drainer's licenses.

The PDR formerly only permitted an endorsement to be applied to a plumbers or drainers licence, and not a provisional licence. An endorsement allows for a greater scope of work to be undertaken by the licence holder.

#### Installation of solar and heat pump hot water systems

The state government, through the Queensland Solar Hot Water Program (QSHWP) has committed to facilitating the installation of up to 200 000 SHPs in Queensland over the next three years to 2012.

#### Current approval process

The PDA requires a compliance permit or compliance certificate to be issued by local government before regulated work is carried out to ensure the work complies with the Standard Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2003 (SPDR). Depending upon the local government, approval will be granted through either a compliance permit (up to 20 days for approval) or compliance certificate process (commencing work in 48 hours with a certificate issued upon completion). Inspections are then required when the work is complete in both cases.

### Legislation

*Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002* Section 83

Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2003 Sections 7, 8, 11, Part 4 and Schedule 3

Standard Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2003 Schedule 2

### PDR and SPDR amendments

#### Amending the current licensing regime for endorsements on licenses

The PDR has been amended to allow a provisional plumber or provisional drainer to obtain licence endorsements, after satisfying the relevant qualifications and experience requirements set by the Plumbers and Drainers Board (the Board).

A provisional plumber or provisional drainer is a person who has completed a trade apprenticeship, but not the business principles competencies which are completed after the apprenticeship training. Provisional plumbers and drainers have gained the necessary skills through the apprenticeship which would enable them to undertake the additional training to gain an endorsement.

## **Introduction of an endorsement on a plumbers' or provisional plumbers' licence for the installation of SHPs**

The PDR has also been amended to create a licence endorsement for the installation, replacement, repair and maintenance of SHPs.

To gain the endorsement, plumbers and provisional plumbers would be required to undertake a three-day course approved by the Plumbers and Drainers Board.

Introducing the endorsement ensures that industry is appropriately skilled and there are sufficient plumbers and provisional plumbers available to deliver services for the QSHWP. Allowing provisional plumbers to hold the endorsement will also provide employment opportunities for provisional plumbers and it will allow a greater number of skilled plumbers to participate in the delivery of the QSHWP.

Plumbers and provisional plumbers have until 31 December 2010 to obtain the new endorsement. From 1 January 2011, all plumbers and provisional plumbers who install, repair, replace and maintain SHPs will be required to have successfully completed the training and gained the endorsement.

To facilitate transition to the new arrangements a plumber or provisional plumber who does not hold an endorsement may use the existing approval and inspection processes until 31 December 2010.

Skillstech, Master Plumbers Association of Queensland (MPAQ) and Careers Australia Institute of Training (CAIT) have advised they will deliver training in the new competency. To find out more please contact:

**Skillstech Australia** 1800 654 447

**MPAQ** 3273 0800

**CAIT** 1300 887 696

## **Use of recognition of prior learning (RPL) process to obtain course qualification**

RPL assessment can result in applicants being granted partial or full results in a qualification without undertaking formal study. RPL is undertaken through a registered training organisation, not the Plumbers and Drainers Board. RPL formally recognises current skills and knowledge, gained through previous 'informal' learning—i.e. work experience, life experience and education.

### **How can applicants prepare for the RPL process?**

Assessments are conducted in a variety of ways. Being prepared can save valuable time and make the RPL process simpler. To best prepare for the RPL process, applicants should:

- be prepared to talk about their job roles and work history by bringing a resumé or work history. To assist with this write down a few points about any paid and unpaid work, both previous and current
- provide examples of installations undertaken for both heat pumps and solar hot water systems
- provide evidence, which may include copies of approval documents and plans, compliance certificates issued by council demonstrating completed work
- bring position descriptions and any performance appraisals received from industry training or workplace experience
- consider the possibilities for workplace contact—for example, if workplace management supports goals to become qualified and you may decide to authorise the assessor contacting your workplace or previous workplaces to have your skills validated
- think about who can confirm your skill level, such as current or recent supervisors who have seen you work in the past 18 months and will be able to confirm your skills, or community contacts or clients who can vouch for your skill level
- collect any certificates from in-house and/or vendor training or formal training previously completed.

### **Installation of SHPs and Form 4 Notifiable minor work**

Form 4 has been amended to include a new section which specifically deals with the installation of SHPs.

The SPDR has been amended so that the replacement of SHPs (undertaken by a plumber or provisional plumber who holds the SHP endorsement) is now included as notifiable minor work. This means the responsible person, now only needs to lodge a Form 4—notifiable minor work, instead of applying to the local government using the Form 1 and Form 2 compliance certificate or compliance permit process.

In addition, local governments may charge a set \$25 fee for the lodgement of the Form 4. However, local governments may, by resolution decide not to charge this fee. The fee will not apply to any other work where a Form 4 is submitted. Revenue that is collected will be used by local governments to fund the administration and auditing process for SHP installations.

### **Form 4—Notifiable minor work and auditing**

Upon receipt of the Form 4, local governments may audit work for compliance. Given that installers of SHPs will have undertaken training to gain an endorsement, there can be a greater level of confidence that installations are being undertaken correctly. Therefore it is anticipated that only a percentage of installations would need to be inspected for auditing purposes.

### **Requirements for new homes and the installation of SHPs**

A plumber or a provisional plumber who does not hold an endorsement may use the Form 1 and Form 2 process for the installation of SHPs until 31 December 2010.

From 1 January 2011 a plumber or a provisional plumber must hold an endorsement to install SHPs. In new homes the installation of SHPs must be undertaken using the Form 1 and Form 2 compliance process as part of the usual plumbing approval process for new homes. Form 1 and Form 2 are intended to cover regulated work for new construction and the Form 4—notifiable minor work is generally intended to be used for selected minor alterations to existing buildings, as specified in the SPDR Schedule 2.

## **Contact for further information**

Department of Infrastructure and Planning  
Building Codes Queensland Division

tel +61 7 3239 6369

[buildingcodes@dip.qld.gov.au](mailto:buildingcodes@dip.qld.gov.au)

**DISCLAIMER:** The information contained in this Newsflash is provided by the State of Queensland in good faith. The material is general in nature and before relying on the material in any important matter, users should carefully evaluate its accuracy, currency, completeness and relevance for their purpose. It is not intended as a substitute for consulting the relevant legislation or for obtaining appropriate professional advice relevant to your particular circumstances. The State of Queensland cannot accept responsibility or liability for any loss, damage, cost or expense you might incur as a result of the use of or reliance on information contained in this Newsflash. It is not intended to be, and should not be relied upon as the ultimate and/or complete source of information.