



Building and plumbing newsflash number 472

Exemptions for raising houses, extended registration period for pools and combination hand basin/cisterns

Purpose

To advise:

- raising homes in flood-prone areas has been facilitated by an exemption from the sustainability upgrade requirements under the QDC and BCA and prescribing relevant plumbing work as 'notifiable minor work'
- the revised date for registration of regulated pools is 4 November 2011
- integrated handbasin/cisterns may now be installed in class 1a, 2 and 4 buildings.

Issues

Raising houses subject to flood or storm surge events

Raising a house can be a way of avoiding future water damage to homes from floods or storm surges associated with tropical cyclones. House-raising works require a building and a plumbing approval. The building approval involves consideration of compliance with the sustainability requirements of the Queensland Development Code mandatory part 4.1—Sustainable buildings (QDC 4.1). Also, work may not proceed until a plumbing permit is in place.

Compliance with the energy and water efficiency performance requirements of QDC 4.1 can involve, for example, the installation of energy-efficient air-conditioners and lighting and water efficient toilets and tap ware.

To minimise costs for homeowners who are raising their homes to make them more resilient to future flood and storm surge events, the QDC 4.1 has been amended to relax its requirements where:

- a building certifier has certified in writing that the building has been affected by a flood or storm surge
- the building is located in a natural hazard management area (flood)
- a local government has declared that the building is likely to be affected by a future flood or storm surge by written notice given to the owner or notice published on its website.

The building certifier must also certify that the work constitutes, or directly relates to, the raising of the building for flood mitigation purposes.

Work associated with raising a house such as the installation of new stairs and landings still need to comply with all other current building assessment provisions relating to structural integrity and safety.

The exemption from QDC 4.1 does not apply to work that is not related to the house raising, for example if an owner adds a new bathroom or new rooms beneath the home. This work will need to comply with the sustainability requirements of QDC 4.1 to the extent practicable.

The Standard Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2003 (SPDR) has been amended to facilitate house raising by removing the need for a plumbing approval. Instead, plumbing work to disconnect, extend and reconnect existing plumbing and drainage for a house is now prescribed as 'notifiable minor work'. Under the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002*, 'notifiable minor work' must be notified to the relevant local government in the approved form, but there is no need to obtain a plumbing permit prior to undertaking the work. The local government may audit the plumbing work.

Repairs of flood damage

In the case of repairs to a house that sustained damage in floods, building certifiers are encouraged to use their discretion to apply a 'like-for-like' reinstatement of affected homes, so that houses continue to comply with the sustainability standards applicable when the house was built or last renovated.

Extended due date for pool registrations

Under the new Queensland pool safety laws introduced in December 2010 pool owners were required to register their pool by 4 May 2011. This registration date has been extended by six months. The Building Regulation 2006 has been amended to prescribe 4 November 2011 as the new date by which a pool owner must register their pool with the department.

Visit the department's [website](#) to register a pool.

Integrated hand basin/toilet cistern

This water-saving device comprises a hand basin that sits on top of a toilet cistern. When the toilet is flushed, the water supply for the cistern is diverted to the spout of the hand basin for hand washing, which in turn directs and discharges greywater into the cistern for future toilet flushing.

The SPDR has been amended to permit the installation of these devices in classes 1a, 2 and 4 buildings. However, greywater (whether treated or not) is not considered safe for hand washing while rainwater is. Therefore, combination hand basins must not be supplied by greywater. Combination hand basins must be supplied by reticulated potable water or rainwater.

Contact for further information

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