

Building newsflash number 413

Proposed amendments to Queensland Development Code (QDC) for Sustainable buildings and the Queensland Plumbing and Wastewater Code (QPW Code)

Purpose

To advise draft versions of the QDC Mandatory Part (MP) 4.1—Sustainable buildings and QPW code are now available to view on the department's [website](#).

Draft QDC MP4.1—Sustainable buildings

5-star units

The QDC for sustainable buildings is referenced in the Building Regulation 2006. This part was introduced on 1 March 2006 to provide for houses and sole-occupancy units to be designed and built for energy and water efficiency.

On 2 March 2009, the Honourable Anna Bligh MP, Premier and Minister for Arts announced the release of the Government's Cleaner Greener Buildings policy. The policy contained the commitment to introduce minimum 5-star standards for new and renovated units (class 2 buildings) by 1 March 2010.

The revised draft QDC contains provisions that promote Queensland's tropical and sub-tropical lifestyle. An optional credit of up to 1 star is available for new units that include a covered outdoor living area, such as a deck, connected to the unit's living area.

Definition of air-conditioner

The Electricity Regulation 2006 (ER) imposes a sales ban on inefficient air-conditioners. From 1 September 2009, air-conditioners (new or second hand) which do not meet a minimum tested average energy efficiency ratio (EER) of 2.9 are prohibited from being sold in Queensland.

Based on industry feedback, the ER was amended in December 2009 to clarify that the sales ban only applies to vapour compression air-conditioners (i.e. it does not apply to evaporative coolers).

The QDC MP 4.1 bans installation of air-conditioners with an EER of less than 2.9. The definition of air-conditioner in the QDC MP 4.1 will be aligned with the definition of air-conditioner in the ER to clarify that the installation ban only applies to 'vapour compression' air-conditioners.

Draft QPW Code

From 1 January 2010 the QPW Code has required the replacement of an existing hot water system for a class 1 building (houses and townhouses) to be solar, heat pump or gas where the building is located in a gas reticulated area. The replacement of an existing hot water system is only required where the system has failed.

Consultation has revealed that manufacturers of electric resistance hot water systems provide warranties of either 5 or 10 years, and while cases of total failures are rare, in the case of catastrophic failure (normally tank failure) within the warranty period the entire water heater is replaced. To allow for manufacturer's warranties to remain effective, it is proposed to amend Part 7 of the QPW Code to allow home owners to replace their electric resistance hot water systems with another electric resistance hot water system where the system is replaced under warranty.



Legislation

Building Act 1975
Building Regulation 2006
Electricity Regulation 2006
Standard Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2003
Queensland Development Code Mandatory Part 4.1

Contact for further information

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