



Plumbing newsflash number 467

Licence requirements including fire occupational licences and supervising apprentices/provisional plumbers

Purpose

To advise licensed plumbers about:

- their obligations when supervising apprentices or provisional plumbers
- the introduction of fire occupational licences by the Queensland Building Services Authority (QBSA).

Legislation

Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 (PDA)

Standard Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2003 (SPDR)

Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2003 (PDR)

Queensland Building Services Authority Act 1991

Background

Supervision requirements

The PDA requires that only individuals who are appropriately licensed perform work within the scope of their licence.

Sections 119 and 120 of the PDA create offences for persons to:

- perform regulated work unless the person has a licence to undertake that work
- direct or supervise the performance of work without having the appropriate licence themselves.

A person performing unlicensed work or a licensee directing/supervising unlicensed work may receive a fine of \$1000. Alternatively courts may impose higher penalties, up to a maximum penalty of 165 units applies for contravening either of these sections (one penalty unit = \$100).

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Section 4 of the PDR requires regulated or minor plumbing and drainage work to be performed by an appropriately licensed person and it outlines the scope of work for each licence type.

Introduction of occupational fire licences

The Plumbing Industry Council licenses fire protection practitioners whose work involves fire sprinklers, pumps, hydrants and hose reels, as any plumbing work including water system work is regulated by the Plumbing Industry Council. A Plumbing Industry Council licence relating to fire protection work is issued as either an endorsement on an existing plumber's licence or as restricted water plumber—fire protection licence, depending on the qualifications held by the licence applicant.

The QBSA also introduced occupational fire licensing and advised that from 1 January 2011, it is mandatory for all practitioners carrying out or supervising fire protection work to carry a fire occupational licence. The QBSA's fire occupational licensing systems include sprinkler, pumps, hydrants and hose reels. Practitioners who do not need to hold a QBSA fire occupational licence include apprentices, trainees and students.

A table is attached to show [when a QBSA or Plumbing Industry Council licence is required](#). The table covers only the qualification aspects of the licences, for further information on these licences including other accreditation options please visit www.bsa.qld.gov.au

Interpretations

Licence requirements

It is an offence to perform plumbing or drainage work without a current licence and therefore:

- persons who have finished their plumbing or fire sprinkler apprenticeship must apply for their licence before commencing any regulated plumbing work
- licensees who hold a licence that is due to expire must renew it on or before the expiry date. Contact the Plumbing Industry Council on +61 7 3235 4149 to renew a licence
- drainage work may be performed under the direct supervision of a person holding a drainer's licence.

Direct supervision of apprentices

Under section 121 of the PDA, work performed by an apprentice must be undertaken under the direct supervision of a licensed person. A provisional licensee may supervise an apprentice.

It is the responsibility of the licensed person supervising the apprentice to ensure they are present on site and easily accessible to the apprentice to check and oversee the work being performed and for workplace health and safety reasons.

It is the responsibility of the licensed person supervising to demonstrate how work is to be undertaken and to ensure that work completed by the apprentice is compliant with the relevant



plumbing legislation. Failure to provide direct supervision to an apprentice can result in a fine of \$1000 being issued to the supervisor.

Supervision of provisional plumbers

Under section 123 of the PDA, a provisional licensee may only undertake work in accordance with the scope authorised by the licence, and must be supervised by a person who holds the necessary licence and required endorsements.

The supervising plumber must decide if a provisional plumber can be left on site alone to undertake plumbing work competently.

It is the responsibility of the supervising plumber to check that work completed by the provisional plumber is compliant with relevant plumbing legislation. Failure to provide supervision to a provisional plumber can also result in a fine of \$1000 being issued.

Company nominees

A nominee of a company is responsible for ensuring that all plumbing work carried out by the company is “adequately supervised”. A supervising company nominee may also be issued with a fine under section 120 of the PDA for directing unlicensed work (an apprentice not directly supervised may be deemed as unlicensed work, depending on the circumstances and the evidence on hand).

Fire sprinkler work

- Fire sprinkler installers are required to hold a restricted water plumber’s licence or an endorsement on a plumber’s licence, enabling them to install, maintain and test relevant work covered by the scope of the licence. The correct licence or endorsement must be held, before commencing the work.
- Supervisors, foremen and company nominees who direct or supervise plumbing work must ensure that any plumbers/fire sprinkler installers being directed/supervised hold a current plumber’s licence. It is recommended that any plumbers/fire sprinkler installers engaged on a site, record their licence number on their induction form. Apprentices should record “apprentice” as their trade on an induction form. Contact can be made direct to the Plumbing Industry Council on +61 7 3235 4149 to verify a licence number belongs to the licensee, is current and is of the correct type for the scope of work to be undertaken.
- Plumbing Industry Council has developed a generic induction form for companies to use on construction sites. If you would like a copy of this form this can be downloaded from www.dip.qld.gov.au



Contact for further information

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