Connecting to recycled water

A guide for plumbers and builders

About this guide
Class A recycled water offers new residential developments across Melbourne’s outer south east a sustainable water source. This guide outlines South East Water’s requirements for installing recycled water. It supports the industry requirements outlined in the Australian Standard for Water Services AS/NZS 3500.1: 2003 and the Plumbing Industry Commission’s Recycled Water Plumbing Guide. We recommend that you also refer to our Conditions of connection for properties with Class A recycled water.

Key steps
The following information outlines the key steps you need to follow when installing recycled water.

Step 1. Apply for a recycled water connection
Complete South East Water’s Plumbing Application form, including the Connection Required date. Fees apply for dry tapping connections for both drinking water and Class A recycled water connections.

Please refer to the Plumbing Application form for the current fee. In the event that this information is not provided, South East Water will wait for the request before arranging the connection, which will be carried out within four working days of the notification.

Step 2. Arrange inspections
At three key stages during the plumbing installation you need to request an inspection from the Plumbing Industry Commission (PIC):

1. Laying the pipes from the meters to the house.
2. Rough in of the house i.e. pipe work supplying recycled water to the toilets and hose bib taps.
3. Fit-off and commissioning (prior to occupancy).

South East Water collects a fee on behalf of the PIC for these inspections. For further information, current fees and to book inspections, contact the Plumbing Industry Commission on 8792 8221.

These inspections will ensure no cross connections occur between drinking and recycled water and that all requirements for the plumbing installation have been met.

Step 3. Commissioning
The recycled water meter assembly will be restricted with a lockbox until the recycled water plumbing is commissioned by the PIC. The lockbox will be removed by a PIC inspector at the time of the final commissioning inspection. Penalties will apply if the lockbox is removed prior to commissioning. Once commissioned, it is the plumber’s responsibility to provide a compliance certificate and the removable tap handle from the backyard/front yard tap to the property owner.

Safety
While recycled water isn’t suitable for drinking, it is safe to be in contact with. Before preparing food however, we recommend that you wash your hands with soap and drinking water. Due to its high nutrient levels of nitrogen and phosphorous, recycled water run-off should be prevented from flowing into the stormwater drainage system.

Although Victorian guidelines currently allows the use of recycled water for clothes washing, South East Water does not yet permit this use. Houses therefore must not be plumbed for this purpose.

All recycled water plumbing must be completed by a suitably licensed plumber.
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General information about recycled water

What is recycled water?
Recycled water is wastewater that is treated to Class A standard in accordance with Environment Protection Authority and Department of Health guidelines. It is a great alternative to drinking water for non-drinking uses such as toilet flushing and outdoor watering. It’s also a sustainable water solution that qualifies homes for 6 star energy rating.

Why are the taps, pipes and meters purple?
Recycled water installations are coloured purple so those installing or using them can easily identify it. The colour of these items must not be changed. All external recycled water hose bib taps must be purple and incorporate a removable handle and non-standard inlet thread.
They must also have a prohibition sign – Recycled water – do not drink, compliant with AS1319.

Recycled water mains
The recycled water main is laid at the same time as the drinking water main during construction. It is coloured purple and always laid closest to the property boundary.
The water pressure in the recycled water main is similar to that in the drinking water main, making it suitable for outdoor use and irrigation systems.

During construction, each property is serviced with individual points to connect to both the recycled water and drinking water meter. This type of connection is known as a dry tapping.

Meter assemblies
Homes with recycled water have both a standard drinking water meter and a recycled water meter. The recycled water meter assembly will be coloured purple and configured in accordance with South East Water’s meter configuration drawings. Authorised contractors will install the dry tapping for both water meter assemblies. Refer to our Water Metering and Servicing Guidelines for further information and diagrams.

Want more information or advice about recycled water?
Contact us on 9552 3770 or email propdev@sew.com.au

Recycled water is suitable for:
• flushing toilets
• watering the garden, including vegetables
• washing cars
• cleaning the outside of homes and outdoor furniture
• fighting fires.

Recycled water is not suitable for:
• drinking
• cooking or other kitchen purposes
• bathing and showering
• swimming pools and spas
• evaporative coolers
• children’s water toys.

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