

# Bore water plumbing guide

## For plumbers and property owners

In Melbourne, water authorities like us at South East Water work hard to deliver safe, high quality drinking water. We also support plumbers and property owners with information and general requirements when installing alternative water supplies like bore water.

One of the ways we protect the quality of the drinking water supply is by placing requirements on the installation and plumbing of bore water systems. The relevant Australian Standards specify these requirements and the Plumbing Industry Commission (PIC) and water authorities enforce them to ensure the water supply continues to meet the high water quality standards set by the Department of Health.

### Water quality

The Department of Health regulates drinking water quality through *Victoria's Safe Drinking Water Act 2003*. The requirements of the Act are based on the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

Where a reticulated drinking water supply is available, the Department of Health and South East Water do not recommend the use of bore water for drinking or food preparation.

### Plumbing requirements

Property owners need to seek the appropriate conditions for gaining access to bore water from Southern Rural Water.

When installing a bore water supply and connecting it to supply outlets within a property, the relevant Australian Standards apply, *AS/NZS3500.1:2003, Plumbing and drainage Part 1: Water Services, Section 9* sets out the minimum plumbing industry standards for non-drinking water services.

### Connection requirements

- Where bore water is used to service an outlet for sanitary flushing (e.g. toilet), an automatic or manual interchange device that switches between the bore water or the reticulated drinking water supply must be installed. This ensures a continual supply of water is available.

Bore water installations must comply with *AS/NZS 3500.1:2003* and the water authority's containment backflow requirements.

- All piping systems delivering bore water to taps, fixtures, outlets or appliances must be installed by an appropriately licensed plumber.
- An applicable plumbing alteration form must be lodged with the water authority prior to work commencing (specific conditions may apply).



### Backflow prevention requirements

Where bore water is going to be used within the home for non-drinking uses, this may at times require an interconnection with the drinking water supply.

The interconnection must be installed according to the following *AS/NZS 3500.1:2003* and the water authority's containment backflow requirements:

- a) A backflow prevention containment device must be installed at the main water meter assembly (such as a reduced pressure zone device (RPZD)). This will protect the bore water supply from passing backwards through the water meter and entering the mains water supply.
- b) Additional zone or individual backflow prevention devices may be required to protect the drinking water supply within the property.
- c) An automatic or manual interchange device that switches between the use of the bore water or the drinking water supply must be installed where required. This will ensure there is a constant supply of water for non-drinking uses.
- d) All testable containment backflow prevention devices must be registered with the water authority and commissioned prior to use. The devices must also be tested annually by a suitably qualified plumber. A copy of the test report shall be provided to the water authority.

## Compliance Certificate

A Compliance Certificate must be given to the person for whom the work was carried out within five days of completion of the work and the PIC notified that the compliance certificate has been given. A Compliance Certificate is a form that must be issued by licensed plumbers to certify that their plumbing work complies with all regulatory requirements and in accordance with *AS/NZS 3500.1:2003*.

## Responsibilities

The water authority maintains:

- The property water meter, pipes and fittings from the water main through to the water meter, or to your property boundary or your boundary stop valve where there is no meter.

The property owner is responsible for maintaining:

- Any pipe works on the property side of the water meter, at their cost. This includes any backflow devices installed, which must be checked and tested by a suitably qualified plumber annually.

## Further information

Plumbers and home owners should seek expert advice and assistance with the installation and connection of bores to ensure that they meet the required standards. The following contacts can offer assistance:

### South East Water

Visit [southeastwater.com.au](http://southeastwater.com.au) or call **9552 3770** for Metering and Servicing Guidelines, information and advice and our Backflow Prevention Policy.

### Victorian Department of Health

Visit [health.vic.gov.au/environment/water](http://health.vic.gov.au/environment/water) for water quality management guidelines

### Local Councils

Visit [dpcd.vic.gov.au/localgovernment](http://dpcd.vic.gov.au/localgovernment) for requirements for new residential buildings or alterations.

### Plumbing Industry Commission

Visit [pic.vic.gov.au](http://pic.vic.gov.au) for plumbing regulatory requirements.

### Southern Rural Water

Visit [srw.com.au](http://srw.com.au) or call **1300 139 510**.

### Department of Environment and Primary Industries

Visit [dse.vic.gov.au](http://dse.vic.gov.au)

## Glossary

**AS/NZS 3500.1:2003** Plumbing and drainage: Part 1: Water services: The Australian and New Zealand Plumbing and Drainage Standard.

**Backflow:** The unplanned reverse flow of water or mixtures of water and contaminants into the drinking (reticulated) water supply system.

**Bore water:** Alternate water sourced from a ground water aquifer.

**Backflow prevention containment device:** A device that prevents the reverse flow of water from a non-drinking water source into the mains water / drinking water supply.

**Drinking water:** Water that is suitable for human consumption, food preparation, utensil washing and oral hygiene.

**Interconnection:** Any connection or arrangement where mains water is connected to a non-drinking water source. Without appropriate backflow prevention devices installed, an interconnection may lead to contamination of the drinking water.

**Licensed or registered plumber:** A licensed plumber may undertake work in any class of plumbing for which they are licensed, may supervise other plumbers (registered or licensed) or plumbing apprentices carrying out that class of plumbing work. They may also issue Compliance Certificates for that class of work.

A registered plumber may individually undertake work in any class of plumbing work for which they are registered. However, if the work requires a Compliance Certificate to be issued, they may only undertake that work under the supervision of a licensed plumber. They cannot issue a Compliance Certificate.

**Testable device:** A medium or high hazard backflow prevention device that is required to be tested annually.

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## Contact us

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