



New permit application approval system

The new plumbing laws come into effect on 1 July 2019.

Currently the approval and inspection process for 'compliance assessable work' is carried out by local government and divided into two stages:

1. Permit required to commence work; and
2. Inspection of work by local government to gain a compliance certificate.

What has changed?

Terminology

The term 'compliance assessable work' has been replaced with 'permit work'. The new term clearly indicates to industry and consumers that a permit is required to perform the work.

Process and timeframes—permit applications will be divided into two streams

From 1 July 2019, permit applications are divided into two streams: fast-track and standard. Timeframes for local government/public entity plumbing application approvals are significantly reduced:

1. Fast-track applications

- Approval timeframes reduced from 20 to 2 business days.
- Available for the majority of new residential dwellings, sheds or domestic out-buildings (class 1a and 10a buildings¹).
- These applications are considered lower risk domestic plumbing and drainage work as they connect directly to the water and sewerage supply and do not require additional approvals.

2. Standard applications

- Approval timeframes reduced from 20 to 10 business days.
- Available for all other types of buildings, including multi-unit residential and commercial buildings (class 2 - 9 buildings) and for those applications excluded from the fast-track process.

More flexibility for local governments

A local government may, by resolution 'opt out' of the fast-track application process and deal solely with permit applications under the mandatory standard applications process. Refer to Fact sheet 4 for more information.

¹ A full listing of the National Construction Code building classifications can be viewed at: <https://australianbuildingservices.wordpress.com/ncc-building-classifications/>





Exclusions apply—why can't I fast-track my application?

Certain applications are excluded from the fast-track application process as they are considered to pose a higher risk to public health, safety and the environment.

These types of applications require assessment of the relevant plans and accompanying documentation by local government before a permit may be issued and must be assessed under the standard application process. These include:

Fast-track application exclusions	
Combined sanitary drainage/community title sanitary drainage	Work for combined and community sanitary drains is excluded as it can effect multiple properties and any changes to an individual property may impact on the performance of drainage for other properties.
Trade waste connection	It is an offence to discharge trade waste to a sewer without approval, as it may contain toxic or harmful substances such as oil, heavy metals, solids, organic solvents or chlorinated organics. Water Service Providers (local governments) or distributor-retailers (e.g. Queensland Urban Utilities) will need to assess trade waste applications based on risk factors to ensure the safe and effective disposal of trade waste.
On-site sewage and grey water treatment facilities	These facilities are used for the treatment, storage and disposal of domestic waste generated on premises in unsewered areas. Poorly sited or maintained facilities may impact public health and the environment.

What won't change?

Approval and inspection stage	
Permit work process	A permit will still be required before permit work can commence, and the applicant must comply with the permit and all permit conditions.
Inspection process	There are no changes to the inspection process. All permit work will continue to be inspected to ensure it complies with the plumbing laws and the permit for the work, and the work substantially complies with the plans accompanying the application for the permit.
Licence requirements	There is no change to current licensing requirements or licence types.

What are the benefits?

Savings in time and costs

The new permit application system will deliver approvals faster, resulting in reduced construction times benefiting all Queenslanders. For example:

- Under the fast-track process, the average new homeowner in Brisbane could save approximately \$640 in holding costs as construction work could commence up to 18 days earlier (based on a median land price of \$255,000 and an indicative mortgage rate of 5.1 percent).
- The construction industry gains further benefit as work could commence up to 10 days earlier on complex construction, such as commercial buildings. Faster approvals simply mean the construction industry and its workforce could start and finish construction projects earlier.