

## What plumbing can home owners do?

New Zealand has a strong tradition of DIY for home owners. However, for important health and safety reasons plumbing is restricted work and can only be done by those authorised to do so. Failure to have an authorised plumber complete the plumbing may affect the home owner's insurance policy. Therefore we will outline what work homeowners can do.

In order to understand what work home owners can do we need to first understand what is restricted. [Under the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006](#) (the Act) sanitary plumbing is restricted work. As outlined in the Act sanitary plumbing is generally described as:

- The installation of sanitary fixtures and appliances (e.g. toilets, sinks, showers);
- The installation of the pipes and fittings that supply water to those sanitary fixtures and appliances; and
- The installation of the associated traps, waste or soil pipes, ventilation pipes and overflow pipes connected with those fixtures

This generally means that working on any pipework, fittings or appliances that are connected to a sanitary fixture or appliance is restricted work and can only be done by a person authorised to do so.

That said there is some related work that homeowners can do. Under the Act, the following is not restricted work;

- Fixing or unfixing, a dishwasher or washing machine;
- Repairing or replacing taps, tap washers or plugs, ball valves such as float valves and ball cocks in toilet cisterns; and
- The work of fixing or unfixing a shower over a bath that is supplied with the water through the bath taps such as those that have a push on rubber connection on the outlet of the bath taps.

However, if the above circumstances involve fixing or unfixing waste pipes or water supply pipes then it becomes restricted work and an authorised plumber will need to be engaged to do the work.

Home owners can also work on a water reticulation system when there are no sanitary fixtures or appliances attached. To do this the pipe work will need to be supplied from a separate source. For example a home owner could have a rain water collection tank that solely feeds their gardens irrigation system. A home owner would be able to run all the pipe work for the irrigation system in this circumstance. If however, the pipe work from the rain water collection tank also supplied a toilet cistern it would then require an authorised plumber to run all the pipework and subsequent fittings, including the irrigation system.

In summary sanitary plumbing is restricted work and only those authorised under the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act 2006 can carry it out. If a home owner is unsure whether some work is restricted they should contact an authorised plumber to advise them.