

# Filtration Guidance

## Introduction

The Board is becoming increasingly aware of pumping and filtration companies using unauthorised people, such as their in-house trained 'service technicians', to carry out restricted sanitary plumbing work. As a result of this work being done by unauthorised people, the Board has seen a number of non-compliant installations.

Only those authorised<sup>1</sup> under the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 (the Act) can do any work that comes within the Act's definition of sanitary plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying.

This is to protect the health and safety of members of the public by ensuring the competency of those engaged in sanitary plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying.

This means that in-house trained 'service technicians' can only carry out work that is defined as sanitary plumbing if they are authorised under the Act.

It is an offence under the Act to carry out, or cause to be carried out, any sanitary plumbing by someone that is not authorised. Every person that commits this offence is liable upon conviction to a fine up to \$10,000.

To assist consumers and filtration companies the Board has made this guidance document to help ensure it is clear what work must be done by someone authorised under the Act.

*Disclaimer: The information contained in this document represents the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Board's opinion on these matters and is not a substitute for seeking your own legal opinion on whether or not the installation of any of these systems is restricted sanitary plumbing or drainlaying work under the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act 2006.*

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<sup>1</sup> There are different ways people can be authorised under the Act however, the most common way is to be registered and licensed.

## Definitions

### Sanitary Plumbing:

Section 6 of the Act defines sanitary plumbing as:

- (a) *the work of fixing or unfixing any sanitary fixture or sanitary appliance, or any associated fittings or accessories:*
- (b) *the work of fixing or unfixing any trap, waste or soil pipe, ventilation pipe, or overflow pipe connected with or intended to be connected with or accessory to any sanitary fixture or sanitary appliance or any drain (whether or not the sanitary fixture, sanitary appliance, or drain is there when the work is done):*
- (c) *the work of fixing or unfixing any pipe that—*
  - (i) *supplies or is intended to be a means of supplying water to any sanitary fixture or sanitary appliance (whether or not that sanitary fixture or sanitary appliance is there when the work is done); and*
  - (ii) *is within the legal boundary of the premises on which that sanitary fixture or sanitary appliance is or will be installed (whether or not that sanitary fixture or sanitary appliance is there when the work is done):*

### Sanitary appliance:

Section 4 of the Act defines a sanitary appliance as:

- (a) *an appliance that is used, or intended to be used, for sanitation and that is not a sanitary fixture; and*
- (b) *includes a washing machine and a dishwasher*

### Sanitary fixture:

Section 4 of the Act defines a sanitary fixture as:

- (a) *means a fixture that is used, or intended to be used, for sanitation; and*
- (b) *includes a bath, a shower, a sink, a basin, a toilet pan, a bidet, a urinal, and a laundry tub.*

## Water Filters

Three of the common types of water filter systems are:

1. Under bench
2. Bench top
3. Inline

Each type of water filter can be sanitary plumbing as defined in the Act.

### **Under bench:**

To install an under bench type of water filter system the installer needs to connect to the water supply pipework and add a junction that will supply water to the water filter.

The water supply pipework will have sanitary fixtures and/or appliances connected to it (e.g. a kitchen sink, toilet, basin etc.). To install a junction into the pipework the installer will do:

*"the work of fixing or unfixing any sanitary fixture or sanitary appliance, or any associated fittings or accessories."*

In addition installing the under bench water filter will involve:

- "(c) the work of fixing or unfixing any pipe that—
- (ii) is within the legal boundary of the premises on which that sanitary fixture or sanitary appliance is or will be installed (whether or not that sanitary fixture or sanitary appliance is there when the work is done):"

Therefore, the installation of an under bench style of water filter system **is sanitary plumbing**.

### **Bench top:**

The common way of installing a bench top style of water filter system is that the installer will connect the water filter to the water outlet of a sink mixer. This involves adding additional pipework and fittings to an existing installation.

The water supply pipework connected to the mixer will have sanitary fixtures and/or appliances connected to it (e.g. a kitchen sink, toilet, basin etc.). To install a bench top style of water filter system on the mixer the installer will do:

*"the work of fixing or unfixing any sanitary fixture or sanitary appliance, or any associated fittings or accessories."*

In addition installing the bench top water filter will involve:

- "(c) *the work of fixing or unfixing any pipe that—*
  - (ii) *is within the legal boundary of the premises on which that sanitary fixture or sanitary appliance is or will be installed (whether or not that sanitary fixture or sanitary appliance is there when the work is done):"*

Therefore, the installation of a bench top style of water filter system **is sanitary plumbing**.

That said the Board has previously determined connecting a push-type fitting on the outlet, such as a rubber push-on connector, is not considered sanitary plumbing.

However, when the water filter connection is fixed to the aerator of the mixer spout it **is sanitary plumbing**.

A significant concern the Board has with this type of installation is when installers connect the water filter on systems that are designed to also function as an open vent that relieves pressure on a push-through type water heater. This restricts the open vent relieving, which in turn puts excess pressure on the water heater. Putting a restriction on an open vent can cause the water heater to leak and in a worst-case scenario it could explode.

**Inline:**

To install an inline style of water filter system the installer needs to connect inline to the water supply pipework. This will involve cutting into the existing pipework in order to install the water filter housing.

The water supply pipework will have sanitary fixtures and/or appliances connected to it (e.g. a kitchen sink, toilet, basin etc.). To install an inline style of water filter system the installer will do:

- "the work of fixing or unfixing any pipe that—*
  - (i) *supplies or is intended to be a means of supplying water to any sanitary fixture or sanitary appliance (whether or not that sanitary fixture or sanitary appliance is there when the work is done);"*

Therefore, the installation of an inline style of water filter system **is sanitary plumbing**.