

Water Installation Certificates Explained

-A Quick Q & A

WHEN IS THE WATER INSTALLATION CERTIFICATE REQUIRED?

One of the primary purposes of the Certificate of Compliance of Water Installation is the prevention of water wastage, i.e. leaks or dripping taps in the supply pipes or system resulting in unintended and uncontrolled usage. Opening the tap is seen as intended usage.

WHAT IS CHECKED DURING INSPECTION?

There are only seven checks that are currently performed during the inspection and as long as the plumbing installation complies with these seven points, the inspector is obliged to issue a certificate and cannot compel the seller to rectify plumbing issues over and above the below seven checks.

1. The hot water cylinder is plumbed correctly, PRV of the correct value, vacuum breakers correctly installed, emergency overflow installed with a metallic pipe, all overflows to be plumbed to the outside and discharge to atmosphere.
2. The water meter registers when a tap is open and stops completely when all taps are closed. If there is movement on the meter with all taps closed, this points to a leak somewhere on the property.
3. None of the terminal water fittings leak, when they are in the OFF position, and they are correctly fixed in position.
4. No storm water is discharged into the sewerage system.
5. There is no cross connection between the potable supply and any grey water system which may be installed.
6. The private isolating valve is in place and functioning.
7. The water pipes in the plumbing installation are properly saddled.

WHAT IS EXCLUDED BY THE WATER INSTALLATION CERTIFICATE?

Generally, more concerns arise from new property owners who believe inspectors could have done more. The new property owner believes that a certificate implies that absolutely everything to do with the plumbing installation will be 100%, which is not the case.

Blocked drains: The City of Cape Town is not concerned in any way with blocked drains on your property, this is considered a normal maintenance issue, not a certificate issue.

Leaks in the secondary, disposal, system: Leaks in the secondary or disposal system are not considered water wastage by the City of Cape Town as the water has already been used for its intended purpose and is now being disposed of. Pipes from your shower, bath, kitchen or bathroom sinks to the outside drain are not checked. If these pipes leak, it is considered normal maintenance and not a certificate issue.

Low water pressure supply: Check this with your supply authority.

Discolouration or odour in water, and water quality: This could be rust in the pipes or geyser, or a result of an external leak outside of your property.

Fittings in poor condition: Chips, cracks or discolouration of baths, sinks, showers, toilets etc. is not a concern of the City of Cape Town.

Fittings or connections to appliances that leak in the ON position: The connection to washing machines, dishwashers etc. is not covered by the certificate as long as the tap is not leaking in the off position.

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Irrigation systems or swimming pool installations: Generally, appliances and the connections thereof are not included in the certificate. So, if your swimming pool or irrigation system leaks when in use, it is a maintenance issue.

Taps or fittings that are not connected to the installation: Occasionally, when a tap or some other fitting that is not connected to the water supply is found, the seller cannot be compelled to upgrade the plumbing installation.

No hot or cold water supply to rooms where you would normally expect both: It is not the purpose of the certificate to upgrade the plumbing installation. At times, a house may have only cold or hot water supply to a kitchen or bathroom. As long as what exists is compliant, the seller cannot be compelled to upgrade the installation.

Air blocks in pipes: This can occur when the water supply has been switched off for a while. Just open the taps in the house and let them run until the air has worked its way out of the system.

WHAT ARE THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS?

- Prevent water wastage. There should be no leaks in the system from the incoming supply on your property up to and including the taps/outlets when in the OFF position.
- Reduce unnecessary load on our sewerage system. No rain water may be disposed of in the sewerage system.
- Prevent grey water from mixing with the potable supply. Naturally, we wish to keep our fresh drinking water safe to drink.
- Ensure the correct and safe installation of the geyser. High pressure geysers pose a possible explosion risk if faulty or incorrectly installed.
- Ensure the water meter works correctly.
- High pressure geysers can be dangerous if not correctly installed. The geyser installation is checked as part of the certificate.

WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING A WATER INSTALLATION CERTIFICATE?

Obtaining the compliance certificate is the duty of the seller. They have to do the following:

- Acquire the certificate forms from the City of Cape Town.
- Select an accredited plumber, i.e. one who has the requisite qualifications in terms of the South African Qualification Authority. If in doubt, contact the City for confirmation. Only accredited plumbers may work on premises or issue the certificate.
- Pay the fee to the plumber.

The seller may also be assisted by an estate agent for all of the above.