

Understanding recycled water for plumbers and builders



This factsheet explains the responsibilities of home owners, plumbers, builders and Council to ensure we all get the most out of recycled water.

Recycled water customers are responsible for:

- Ensuring recycled water is used only for suitable purposes.
- Advising anyone entering their property that recycled water is on site and of its correct uses.
- Maintenance of recycled water pipes and taps, in the home or business, up to the water meter.
- Ensuring all work and maintenance on the recycled water system is undertaken by a NSW licensed plumber.
- Ensuring recycled water taps are not removed or replaced with conventional taps. (Increasing potential risk for misuse of recycled water and possibly resulting in a health risk to the customer.)
- Ensuring that no cross connections are made between recycled water and drinking water systems (i.e. connecting drinking water pipes, taps or hoses to recycled water pipes, taps or hoses). Appropriate purple accessories including hoses and sprinklers should be used to connect to the recycled water network.
- Ensuring missing, damaged or faded recycled water warning signs are replaced. Replacement signs, taps and pipes are available from most plumbing and irrigation suppliers.
- Informing Council and persons at the property if a cross connection is detected on a property.

Council is responsible for:

- Recycled pipes from the supply system up to and including the water meter.
- Ensuring management systems are in place to maintain and repair the recycled water network.

- Providing recycled water that meets or exceeds the standards outlined in the Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling.
- Monitoring the quality of recycled water in the network and reporting to our Regulators with the results of this monitoring.
- Informing and educating customers about the uses and benefits of recycled water.
- Independently auditing all dual reticulated properties as required by our regulators. All outlets for drinking and recycled water services are checked for cross connections during these audits.
- Responding to customers reporting plumbing compliance issues by organising a Council plumber and drainage inspector to investigate the problem.

Getting connected

Recycled Water is supplied to new properties through a separate pipe network which is colour coded purple for easy identification. Recycled water is only available for newly constructed dwellings in Lake Cathie/Bonny Hills and Thrumster. Check with Council whether a property is within a dual reticulation area. Builders/plumbers will need to apply to Council for a water service connection, just as they do for drinking water connections. Recycled water plumbing will be checked by Council's Plumbing and Drainage Section during construction to ensure correct installation.

What if there are problems with my plumbing?

The home owner is responsible for fixing any plumbing problems that are identified during the audit. If Council staff find recycled water is being supplied to any drinking water taps, then Council will need to immediately disconnect the recycled water supply. For other issues Council may need to follow up or reaudit the property to ensure any issues have been corrected.



pmhc.nsw.gov.au/recycled-water

Call Council's Customer Service Centre on 6581 8111
or email council@pmhc.nsw.gov.au



Steps to check for cross connections

Check your home's recycled water connection:

- STEP 1** Turn off the drinking water supply at your property's meter and rainwater tank pump or valve.
- STEP 2** Turn on all internal drinking water taps. Taps should run dry.
- STEP 3** Flush all toilets. Toilets should refill if connected to recycled water supply.
- STEP 4** Turn on your external taps. Your drinking water tap should run dry. Taps continuing to run are connected to recycled water supply and should be coloured purple and marked with appropriate signs. Turn your drinking water supply back on.

STEPS to Check a home's drinking water connection:

- STEP 1** Turn off your recycled water supply at your property's purple meter and rainwater tank pump or valve. Run recycled water supply dry via your purple external taps or toilet flushing.
- STEP 2** Turn on internal drinking water taps, such as the shower or kitchen sink tap. If these taps do not flow they are connected to the incorrect supply.
- STEP 3** Turn your recycled water supply back on at your property's purple water meter.

If you encounter problems while undertaking the check (e.g. a tap does not run dry when it should), you will need to contact a certified plumber to fix the fault. For water quality complaints or any other queries you should call Council for assistance on 6581 8111.



Recycled water plumbing

A plumber must connect all toilets, and the cold water tap on your washing machine to the recycled water supply. At least one recycled water tap in the front or backyard is to be connected in addition to having only one outdoor drinking water tap in either the front or backyard. All maintenance on the recycled water system should be undertaken by a NSW licenced plumber.

Meters

Properties supplied with recycled water will have two meters which will sit side by side and approximately 300mm apart. The recycled water meter will be purple. When planning driveways and landscaping, allowances should be made for two meters at the front of the property.

Signage

The 'Recycled Water Do Not Drink' signs on each purple tap have a limited life span due to sunlight. Once they deteriorate, it is the responsibility of the householder to replace these. New signs can be purchased from plumbing suppliers and are not expensive.

Rainwater tanks

Rainwater tanks are not recommended in areas where recycled water is available. This is because recycled water is higher quality and more reliable. Where a rainwater tank is installed it must meet strict controls and it can not be topped up with recycled water.

How do I know where council pipes are located?

Council keeps records and maps of underground infrastructure. Anyone who intends to begin digging or excavation work (even in your own backyard) should lodge a **Dial before You Dig** enquiry before commencing work.

For more information visit the **Dial Before You Dig** website at www.1100.com.au or call 1100.



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