

Building and Plumbing Newsflash 540

Position of hot water indicators for mixing taps

Purpose

To provide clarification on the position of hot and cold water indicators for mixing tap installations.

Background

Under the Australian Standard 3500.0.2003 (AS/NZS 3500.0.2003), mixing taps are defined as a tap into which hot and cold water enters through separate ports and is mixed in a chamber to discharge the water through a single outlet with the temperature of the mixed water controlled by the operation of a control handle or handles. These types of taps are typically installed in kitchens, baths, basins and showers.

Clarification on the appropriate position of hot and cold water indicators for mixing taps has been sought by local government and tapware manufacturers.

The Plumbing Code of Australia (PCA), Volume Three of the National Construction Code series, Part B2.5 'Layout of taps' provides installation standards on how separate hot and cold water taps are to be installed. It provides that the hot water tap must be positioned either on the left hand side for horizontal placements or above the cold water tap for vertical placements.

This installation requirement is only applicable where each tap controls a separate outlet or where both taps control a combined flow of water delivered through a single outlet. The PCA does not provide installation standards specifically for mixing taps.

All tapware to be installed must be certified under the WaterMark scheme to confirm compliance with the PCA and the relevant Australian Standards. To achieve WaterMark certification, mixing taps must comply with requirements contained in AS/NZS 3718 Water supply – Tapware and AS/NZS 3662 Performance of showers for bathing.

Installation requirements for mixing taps

AS/NZS 3718 and AS/NZS 3662 require free standing mixing taps to clearly identify the direction of operation to select hot and cold temperatures to supply water from the tap. These standards do not prescribe how hot water indicators are to be positioned on the tap itself.

Provided that the mixing tap has WaterMark certification and complies with AS/NZS 3718 and AS/NZS 3662, any position of the indicators on the tap can be considered compliant provided they are marked appropriately for the relevant temperature. For example, with a 'H' or red colouring for hot water and a 'C' or blue colouring for cold water (see Figure 1).

In comparison, where separate hot and cold water taps are installed in combination to supply water to a single outlet (spout), the hot water tap must be on the left for horizontal placements, or for vertical placements, above the cold water tap (see Figure 2). This installation requirement is set out in Part B2.5 of the PCA, which is now available at www.abcb.gov.au free of charge.

In order to minimise scalding from hot water, installers must set the delivery of hot water from the mixing tap to the relevant temperature under AS/NZS 3500.4 for the building's use. For sanitary fixtures used for personal hygiene purposes in healthcare and aged care buildings, early childhood centres, primary and secondary schools, nursing homes or similar facilities, this is 45°C at the outlet. For sanitary fixtures used primarily for personal hygiene purposes in all other situations this is 50°C.

Contact for further information

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Figure 1: mixing taps appropriately indicating the position for hot water supply

Free standing mixing taps need to clearly identify the direction of operation to select hot and cold temperatures. This does not limit how hot water indicators are to be positioned on the tap.



Mixing tap with red dot indicating hot water supply by operating the lever to the left.



Mixing tap with the red side indicating hot water supply by operating the lever to the right.

Figure 2: Separate hot and cold water taps in combination for a single outlet (spout)

Where individual hot and cold water taps are installed in combination, the hot water tap must be installed on the left of, or above, the cold water tap.



Separate taps for a horizontal placement with the hot water tap on the left hand side.



Separate taps for a vertical placement with the hot water tap above the cold water tap.