

Building and Plumbing Newsflash 588

New transitional arrangements for mechanical services – air conditioning and refrigeration occupational licensing

Purpose

To advise industry about new transitional arrangements for the mechanical services - air conditioning and refrigeration (RAC) occupational licensing framework.

Background

On 1 January 2020, the new mechanical services licensing framework, which is regulated by the [Queensland Building and Construction Commission](#) (QBCC) commenced in Queensland.

Mechanical services work involves the construction, installation, replacement, repair, alteration, maintenance, test or commissioning of a mechanical heating or cooling system in a building. For example, air conditioning, refrigeration and air handling systems. These systems contribute to the overall health, safety and comfort of the community and can have fatal consequences if incorrectly installed or maintained.

All contractors and nominee supervisors must now hold a mechanical services licence to lawfully perform mechanical services work.

Before the new mechanical services framework commenced, unlicensed individuals could perform RAC work provided they worked for a licensed contractor. Under the new mechanical services licensing framework all workers must hold a mechanical services licence from 1 January 2022 or risk being fined.

New transitional arrangements

From 1 January 2022 all individuals must hold the prescribed qualifications to meet the mechanical services licensing eligibility requirements. However, to assist workers to transition into the new mechanical services - RAC occupational licensing framework, we have introduced new transitional provisions that recognise a worker's experience (alternative licensing pathway).

To access the alternative licensing pathway individuals must have their application lodged with the QBCC on or before 30 September 2021. Provided the application is submitted by this date, the QBCC will be able to work with the applicant and assess the application against the alternative licensing pathway until 31 December 2021.

Applications lodged after 30 September 2021 cannot be assessed against the alternative licensing criteria and individuals will need to meet the prescribed technical qualifications to be eligible for the RAC occupational licence.

For applications made on or before 30 September 2021, the QBCC can recognise experience as an alternative to the technical qualification. The applicant must demonstrate:

- two years' experience performing work within the scope of the RAC occupational licence class before the new mechanical services licensing framework started on 1 January 2020; and
- no breach of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* has occurred for at least six months because of the RAC work.

The amendments provide a temporary alternative qualification pathway for applicants who have gained relevant experience and skills, but don't have the formal qualifications required under the [technical qualifications for QBCC licensing](#) document for the RAC occupational licence class.

When do the changes take effect?

These amendments commenced on 30 July 2021.

More information

For more information regarding the mechanical services licensing framework and requirements visit:

- Business Queensland <http://www.business.qld.gov.au/mechanicalserviceslicences>
- Queensland Building and Construction Commission <http://www.qbcc.qld.gov.au/mechanical-services-licences/>

Contact us

Building Policy
Department of Energy and Public Works
Email: BLP@hpw.qld.gov.au

If you have not received this newsflash directly from Building Policy, you can subscribe via bcqnewsflash@qld.gov.au

DISCLAIMER: The information contained in this Newsflash is provided by the Queensland Government, through the Department of Energy and Public Works ('the department') as an information source only. The information is general in nature and the department makes no statements, representations, or warranties about the accuracy, quality, reliability, adequacy or completeness of any information contained in this Newsflash. It is not to be relied on as a substitute for consulting the relevant legislation or for obtaining appropriate professional advice relevant to your particular circumstances. The department disclaims all responsibility and all liability (including without limitation, liability in negligence) for all expenses, losses, damages and costs (including consequential or indirect loss or damage or loss of profits) you might incur as a result of the information being inaccurate, inadequate or incomplete in any way, and for any reason.