

Building and Plumbing Newsflash 622

National Construction Code 2022 – requirements for the grading of floors to floor wastes

Purpose

To inform industry and the community about the compliance requirements under the National Construction Code (NCC) 2022 for grading floors to floor wastes with showers and other wet areas of dwellings.

This newsflash outlines:

- where a floor waste is required to be installed
- when floors are required to be graded to fall to floor wastes
- additional Queensland acceptable solutions for complying with floor waste requirements.

This newsflash reflects NCC 2022 requirements and supersedes previous information on floor waste¹.

Background

With the commencement of the NCC 2022 on 1 May 2023, the requirements for floors to be graded to floor wastes have been amended. The new requirements aim to reduce water overflow from showers and other wet areas when a floor waste is installed.

The requirements apply:

- where a floor waste is installed because of a mandatory requirement (e.g. showers)
- in other wet areas not required under the NCC (e.g. laundries and bathrooms).

Before the commencement of the NCC 2022, the requirement to grade floors in wet areas only applied where floor wastes were installed because of a mandatory requirement.

Floor waste requirements

Under the NCC 2022, floor waste requirements apply in areas of a building:

- where there is a shower
- a room containing a urinal
- where a bathroom or laundry is located at any level above a sole-occupancy unit, or public space in a Class 2 or 3 building or Class 4 part of a building.

When installing a floor waste in a wet area, the graded floor surface will affect some design aspects for the installation of fittings and fixtures. Installers may need to consider the:

- ability to use raised thresholds or the ramping of tiles at bathroom doorways to achieve the necessary fall
- use of linear grates to facilitate large tiles and avoid additional cuts to floor tiles around the floor waste
- use of bedding under toilet pans²
- use of adjustable feet and sealant at the base of freestanding bathtubs³

¹ [Building and Plumbing Newsflash 170: Falls to a floor waste](#)

² AS/NZS 3500.2:2021 Plumbing and drainage Part 2: Sanitary plumbing and drainage, clause 13.27.2

³ AS/NZS 3500.2:2021 Plumbing and drainage Part 2: Sanitary plumbing and drainage, clause 13.9



- potential to move the location of a proposed floor waste to suit the type of floor finish and the type of proposed floor waste.

Voluntary installations

Floor wastes are regularly installed in wet areas even where it is not a requirement in the NCC 2022. For example, in a house, a floor waste installed in the main floor area outside of a shower recess in a bathroom or in a laundry in a house is considered a voluntary installation.

Most homeowners would expect to see a floor waste installed in a wet area. To enable the homeowner to make an informed decision about the installation of a floor waste, it is important for the builder and plumber to discuss the requirements in the NCC 2022 for floor wastes to be installed in a wet area.

It is recommended that the property owner be consulted if it is proposed not to install a floor waste.

Floor wastes and floor waste gullies⁴

The purpose of a floor waste gully is to provide a means for a floor waste to be connected to the sanitary plumbing or drainage while allowing the floor waste gully water seal to prevent sewer odours and gases entering a room.

A floor waste can also be used to connect other waste fittings such as a basin, bath or shower to the sanitary plumbing or drainage. These connections are not mandatory and the same waste fixtures can be connected directly to the sanitary plumbing or drainage without using a floor waste.

Requirements for grading floors to floor wastes

The NCC 2022 requires that where a floor waste is installed both:

- a. the minimum continuous fall of a floor plane to the waste must be 1:80
- b. the maximum continuous fall of a floor plane to the waste must be 1:50.

These requirements apply regardless of whether the floor waste installation is required under the NCC 2022, or if the floor waste is installed voluntarily.

Additional compliance solutions

The new Queensland Development Code Mandatory Part 4.5 – *Livable dwellings and grading to floor waste* (QDC 4.5) provides additional compliance solutions to those in NCC 2022 for the grading of floors to floor wastes. These only apply to the grading of floors to floor wastes in wet areas where a voluntary floor waste has been installed.

The compliance solutions include:

1. adopting gradients provided by AS 3740:2021 *Waterproofing of domestic wet areas*
2. installing a linear strip drain or weir at each entrance to the room
3. ensuring that water from a fixture cannot flow out of a room without passing over a graded area.

Transitional arrangements for assessable development building work

In some circumstances, the implementation timeframes for the changes to the NCC 2022 may make re-designing existing projects to comply with the new requirements difficult. A contract may have been agreed between the builder and owner or significant planning work may have been undertaken. The *Building Act 1975* (BA) provides some flexibility for building certifiers approving building development applications under previous building assessment provisions.

⁴ AS/NZS 3500.2:2021 Plumbing and drainage Part 2: Sanitary plumbing and drainage, clause 4.6.7

Section 37 of the BA allows building certifiers to have discretion when considering building assessment work to be carried out under the building assessment provisions in force immediately before an amendment. When exercising this discretion, the building certifier should clearly document the circumstances of their decision for the building development approval.

The Department of Energy and Public Works has published a [guideline](#) for applying section 37 of the BA. This guidance includes examples of when substantial progress is made on the design of a building and when a design is considered complete.

More information

- [Modern Homes Standards](#)
- [Guideline for applying transitional arrangements when building requirements change](#)
- Australian Building Codes Board – [NCC Resource Library](#)

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