

## VBA issues health warnings over DIY bidets and alternative toileting devices

Homeowners and tenants installing DIY bidets, douche sprays and handheld hoses are placing their own health and the health of the community at risk from contaminated drinking water.

Australia's recent toilet paper shortage caught many of us short, leading some of the more enterprising among us to assemble and install bidets, douche sprays and handheld hoses in their bathrooms and toilets.

Recent media coverage picked up on this trend, advocating – incorrectly – for consumers to assemble these alternative toileting devices from parts bought from their local hardware retailer.

DIY plumbing installations, however, pose a significant health risk to the immediate household and adjoining properties. Sewage can contaminate the drinking water supply through backflow or back-siphonage, causing infections, diarrhoea or other health problems.

That's why the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) is reminding consumers that bidets, douche sprays and handheld hoses can only be installed by a plumber registered or licensed in the class of Water Supply.

**All home-made, self-installed and non-compliant sanitary toileting products are illegal, pose a health risk to the community and should be removed from bathrooms and toilets immediately.**

The VBA is also writing to major retailers of plumbing products requesting they post notices next to product displays to warn consumers of the health risks and of the need for an appropriately qualified plumber to install these products.

### Information for consumers

The installation of bidets, douche sprays or handheld hoses in household bathrooms or toilets must meet strict plumbing requirements to protect the health and safety of occupants and maintain the purity of the water supply. Here's what consumers need to know.

- Consumers cannot install a bidet, douche spray or handheld hose in their bathroom or toilet themselves. A registered or licensed plumber must install these devices, as they have relevant qualifications and experience to carry out these installations.
- Home-made DIY installations are illegal and breach plumbing regulations and technical standards.
- Plumbers can only install fittings to the water supply if it is protected by a high-hazard backflow-prevention device to prevent contaminated sewage water getting into the drinking water supply and, potentially, that of neighbouring properties.
- Bidets, douche sprays and handheld hoses cannot be connected to a recycled water service.

### Information for plumbers

Plumbers asked to install a bidet, douche spray or handheld hose in a bathroom or toilet must be registered or licensed in Water Supply work before they start. Any plumber carrying out this work without an appropriate registration or licence is in breach of section 221D of the *Building Act 1993* and subject to penalties.

The plumbing work must also comply with the regulatory requirements for the installation of bidets, douche sprays and handheld hoses under Victoria's Plumbing Regulations 2018, the *Plumbing Code of Australia 2019* and AS/NZS 3500.1 Plumbing and drainage Part 1: Water services.

# Media Release

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To avoid contamination of the water supply:

- all water points installed adjacent to a water closet (toilet) but not directly connected to a sanitary fixture must be protected by a high-hazard backflow-prevention device
- douche sprays or handheld hoses that can be placed over the rim of a toilet bowl cannot be used unless they are protected by a high-hazard backflow-prevention device; and
- all douche sprays or bidet seats must be WaterMark-certified and installed in accordance with plumbing regulations, technical standards and the manufacturer's installation instructions.

**There is a high risk of sewage contaminating the drinking water supply if an installation is non-compliant or no high-hazard backflow-prevention device is installed.**

More information about handheld sprays and water points adjacent to water closets is available in a VBA fact sheet – [Handheld sprays and water points adjacent to water closets](#).

Anyone with questions about the installation of alternative toileting devices should contact the VBA's Technical and Regulation Plumbing team.

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## Media Enquiries

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