

# Code of Practice for The Provision of Facilities for Sanitation and Personal Hygiene



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## Foreword

The provision of safe, accessible and hygienic public toilet facilities is an important function of local government, building owners and facility managers. Public toilet facilities that are conveniently located, well maintained and properly managed can promote the use of public spaces and public transport and generally contribute to active living and positive public health outcomes.

Under the *South Australian Public Health Act 2011* (the Act), the Minister can initiate measures to promote proper standards of public and environmental health within the state. This Code of Practice for the Provision of Facilities for Sanitation and Personal Hygiene (the Code) has been developed to assist relevant authorities responsible for the administration of the Act and provide information to building owners to ensure the public facilities for sanitation and personal hygiene are suitable and kept clean and hygienic in order to protect public health.

This document is a prescribed code of practice under Section 109 of the Act meaning that its requirements are enforceable under the Act.

While the Code is applicable to all premises developed before or after the commencement of the Act, it is particularly intended that the provisions of the Code apply to:

- > any premises that is undergoing improvements, alterations or a change of use (with or without structural alteration); and/or
- > where it can be demonstrated that the existing facilities for sanitation and personal hygiene are inadequate for the current use.

Section 92 of the Act provides for the relevant authority to serve a notice for the purpose of securing compliance with a requirement imposed by or under the Act (including the duty under Part 6 or under a regulation or code of practice under the Act), or averting, eliminating or minimising a risk, or a perceived risk, to public health.

Non-compliance with provisions of the Code, when incorporated within a notice issued under Section 92 of the Act would be seen as a breach of the notice and render the person to whom the notice was served, liable to prosecution.

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## 1. Introduction

Public toilets make an important contribution to community liveability, health and wellbeing by supporting active living and social participation. Public toilet facilities are located in a variety of settings including shopping centres, community halls, recreational facilities and stand-alone toilet blocks. To ensure that public toilet facilities are safe and hygienic they must be properly designed, managed and maintained.

This Code supports the *South Australian Public Health Act 2011* (the Act) and the National Construction Code (NCC), particularly Volume One - Building Code of Australia Class 2 to Class 9 Buildings, and provides guidance for building owners to ensure that facilities for sanitation and personal hygiene are appropriate and compliant with associated legislation and standards.

The design of public toilet facilities is required to comply with legislation such as the NCC and relevant Australian Standards, and may be subject to planning controls by the relevant local authority. Where premises containing public toilet facilities are to be constructed or substantially modified, advice from the relevant authority should be sought to ensure compliance with relevant planning, building and health legislation.

Any requirement of this Code specified in a notice issued by the relevant authority under Section 92 of the Act does not derogate from the need for the person to whom the notice is served to also comply with other relevant laws of the State.

All legislation, codes of practice and guidelines referred to in this Code include amendments made from time to time, unless otherwise stated.

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## 2. Definitions

<i>closet pan</i>	has the same meaning as AS/NZS 3500 – the Plumbing Code.
<i>council</i>	means a council within the meaning of the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i> .
<i>owner</i>	is the owner or occupier of the premises; or has the management or control of the premises; or is the trustee of said person or is managing the affairs of such a person on some other basis.
<i>premises</i>	means any land, building (including residential premises) or place (including a public place, or a moveable building or structure); or a part of a premises.
<i>relevant authority</i>	means the Chief Public Health Officer; or a council.
<i>sanitary compartment</i>	means a room or space containing a closet pan or urinal.
<i>sharps</i>	objects or devices having sharp points or protuberances or cutting edges, capable of cutting or piercing the skin.
<i>shower area</i>	means the area affected by water from a shower, including a shower over a bath.
<i>urinal</i>	an individual stall or wall-hung urinal; or each 600 mm length of a continuous urinal trough; or a closet pan used in place of a urinal.
<i>washbasin</i>	washbasin may be—an individual basin; or a part of a hand washing trough served by a single water tap.

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## 3. General Requirements

The National Construction Code (NCC) provides uniform guidance and technical provisions for the design and construction of buildings and other structures throughout Australia. The NCC (Volume One, Section F2 - Sanitary and Other Facilities) requires owners of prescribed classes of premises to provide suitable facilities for personal hygiene such as toilets, urinals, hand basins, baths or shower areas, laundry facilities, kitchen sinks or such other provisions as are necessary.

The NCC;

- > sets out the minimum number of facilities required for each type of premises
- > prescribes the construction and maintenance requirements
- > requires that facilities are provided in a convenient location (within or associated with a building) considering;
  - the function and use of the building;
  - the number and gender of the patrons;
  - the disability or other particular needs of the patrons.

In addition to the NCC, the Housing Improvement Regulations 2017 (under the *Housing Improvement Act 2016*) also set out minimum standards for residential properties within South Australia.

### 3.1 Number of facilities

The number and gender designation of facilities provided in a building is determined Part F2, Table F2.3 of the NCC and depends on the building size and classification (unless otherwise determined by the relevant authority). Where the building is not classified under the NCC, the relevant authority should determine the number and type of facilities required.

When determining the appropriate number of toilet facilities for public spaces or particular buildings or structures not classified under the NCC (e.g. those within parks, gardens and reserves) the authority should take into consideration;

- > the nature and use of the premises or land concerned
- > the number (or expected number), gender and needs of associated users, patrons and visitors
- > the presence, number and accessibility of other public toilets in the vicinity

The minimum number of facilities required under the NCC for similar premises or uses can also be used as a guide.

For temporary events, in addition to the above criteria, it is important to consider the type and duration of the event, and whether food or alcohol is available for purchase. For events where alcohol is being sold the Office for Liquor and Gambling, Consumer and Business Services should be contacted.

Where sanitary facilities need not be provided for the public, the relevant authority may, where there is a demonstrated need, determine the number and type of facilities required. Where unisex facilities and separate facilities for both sexes are provided, they should be appropriately designated.

### 3.2 When the relevant authority may require additional facilities

To maintain appropriate standards of public health, the relevant authority may determine that the provision of facilities, amendments of existing facilities or additional facilities may be required. Situations where an authority may require changes to or additional facilities include;

- > where the conditions of use have changed
- > where the existing facilities have been demonstrated to be or are at risk of becoming inadequate
- > where access arrangements to shared facilities for patrons and staff have changed. e.g. patrons denied access to employee facilities in retail outlets, combined retail and office complexes (or similar premises)
- > where the demand in peak periods warrants the provision of facilities to serve the needs of patrons.

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### 3.3 Plumbing and drainage

For the purposes of this Code, all new sanitary plumbing and drainage work, including the installation of fixtures and connections must comply with (where applicable):

- > South Australian Public Health (Wastewater) Regulations 2013 and Onsite Wastewater Systems Code
- > Any conditions of a wastewater works approval
- > AS/NZS 3500: 2013 Plumbing and Drainage (Parts 0-5)
- > The National Construction Code (NCC) Volume 3 Plumbing Code of Australia (including SA Variations and/or additional provisions as listed in Appendix A)

### 3.4 Floors, walls partitions and ceilings

Floors, walls, ceilings and partitions should be constructed of hard, durable, impervious materials which are easily cleaned and maintained to ensure they are kept in a clean and hygienic condition.

### 3.5 Fixtures and fittings

Fixtures and fittings used for sanitation and personal hygiene should be durable, vandal-resistant, and able to be easily cleaned and to withstand frequent use.

### 3.6 Lighting

All facilities should be provided with adequate lighting to ensure safety and effective cleaning.

Where possible, natural lighting in the form of windows, skylights or similar should be installed in all relevant facilities.

Facilities that are available outside of daylight hours or not provided with adequate natural lighting should be provided with appropriate artificial lighting. Where artificial lighting is required it must be installed in accordance with the provisions of the NCC and AS/NZS 1680: 2009 Part 0, Interior lighting safe movement.

### 3.7 Ventilation

To remove odours and prevent condensation and the growth of mould, adequate ventilation by the provision of windows, vents, roof ducts, mechanical exhaust systems or similar must be installed.

The NCC requires that natural ventilation complying with F4.6, or a mechanical ventilation or air-conditioning system complying with AS 1668.2 and AS/NZS 3666.1 be installed. The relevant authority may (at their discretion) determine that mechanical ventilation facilities are required in certain circumstances.

Exhaust removed from the premises should be discharged above the roof of the building in such a way that occupants of nearby premises do not suffer discomfort through the emission of odours.

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### 3.8 Disposal of sewage, effluent and greywater

Wastewater systems are governed by legislation and technical information in South Australia:

- > *South Australian Public Health Act 2011*
- > South Australian Public Health (Wastewater) Regulations 2013 and its Prescribed Codes (as applicable) :
  - The On-Site Wastewater Systems Code
  - Community Wastewater Management Code

Where premises are not connected to SA Water infrastructure, wastewater must be discharged to a community wastewater management scheme (CWMS) or disposed of via an appropriate on-site wastewater system. CWMS and onsite disposals are subject to the provisions of the South Australia Public Health (Wastewater) Regulations 2013 and the Onsite Wastewater Systems Code and require an application, assessment and approval from the relevant authority.

The treatment, reuse and disposal of greywater must be in accordance with the requirements of the South Australia Public Health (Wastewater) Regulations 2013 and the Onsite Wastewater Systems Code. If the premises is supplied with a connection point for the discharge of wastewater, permission must be sought from the water industry entity providing that connection.

### 3.9 Alternate toilet facilities – reduced water requirements

In areas where water is not readily available (e.g. rural or remote areas of the State) the use of composting, chemical or other similar toilets may be considered. Factors which can affect the satisfactory performance of these units include;

- > the number of users
- > temperature and humidity
- > airflow within the unit
- > frequency of maintenance and cleaning
- > improper use
- > facilities for the disposal of the contents
- > potential to contaminate underground water resources.

The provision of non-water flush systems should only be considered where the relevant authority determines that the abovementioned factors have been properly considered and that appropriate measures are put in place to ensure their correct use, and to ensure satisfactory inspection and maintenance.



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## 4. Specific Requirements for Non-Residential Premises

Public toilet facilities provided for premises such as shopping centres, bus depots, restaurants, commercial buildings and the like, or stand-alone ablution blocks in parks and reserves, have additional requirements to those of residential premises.

### 4.1 The provision of soap and hand drying facilities

Hand hygiene is considered one of the most effective ways of preventing the spread of pathogens that can cause illnesses such as colds and flu and gastroenteritis. A continuous supply of running water, liquid soap and facilities for drying hands (such as single-use paper towels or air dryers) should be provided in public toilet facilities where practicable. If determined necessary by the relevant authority, the requirement to provide soap and facilities for drying hands may be enforced through a Section 92 Notice.

### 4.2 External showers

Where external showers have been installed for rinsing off at recreation areas such as the beach or inland waterways, screening is not required and waste water should be disposed of in accordance with the requirements outlined in section 3.8 of this Code.

### 4.3 Infant care facilities

Where a business or the relevant authority determine that a separate facility for infant care is to be provided, the facility should be suitable for the use of both sexes. The facility should contain a closet pan, handwashing facilities, a changing bench and receptacles for the containment and removal of used disposable nappies and other soiled material. Fittings and fixtures should be of a size suitable for use by small children.

Where a unisex facility for the disabled is combined with an infant care facility, the area for the disabled must not be impeded by benches, refuse receptacles, storage cupboards. Baby change facilities should be provided in accordance with AS 1428.1 and 1428.2 disability access to premises if possible and reasonable.

### 4.4 Facilities for the disabled

The number of facilities required for use by people with disabilities should be in accordance with the requirements of the NCC. Access for the disabled should be in accordance with Australian Standard 1428.1, Design for access and mobility.

### 4.5 Maintenance and cleaning

Facilities for sanitation and personal hygiene must be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

Facilities should be inspected regularly and serviced as required noting that facilities that are available continuously or for extended periods, and those subject to heavy use, may require additional monitoring, cleaning and maintenance.

Contact details for reporting damage, faulty equipment or the need for cleaning and/or servicing should be clearly displayed in public toilet facilities.

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## 4.6 Solid waste disposal

Suitable receptacles must be provided for the disposal of waste such as used nappies, sanitary products, incontinence pads, paper hand towels and other wastes. All receptacles used for the containment of wastes must be kept in good repair and maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

In accordance with Regulation 7 of the South Australian Public Health (General) Regulations 2013; the owner or occupier of premises must take reasonable steps to ensure that waste on the premises that poses or may pose a risk to public health is—

- (a) while on the premises, kept in a receptacle that is—
  - (i) capable of adequately holding the waste and containing any offensive odours and fluids from the waste; and
  - (ii) inaccessible to pests, vermin and other animals; and
  - (iii) impervious to water; and
  - (iv) in a clean and sound condition; and
- (b) made available for collection by a waste collection service as often as may be appropriate having regard to the nature of the waste.

To ensure compliance with the requirements of the Regulations and this Code it is important that the facilities are regularly monitored for the accumulation of waste. All waste must be disposed of in accordance with the *Environment Protection Act 1993* and associated subordinate legislation.

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## 5. Sharps Disposal Facilities

Sharps (e.g. needles, syringes and medical lancets) are used by people to monitor specific medical conditions or administer injectable medications or illegal drugs. The provision of appropriate sharps disposal facilities in public toilets promotes the safe disposal of sharps and reduces the risks of injuries through accidental contact with sharps that have been illegally or inappropriately disposed of.

### 5.1 Sharps collection containers

Sharps disposal facilities in public toilets typically consist of a non-reusable, rigid, puncture-proof container that is placed within lockable outer wall housing of metal fabrication.

Where sharps containers are provided they must be capable of accommodating a 14cm long object without exceeding the fill line of the container and must conform to the relevant Australian Standards as follows:

- > AS 4031 – 1992: Non-reusable containers for the collection of sharp medical items used in health care settings
- > AS/NZS 4261 - 1994: Re-useable containers for the collection of sharp items used in human and animal medical applications.

These standards require that the container is yellow, marked with the internationally recognised biohazard symbol and marked with a statement that the containers must not be filled above the fill line.

### 5.2 Outer housings

Whilst there are no specific Australian Standards relating to the outer housings for sharps containers, it is important that they are:

- > Designed to accommodate an internal container of a specified size that conforms to the relevant Australian Standard for sharps containers.
- > Designed with no sharp edges on external or internal surfaces of the bin and disposal chute that could cause blockage or injury
- > Designed so as not to impede the function and serviceability of the sharps container within
- > Designed so that the contents of the bin are inaccessible to people depositing sharps or members of the public
- > Of strong and vandal resistant construction
- > Secured onto a post, wall or other structure with appropriate vandal resistant brackets/bolts/housing
- > Incorporate a key only access and locking system
- > Incorporate a floor in case of spillage or overflow of the contents
- > Clearly identified by signage as being only for the disposal of community sharps
- > Readily distinguishable by means of colour and signage from other public bins (e.g. waste or recycling)
- > Marked with a clearly identifiable point of contact to enable the reporting of issues of concern such as full, overflowing or damaged sharps disposal facilities (e.g. a phone number/staff member/attendant/cleaning contractor)
- > Located so that they are easily accessible and serviceable
- > Installed so that the access point for disposal is at a sufficient height from the ground to be inaccessible to small children
- > Regularly monitored for usage, condition and to ensure they are not full/overflowing

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### 5.3 Installation heights

Sharps disposal containers in public toilets should be installed at a height of no less than 1300mm from the ground to the opening of the container. This height will reduce the potential for children to come into accidental contact with the contents of sharps containers whilst ensuring that the container is within the side 'reach range' limits for wheelchair users (side access where there is no obstruction) and ambulant people with a disability. For further information regarding design for access and mobility, please refer to the Australian Standard AS1428, 1992 – Design for access and mobility – Part 2: Enhanced and additional requirements – Buildings and Facilities.

### 5.4 Monitoring and management

Sharps containers should be appropriately sized for expected waste volumes, and regularly monitored and serviced as required. The contents of these containers must be disposed of in accordance with regulatory requirements.

Areas where sharps disposal facilities are located should be regularly inspected to ensure the early detection and disposal of any sharps that have been inappropriately discarded or disposed of. A clearly identifiable point of contact is to be provided to enable the reporting of full, overflowing or damaged sharps disposal facilities e.g. this may be a phone number/staff member/attendant/cleaning contractor. The point of contact should be available whilst the facilities are open for use.

Responsibilities and procedures for monitoring and servicing sharps disposal facilities should be clearly defined and documented, and staff should be appropriately trained to ensure that obligations are fulfilled in accordance with the *Work Health Safety Act 2012*.

At the discretion of the relevant authority, requirements relating to the provision and management of sharps disposal facilities may be imposed in a notice issued under Section 92 of the Act'.

## 6. Resources

To minimise the risk of needle stick injuries in the community SA Health has developed a public warning sign.

For more information please visit [www.sahealth.sa.gov.au](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au) or contact Health Protection Programs on (08) 8226 7100.

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## 7. Legislation and References

*South Australian Public Health Act 2011.*

National Construction Code Series 2016

*Local Government Act 1999*

*Housing Improvement Act 2016*

Housing Improvement Regulations 2017

South Australian Public Health (Wastewater) Regulations 2013

Australian/New Zealand Standard 3500: 2015 (Parts 0-4) Plumbing and Drainage

Australian Standard 1680.0: 2009 (Part 0) Interior lighting safe movement

Australian Standard 1668.2: 2012 The use of ventilation and airconditioning in buildings – Mechanical ventilation in buildings

Australian/New Zealand Standard 3666.1: 2013 Air-handling and water systems of buildings – Microbial control, Design, installation and commissioning

SA Health, On-Site Wastewater Systems Code

SA Health, Community Wastewater Management Systems Code

Australian Standard 1428.1: 1992 Design for access and mobility

Australian Standard 1428: 1992 – Design for access and mobility – Part 2: Enhanced and additional requirements – Buildings and Facilities

South Australian Public Health (General Regulations) 2013

Australian Standard 4031: 1992 Non-reuseable containers for the collection of sharp medical items used in health care areas

Australian/New Zealand Standard 4261: 1994 Reuseable containers for the collection of sharp items used in human and animal medical applications

*Environment Protection Act 1993*

*Work Health and Safety Act 2012.*

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