



# Guidelines on supervision

Version 1.0

VERSION HISTORY			
Version	Name/description	Board approval date	Date of effect
1.0			

## **1. The purpose of these guidelines**

The Industry has provided feedback to the Board that there is a lack of clarity around how supervision should be implemented. As a consequence, the Board has developed these guidelines for the purpose of giving practical guidance to the industry on what the Board considers to be best practice supervision.

These are guidelines only, as opposed to rules, and, therefore, are not binding. However, as best practice statements they will be used by the Board to assist it in determining when to take action against individuals for not exercising proper supervision. For that reason, the industry is urged to carefully read, understand and follow these guidelines.

## **2. The purpose of supervision**

Supervision serves two main purposes:

- It ensures standards of competency and safety are achieved by those who are licensed to undertake restricted work (quality control); and
- It helps to build the overall capability of the industry.

## **3. Interpretation**

“Restricted work” means sanitary plumbing, drainlaying or gasfitting as those terms are defined in the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act 2006 (the Act).

“Certifier” means the registered and licensed certifying plumber, gasfitter or drainlayer who is the person responsible for supervision and who is recorded as the nominated supervisor on the Boards database.

“Nominated Person” means a person registered and licensed as a certifying or licensed plumber, gasfitter or drainlayer who performs physical supervision on behalf of the Certifier.

“Licensed Tradesperson” means a person holding a license as a licensed plumber, gasfitter or drainlayer and working under the supervision of the supervisor.

## **4. Who is responsible for supervision?**

In the case of each discipline a Certifier must supervise the relevant Restricted Work.

This doesn't mean that the Certifier actually has to physically supervise all the Restricted Work themselves. The Certifier can also allow a Nominated Person (from the relevant trade) to physically supervise the work. This provides flexibility for the Certifier to arrange for someone else to actually physically supervise the work.

On most occasions this will be by someone from within the same business. If someone from outside the business is engaged to physically supervise the work then the Board recommends that some sort of written acknowledgement or contract is entered into between the Certifier and the Nominated Person recording this arrangement.

Regardless, even when a Nominated Person physically supervises Restricted Work on their behalf, it is the Certifier who remains responsible for supervision. This means that they are responsible for having appropriate systems and processes of supervision in place and for ensuring an appropriate level of oversight is applied to

each task.

## **5. Who must be supervised?**

### **Trainees**

During their first year of holding a limited certificate (issued under section 14 of the Act) a Trainee carrying out Restricted Work must be in the presence of the Certifier or a Nominated Person (from the relevant trade). After the first year Trainees still have to be supervised but it doesn't need to be at the "in the presence of" level.

In the case of plumbing and drainlaying the Certifier must ensure that it has been performed competently and complies with the requirements of regulations under the Act and regulations under the Building Act 2004.

In the case of gasfitting, the person physically supervising the work (the Certifier or Nominated Person) can test the work but only a Certifying level tradesperson can certify that the work complies with regulations under the Gas Act 1992.

### **Exemptions under supervision (under sections 19, 21 and 25 of the Act)**

During the first two years of working under an exemption under supervision, a person carrying out Restricted Work must be in the presence of the Certifier or a Nominated Person (from the relevant trade). After the first two years the person must still be supervised but it doesn't need to be at the "in the presence of" level.

In the case of plumbing and drainlaying the Certifier must ensure that it has been performed competently and complies with the requirements of regulations under the Act and regulations under the Building Act 2004.

In the case of gasfitting the person physically supervising the work (the Certifier or Nominated Person) must ensure that no pipe or appliance is connected to the gas supply while the work is being carried out and must be the person who connects the supply of gas to the work when it is completed. The Certifier Nominated Person must be the person who tests the work. A Certifying level tradesperson must certify that it complies with regulations under the Gas Act 1992.

### **Provisional Licence Holders**

A person holding a provisional licence must be supervised by the Certifier or a Nominated Person when carrying out Restricted Work.

### **Licensed Tradespersons (plumbers, gasfitters, drainlayers)**

Certifiers are responsible for the supervision of Restricted Work performed by the Licensed Tradespersons who work under them.

In the case of plumbing and drainlaying the Certifier must ensure that it has been performed competently and complies with the requirements of regulations under the Act and regulations under the Building Act 2004.

In the case of gasfitting work the Certifier must certify that the work complies with regulations made under the Gas Act 1992.

## 6. Definition in the Act

The definition of supervision in the Act makes it clear that the supervision must involve **direction and control** that is **sufficient** to ensure:

- that the work is performed **competently**
- that **appropriate safety measures** are adopted
- that the work is performed in **compliance** with the Act and regulations

## 6. What does proper supervision look like?

The Board considers that there are two key aspects to proper supervision.

- The Certifier must ensure that there are good systems and processes in place for exercising supervision. Without good systems and processes it will be much more difficult for the supervision to be effective.
- The Certifier must ensure that in relation to each particular task that the appropriate level of “direction and control” is applied.

## 7. What systems and processes should the Certifier have in place?

It is an important part of supervision that the Certifier has good systems and processes in place. The Board considers that this means that the Certifier will ensure that the systems and processes they establish have the following features:

- a practical management system in place demonstrating (through checks and balances) that the Restricted Work performed has been carried out safely, competently and in accordance with the Regulations and the prescribed standards;
- regular assessments of performance and skills of those supervised to highlight areas where further training may be required;
- the provision of corrective and further training where required; and
- the provision of regular instruction and/or guidance to those being supervised .

## 8. What is the appropriate level of direction and control for a job?

In each case the Certifier must ensure that the level of “direction and control” that they apply is appropriate. This means that in each case the Certifier should be assessing the following factors before deciding which level of “direction and control” needs to be applied:

- The level of competence of the person being supervised to perform

that work. Have they been trained to do this work? Is there anything in their work history that affects the assessment of their competence? The more experienced and competent they are, the lower the level of supervision required.

- Any actual or potential issues with the work and the reasons for those issues. If there are issues with the work then a higher level of supervision may be required.
- The job's geographical location.
- The type and complexity of plumbing work being undertaken. More complex work will require a higher level of supervision.
- The time lines, costs and risks of the work. Tight timelines, higher cost work and higher risk work may all indicate the requirement for a higher level of supervision.
- The overall risk to safety, health and the environment. Higher risk work will require a higher level of supervision.

Once the Certifier has balanced these factors they can then ensure that the appropriate level of "direction and control" is applied from the categories set out below. (NB: In each category the reference to Supervisor is to the Certifier or the Registered and Licensed Tradesperson who is appointed by, and works under the supervision of the Certifier.)

### ***Direct supervision***

Direct supervision is when the Supervisor constantly monitors the Supervisee, reviewing their work practices and standards of work. This includes dedicated oversight of all activities performed and requires the Supervisor to be in the presence of the Supervisee at all times. This means within visual contact and/or earshot (audible range).

Direct supervision is required of all Trainees during the first year of their limited certificate exemption and must always be performed by the Certifier or a Licensed Tradesperson (from the relevant trade) working under the supervision of the Certifier. In the case of gasfitting, the person overseeing the work can test the work but only the Certifier can certify that the work complies with regulations under the Gas Act 1992.

Direct supervision is required of all persons working under an exemption under supervision (under sections 19,21 or 25 of the Act) during the first two years and must always be performed by the Certifier or an Authorised Person (from the relevant trade). In the case of gasfitting the person physically supervising the work must ensure that no pipe or appliance is connected to the gas supply while the work is being carried out and must be the person who connects the supply of gas to the work when it is completed. The Certifier or the Nominated Person must be the person who tests the work and certifies that it complies with regulations under the Gas Act 1992.

Direct supervision will also be appropriate in the following circumstances:

- When the Supervisee is new to the task or has not yet demonstrated consistent ability to perform the task to a minimum standard.
- The job contains variations to basic work that are new.

- The formally assessed hazards and risks related to the task indicate direct supervision is appropriate.
- The Supervisee has not yet completed off the job training that supports competent performance of the task.
- There is a reasonable chance for unplanned events that may be beyond the Supervisee's current ability to manage.

### ***General supervision***

General supervision describes a situation in which the Supervisor is not constantly reviewing the Supervisee but remains in face-to-face contact on a recurrent (periodic) basis.

The Supervisor continues to provide instruction and direction for tasks to be performed and must test the Supervisees work prior to commissioning.

Although not necessarily in close proximity, the Supervisor must be contactable for assistance or instruction as required.

General supervision is normally appropriate where:

- The Supervisee has previously demonstrated their ability to perform the task safely and to minimum standards without the need for constant intervention.
- The Supervisee clearly understands when and how to seek assistance and support.
- The formally assessed hazards and risks related to the task indicate general supervision is appropriate.
- The Supervisee has an appropriate level of knowledge and practical skill from either or both on-the-job or off-the-job learning.
- The Supervisee has previously demonstrated an ability to manage reasonably predictable unplanned events.

### ***Broad supervision***

Broad supervision is only suitable for Supervisees who have demonstrated an ability to conduct the intended work autonomously.

In this situation, the Supervisor need only make occasional face-to-face contact but should continue to provide instruction and direction for tasks to be performed and the Supervisor must inspect and test the Supervisee's work prior to commissioning.

Although not necessarily in close proximity, the Supervisor must be contactable for assistance or instruction as required.

Broad supervision may be appropriate where:

- The Supervisee has previously demonstrated their ability to perform the task safely and to acceptable standards without the need for supervisor intervention.

- The Supervisee has demonstrated an understanding of any hazards and risks involved with the task and an ability to manage the risks appropriately.
- The Supervisee clearly understands when and how to seek assistance and support.
- The formally assessed hazards and risks related to the task indicate broad supervision is appropriate.
- The Supervisee has a significant level of knowledge and practical skill from both on-the-job and off-the-job learning.
- The Supervisee has previously demonstrated an ability to manage (or seek assistance with) unplanned events that may occur.

## **9. Is it ok to supervise remotely?**

If the circumstances dictate that direct supervision is required then it will never be ok to use technology such as I-Pads and mobile phones to perform that supervision.

However, if the circumstances indicate that either general or broad supervision is suitable then some level of technology use will be appropriate.

The Board has become aware of the practice of Certifiers' from the three trades essentially making a business of farming themselves out to businesses that do not employ Certifiers.

The Board is of the view that this practice is an acceptable way of providing supervision only in very limited circumstances. The Certifier remains responsible for ensuring that there are appropriate systems and processes in place for dealing with supervision and will be responsible for ensuring that all auditing and training required by that system is delivered. They also remain responsible for the identifying and implementing the appropriate level of supervision required for each particular task.

The view of the Board is that these responsibilities mean that it is unlikely that supervision from a different geographic location will be appropriate. Although technology such as I-Pads and mobile phones make some remote supervision possible, the Certifier still has to have sufficient information to adopt the appropriate level of supervision in each case and provide appropriate physical assistance when required. The Board is of the view that in most circumstances these important roles cannot be performed exclusively at the end of a phone or internet connection.

## **10. How many people can I supervise?**

How many people can be supervised by one Supervisor very much depends on a number of factors that need to be balanced by the Certifier. The factors that the Certifier should balance are:

- The level of supervision required. The complexity of the work being performed.
- The risks involved.

- The experience of those performing the work.

A Certifier trying to determine this issue must always remember that the supervision they put in place has to be capable of being effective. The types of questions that the Certifier should consider are:

- **Will the Supervisor be in eyesight/earshot of those requiring direct supervision?**
- **Will the Supervisor have the time to be able to train those who need to be trained in the skills required for the job?**
- **Will the Supervisor have time to review the work of those they are supervising?**
- **Will the Supervisor have the ability to manage any unforeseen events that may occur?**

If you can't answer yes to the following then you are trying to supervise too many people.

## **11. Keeping yourself safe**

To assist you in keeping yourself safe, attached are the following:

- An audit checklist to use to determine whether or not you have adequate systems and processes in place for managing supervision.
- A template for using when making a decision about what level of supervision is required for a particular job

These two documents are not mandatory but are designed to assist you. The value of using the template is that it is a practical way of being able to demonstrate that you did consciously address the issue of supervision in relation to a particular job. If the Board is ever in a position of investigating a complaint, the existence of this template on the job file, or a similar one of your design, will be evidence that supervision was properly addressed by you.