

The extent of non-compliant plumbing components used in South Africa

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Abstract

High quality plumbing components are essential to ensure the efficient and safe supply of water, and minimise water losses in buildings. South African legislation requires that all plumbing components installed comply with certain standards set by the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS). Water Services Authorities are responsible for enforcing this legislation, and are allowed to set their own additional requirements for plumbing components. This study investigated the extent of non-compliant plumbing components used in South Africa through a number of methods, and concludes that compliance is roughly 50%. This points to a large problem and has dire consequences for the future of effective water use and water leakage in South Africa. A worrying finding is that the level of non-compliance seems to be particularly large in low-cost housing developments. The main reasons for the low levels of compliance are a lack of enforcement at local government level and the fact that legislation does not prohibit the import and sale of non-compliant components. The paper makes a number of recommendations for improving the situation.

Keywords: plumbing components, plumbing fittings, water supply