Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board

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Exemption from the minimum standards for registration – Information guide

In certain situations, the Board can approve an exemption from the minimum standards for registration or to hold a licence. These requirements are set out in the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 (the Act) along with the exemption criteria.

This guide helps you identify if this application is right for you and outlines the process.

How do I apply for an exemption?

Send us an application form and evidence of your qualifications and work experience. You will also need to give sufficient reasons for why you should be exempt from a particular requirement. This

information will demonstrate to the Board that you are competent in your trade and mitigate the fact you do not meet the legislative requirements.

The Board will only issue an exemption if they are satisfied that you have the experience and skills required of a New Zealand practitioner at the level of registration/licence you are applying for.

It is important you understand your trade as defined in the Act and the licence type you are applying for.

What exemptions can I apply for?

The following information outlines what is required when applying for an exemption.

Application to be exempt from being registered and holding an active licence for 24 months

To apply for this exemption, you should:

1. Be registered in the trade(s) you are applying for.
2. Have passed both the registration and certifying exam in the trade(s) you are applying for.
3. Provide evidence of a minimum of seven years full time experience carrying out sanitary plumbing and gasfitting work, and five years' experience carrying out drainlaying work. To do this, you can provide:
    a. Two to three letters from supervisor(s) and/or employer(s) outlining specific details of experience including specific date ranges for how long you have been carrying out work.

b. If self-employed, you can provide letters from customers that you did regular work for. The letters should also provide specific details of experience including specific date ranges for how long you have been carrying out the work. Note: If working in New Zealand, the Board has records on their database of licence history since 2003.

Application to be exempt from holding the New Zealand certificate (level 4)

There are three main reasons for why you may apply for this exemption:

1. you have an overseas qualification
2. you have no qualification
3. you have an older qualification.

Before applying for an exemption from holding the New Zealand certificate, you will need to consider if one of the below pathways apply to you:

1. If you hold an overseas qualifications, we recommend considering the Category A – Overseas qualification pathway.
2. If you have seven years' full time experience carrying out sanitary plumbing, gasfitting, or drainlaying, we recommend considering the Category B - Experience pathway.

To apply for this exemption, you should:

1. Provide a reason for why you are unable to follow any other pathways for registration.
2. Provide a certified copy of a comparable overseas qualification and a certified copy of a transcript of the qualification. Where the overseas qualification does not directly align with the New Zealand equivalent qualification, please provide additional evidence to address any gaps.
3. Where relevant, provide a certified copy of the transcript for a partially completed relevant qualification (e.g., if you began you plumbing training but missed a block course).
4. Provide a portfolio of your work and training to demonstrate their knowledge experience (see our evidence guide for further guidance).
5. If you have a qualification, you will need to provide evidence of a minimum of five years full time experience carrying out sanitary plumbing work and gasfitting work and three years' experience carrying out drainlaying work. To do this, you can provide:

    a) Two to three letters from supervisor(s) and/or employer(s) outlining specific details of experience including specific date ranges for how long you have been carrying out work.
    b) If self-employed, you can provide letters from customers you did regular work for. The letters should also provide specific details of experience including specific date ranges for how long you had been carrying out the work. Note: If working in New Zealand the Board has records on their database of licence history since 2003.

Many older New Zealand plumbing/gasfitting/drainlaying qualifications are no longer recognised under current legislation. This means some tradespeople will have to apply for an exemption to register. In this situation, you will need to provide a certified copy of their older plumbing/gasfitting/drainlaying qualification.

Application to be exempt from passing the registration exam

Granting this exemption can be challenging for the Board, as the exam assesses the essential knowledge and competencies required for plumbing, gasfitting, and drainlaying.

To apply for this exemption, you should:

1. Provide evidence that you have completed a New Zealand level 4 qualification in the trade(s) being applied for. If overseas qualified, evidence your qualification has been assessed at level 4 or above against the New Zealand equivalent qualification.
2. Provide evidence of an alternative assessment/training that is comparable to a registration exam (eg, you may have a verbal interview with a technical assessor who provides a recommendation letter).
3. Provide a portfolio of your work and training to demonstrate your knowledge experience (see our evidence guide for portfolio guidance).
4. Provide evidence of a minimum of five years full time experience carrying out sanitary plumbing work and gasfitting work and three years' experience carrying out drainlaying work. To do this, you can provide:
    a. Two to three letters from supervisor(s) and/or employer(s) outlining specific details of experience including specific date ranges for how long you have been carrying out work.
    b. If self-employed, applicants can provide letters from customers you did regular work for. The letters should also provide specific details of experience including specific date ranges for how long you have had been carrying out work. Note: If working in New Zealand the Board has records on their database of licence history since 2003.

Application to be exempt of passing the certifying exam

This is the most difficult exemption to grant, as it permits the applicant to work without any supervision and to supervise others. Because of this, the exemption is only granted in exceptional circumstances.

To apply for this exemption, applicants should:

1. Be registered in the trade(s) they are applying for.
2. Provide evidence of an alternative assessment/training that is comparable to a registration exam (e.g., you may have had a verbal interview with a technical assessor who provides a recommendation letter).
3. Provide evidence of a minimum of seven years full time experience carrying out sanitary plumbing work and gasfitting work and five years' experience carrying out drainlaying work. To do this, applicants can provide:
    a. Two to three letters from supervisor(s) and/or employer(s) outlining specific details of experience including specific date ranges for how long the applicant has been carrying out plumbing work.

- If the person is self-employed, applicants can provide letters from customers they did regular work for. The letters should also provide specific details of experience including specific date ranges for how long the applicant has been carrying out plumbing, gasfitting, and/or drainlaying work. Note: If working in New Zealand the Board has records on their database of licence history since 2003.

How much does it cost?

Applications for an exemption are set on a full cost recovery basis. That means that the fee charged is the cost of the Board delivering that service. You may receive a refund or a further invoice at the end of your application depending on the time and resources used to review your application.

The initial amount charged will be $1,200.00. It is important that you submit a complete application and evidence to avoid additional costs.

How long does an application take?

Your application will be initially assessed by our registration team within 10 working days. The team will give you feedback on your application and discuss if you would like to proceed with your application.

Your application will be considered by the Board at its next meeting. The Board may approve your application or propose to decline it.

Board meetings are held every six weeks so it may take some time to receive an outcome.

What happens if my application is approved?

We will send you a letter to let you know that your application has been approved. The letter will advise you of the following:

1. The decision and any feedback made by the Board.
2. What your next steps are to gain registration in the trade you applied for.

What happens if my application is declined?

You have two opportunities for your application to be considered by the Board.

If your application is preliminary declined, we will issue you a letter that outlines the feedback from the meeting. You will be given an opportunity to provide further evidence or information to assist with your application when the Board meets to make its final decision at the second meeting.

We will send you a letter to let you know the outcome from the Board meeting. The letter will advise you of the following:

1. The decision and any feedback made by the Board.
2. Which pathways you will need to follow so that you can get fully registered.
3. Any further information that you may submit to assist the Board in making their final decision – if your application has been preliminary declined.