

# WATERMARK AT THE CHECKOUT

A plumber walking through a supermarket these days would expect to find the usual suspects: meat, fresh produce, household staples and toilet paper [hopefully]. However, did you know that they could also find something unexpected, such as a tap repair kit for leaking tapware? **Konrad Perry** comments.

In Australia, a licensed plumbing practitioner should always complete any plumbing job performed in a household. Plumbing products must also be WaterMark-certified, which means they meet all mandatory requirements. WaterMark certification ensures that a product is fit for purpose and authorised for plumbing and drainage installations.

Currently, the WaterMark scheme is only designed to cover the point of installation and not the point of sale. This means that you can easily buy a plumbing product that is not WaterMark certified, such as a tap repair kit, from a variety of merchants, and, as is increasingly popular, from an online retailer. However, installing the tap repair kit into a domestic bathroom spindle tap set would be illegal.

Many other items such as ball valves, waste connectors and even various appliance hoses also appear in the list of items that can be sold without a WaterMark licence. Although some of these may not be found at a grocery store, many retailers offer a variety of products used for other water applications. Products used in the irrigation or pool industries are not covered by the WaterMark Certification Scheme, and therefore are not required to bear the WaterMark logo. The plumber is responsible for ensuring that the correct products are always used for the right applications, and sometimes the line between can be blurred. Introducing these products into consumer retail spaces has the potential to catch a plumber off guard whilst wandering down a shopping aisle.

This entire process requires plumbers to be more vigilant about products that may be popping up in unusual retail settings to maintain their obligations in safeguarding the community against non-compliant products. Any failure to do this could affect health and safety, or result in a rejection of an insurance



claim, or even cause a plumber to lose their reputation and have their plumbing licence affected.

Only a WaterMark-certified product can be deemed 'fit for purpose'. The WaterMark label and licence number displayed on WaterMark-certified plumbing products serve as a measure of confidence to those installing it. This is because it ensures the product has been assessed by a Conformity Assessment Body (including ongoing quality controls) and tested by a NATA-accredited plumbing test laboratory. Testing and certification is also the reason why a WaterMark-certified product is often more expensive than an uncertified counterpart.

Jumper valves are an example of a product that, if WaterMark-certified, will have been assessed for wide range of material, performance and design tests. Tests that have been performed on a WaterMark-certified jumper valve include: meeting necessary design requirements, pressure testing and endurance testing that involves cycling the jumper valve from open to closed for a minimum of 25,000 cycles. Tests and physical assessments ensure that the

valves are compatible with typical spindle taps, and will meet a minimum longevity that satisfies consumers' expectations.

In addition, and arguably more importantly, a WaterMark licence on a plumbing product ensures that it is safe to use with drinking water. WaterMark-certified components such as tap seals are tested to meet the requirements of AS/NZS 4020 *Products for use in contact with drinking water*.

Ensuring a plumbing product has WaterMark certification is crucial to maintain the health and wellbeing of the community. With the great variety of products on the market right now, it is becoming more and more important for industry professionals to carefully select the appropriate plumbing products, regardless of the retail setting. After all, a tap repair kit needs to do more than just stop leaks. ■

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