

Issue: The requirement for an inspection opening being raised to ground level or floor surface level.

To: Licensees / Contractors / the Plumbing and Drainage Industry

From: PIAS, Better Regulation Division, Parramatta

Date: May 2021

Scope: Applies to all installations in New South Wales.

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The purpose of this document is to clarify the interpretation of an inspection opening and an inspection shaft or boundary trap and to determine whether the presence / installation of an Inspection shaft / Boundary trap riser negates the need for inspection opening being raised to ground level or floor surface level as required in AS/NZS 3500 part 2, clause 4.7.4(a).

Definitions:

The glossary of terms states that:

An inspection opening is: An access opening in a pipe or pipe fitting, arranged to facilitate inspection testing or the clearing of obstructions, and fitted with a threaded cap or plug or an access cover.

An Inspection shaft is: A shaft constructed in the line of a sanitary drain for the purpose of inspection and future access for locating and clearing the drain.

A Main Drain is: The main conduit of a drainage system to which branches are connected. It is that portion of a sewerage service on private property that is normally located in the ground, which conveys or is intended to convey the discharge from all fixtures to the sewer.

A Branch Drain is: A section of a drain that is intended to receive the discharge of fixture discharge pipes, but which has a lower fixture unit loading and which may be of smaller nominal size than the main drain at its point of connection.

Detail:

There has been differing opinions whether an inspection shaft or boundary trap riser negates the requirement of AS/NZS 3500 part 2, clause 4.7.4 (a) which states that:

At least one inspection opening shall be raised to ground level or floor surface level, on each main drain.

With the above definitions in mind it is important to read these in conjunction with AS/NZS 3500 part 2, clause 4.4.1 which states that:

The main drain shall be provided with either an inspection shaft in non-boundary trap areas, or a boundary trap in boundary trap areas, located at or near the point of connection to the sewer.

And the Note:

1. Inspection shafts and boundary traps located in an area that is subject to flooding shall comply with the requirements of the relevant authority.

It is also important to note that AS/NZS 3500 part 2, clause 4.7.4 (a) asks for the access point to be on the main drain.

Conclusion:

The standard requires that one of the already installed inspection openings installed on the main drain be raised to ground / surface level in addition to the inspection shaft / boundary trap riser. The following diagram taken from AS/NZS 3500 part 2, Figure 4.7.1 illustrates the typical locations of the Inspection shaft / boundary trap riser and Inspection Openings.

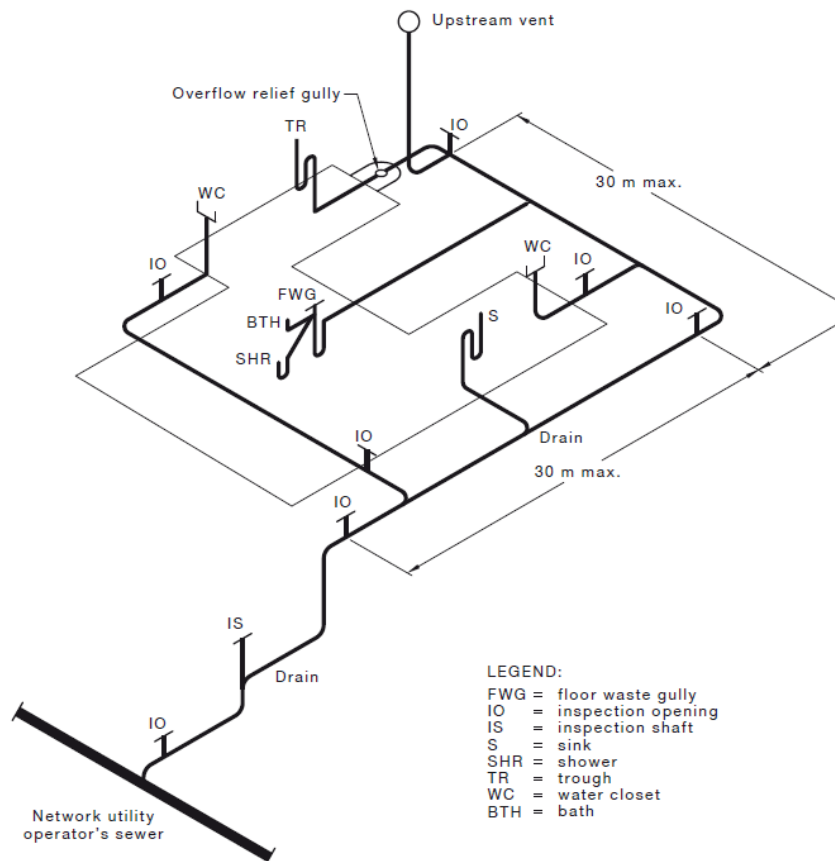


FIGURE 4.7.1 TYPICAL PROVISION OF INSPECTION OPENINGS

Note:

As trends are continually changing in the building industry, especially around new home construction, more often, concrete paths are being installed enveloping the entire perimeter of the building footprint. While it is not required, in these cases, it would be in the interest of best plumbing practise to raise as many inspection openings to surface level as practical with emphases on branch drains as well as the main drain.

Reference:

AS/NZS 3500 Part 2, Clause 4.4.1, Clause 4.7.4 (a), Figure 4.7.1
AS/NZS 3500, Glossary of terms

Contact:

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