



# HCAA ADVISORY NOTE ON CLEAROUTS, INSPECTION OPENINGS AND ACCESS PANELS

REVISION 2: AUGUST 2022



# ADVISORY NOTE ON CLEAROUTS, INSPECTION OPENINGS AND ACCESS PANELS

Stacks and common discharge pipes must have accessible inspection openings for inspecting and testing sanitary plumbing systems, and so obstructions can be cleared as needed.

## **Location of inspection/testing openings**

Accessible inspection openings must be installed in the following locations to comply with AS/NZS 3500.2:2018:

- at the base of every stack
- at every junction fitting that connects a common discharge pipe to a stack, or in the upstream section of the common discharge pipe
- at intervals no greater than every 30 metres in a common discharge pipe.

Accessible inspection/testing openings shall be provided at any level of a stack where required for testing/inspection and ongoing maintenance purposes.

## **Access to inspection openings**

As illustrated over the page, all required inspection openings must be accessible via an access panel, cover, door, or similar protection (as noted in AS/NZS 3500.0 glossary of terms).

## **Definitions:**

### **Inspection Opening (IO)**

Access opening in a pipe or pipe fitting, arranged to facilitate inspection testing or the cleaning of obstructions and fitted with a threaded cap or plug or access cover.

### **Test Opening (TO)**

Opening with a removable cover in the body of a fitting and of sufficient size to permit the installation of a plug for use in the hydrostatic testing of a pipeline.

## **Legislative requirements**

The National Construction Code Series Volume 3 – Plumbing Code of Australia (PCA), Part C1 specifies the requirements for designing, constructing, installing, replacing, repairing, altering and maintaining any part of a sanitary plumbing system.

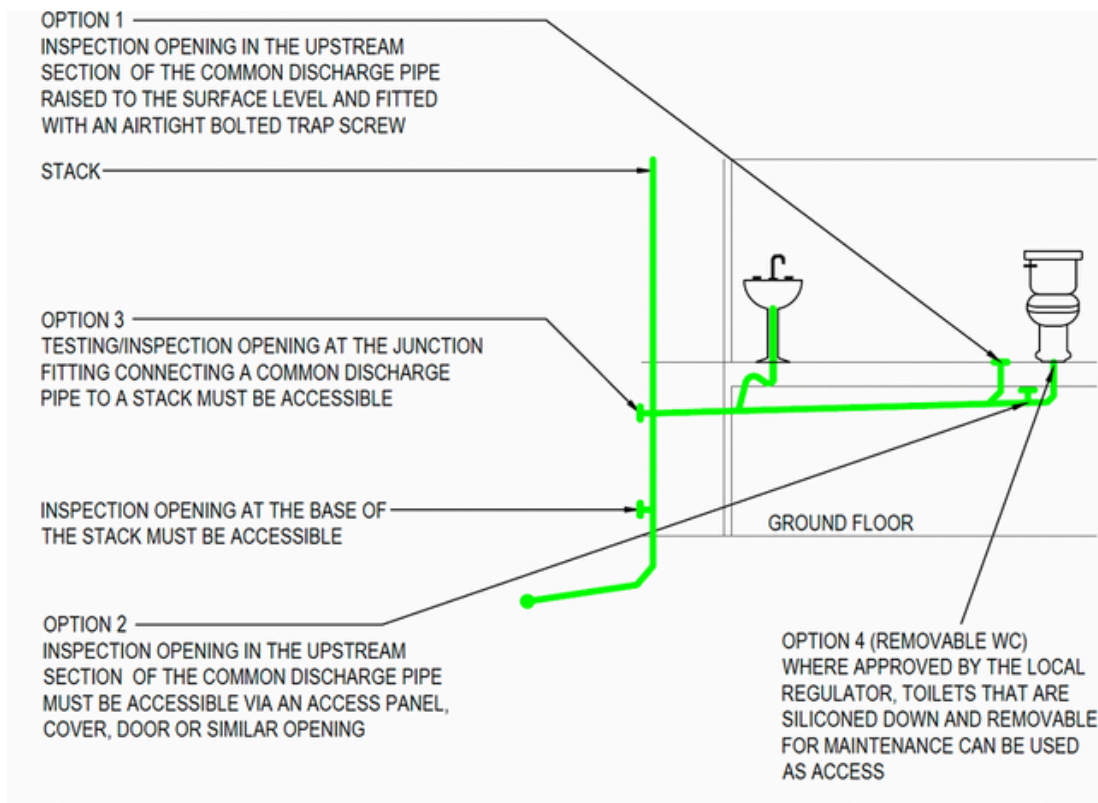
AS/NZS 3500.0 glossary of terms defines:

- an inspection opening is ‘an 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’
- a testing opening is ‘an opening with a removable cover in the body of a fitting and of sufficient size to permit the installation of a plug for use in the hydrostatic testing of a pipeline’
- accessible is ‘capable of being reached for the purposes of Inspection, cleaning or maintenance, repair, or replacement, but first may require removal of an access panel, cover, door or similar obstruction’.

## Class 1 residential buildings

Inspection openings must be installed and must be accessible:

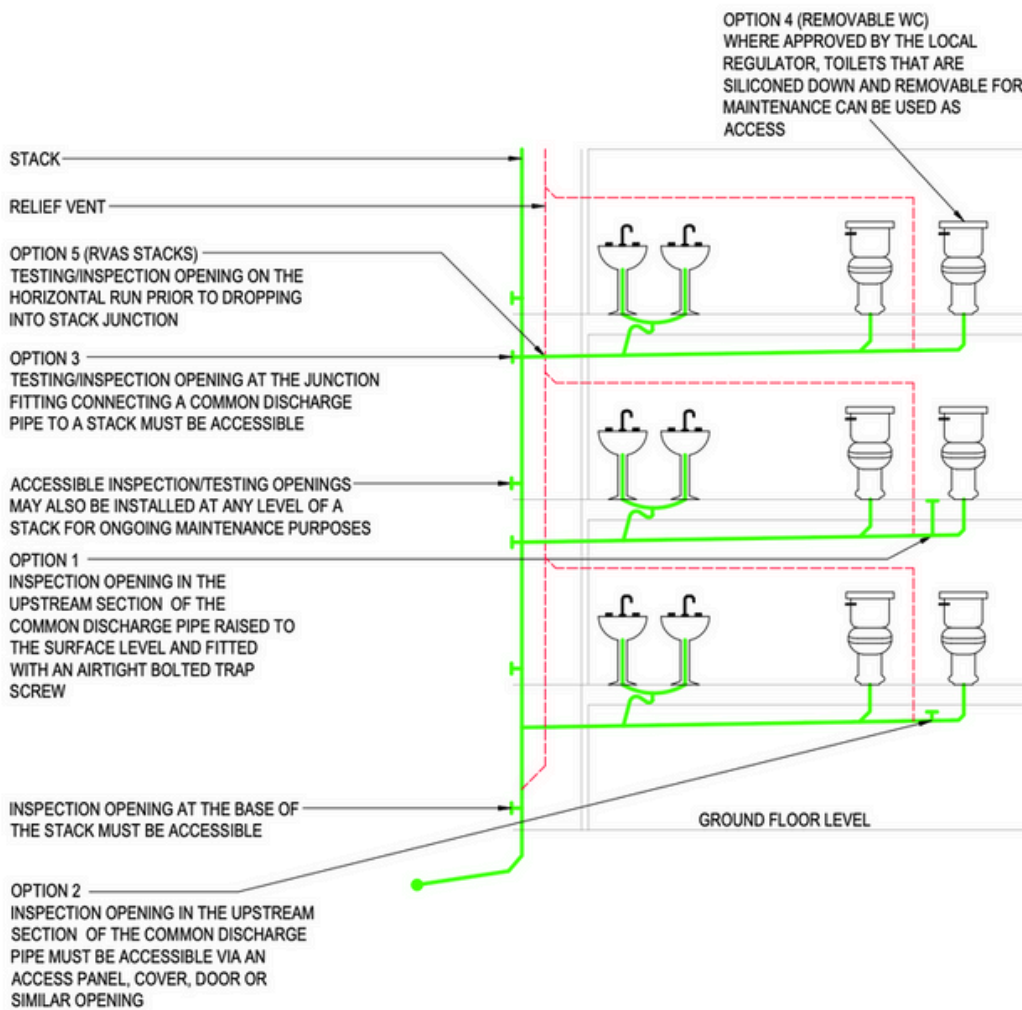
- at the base of each stack and
- in the upstream section of a common discharge pipe, either raised to surface level or provided with a access to the inspection point in the ceiling below or on the junction fitting that connects a common discharge pipe to a stack.



## Commercial, industrial and Class 2-9 residential buildings

Inspection openings must be installed and must be accessible:

- at the base of every stack
- at every junction fitting that connects a common discharge pipe to a stack, or in the upstream section of the common discharge pipe
- at intervals no greater than every 30 metres in a common discharge pipe



## Notes

- Common discharge pipes connected to sanitary plumbing stacks must have accessible testing/inspection openings, as per the diagrams on page 3.
- Accessible testing/inspection openings in sanitary plumbing stacks may be installed on each floor level.
- An accessible testing/inspection opening must be installed at the base of all sanitary plumbing stacks.
- When testing/inspection openings are located within a tenancy that is occupied by a separate party, it is a good idea to put the inspection/testing opening into the tenancy it serves.

## Testing openings

Testing openings must be provided where required for testing of sanitary plumbing systems, in accordance with AS/NZS 3500.2:2018 Section 10.

## Inspection openings for in-ground sanitary drainage systems

For requirements related to inspection openings in sanitary drainage systems, refer to AS/NZS 3500:2 Section 4.

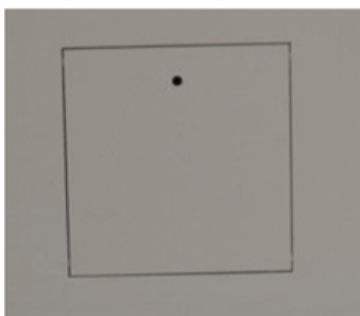
Inspection opening in a sanitary plumbing stack



Access hatch in a sanitary plumbing stack.



Access hatch in a ceiling for a common discharge pipe inspection opening





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These suggestions are the formal position of the HCAA in regards to this matter. These statements are provided in the public interest, and the HCAA may not have any specific jurisdiction on the related matter. A responsible person or authority is expected to take relevant advice into consideration as appropriate to their given circumstance. The HCAA has issued this document for use by competent personnel deemed by their local and state/territory-based engineering community and regulations. All data within this document is to be suitably verified by a suitably qualified person before use. The HCAA provides no warranty, no guarantee, or the like to the accuracy, validity or appropriateness of this data to your situation. Please be advised that you are using these documents at your own risk.

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