

# The West Australian

## 'Faulty' pipes to remain in homes pending 'top priority' investigation by building industry regulator

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WA's building industry regulator has stopped short of telling builders they have to strip out all piping at the centre of a growing scandal impacting hundreds of homes. Credit: The West Australian/supplied

WA's [building](#) industry regulator has stopped short of telling builders they have to strip out all piping at the centre of a growing scandal impacting hundreds of homes.

But that could change pending the outcome of an investigation.

The Sunday Times two weeks ago revealed 400-500 new homes across WA have been hit by a deluge of burst pipes, resulting in flooded houses and costly repairs.

Homeowners impacted by the failure of extensively-used polybutylene plumbing pipes are demanding all such piping is replaced, not just the sections that have torn and caused leaks. They complain it's only a matter of time before there are fresh bursts.

The Building and Energy division of the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety is investigating the failure of the piping, manufactured by Iplex. Iplex stopped selling its Pro-fit brand of pipes on May 31 last year.



A Building and Energy spokesperson said “builders were required to fix the relevant sections of pipes that have failed along with any consequential damage”.

“Building and Energy’s investigation is focused on determining the root cause of the pipe failures i.e. whether it is a manufacturing issue, an installation issue or a combination of both. The findings of the investigation will indicate whether more of the pipes should be replaced,” the spokesperson said.

“We are aware of the stress and inconvenience many affected home owners are experiencing and can reassure them that our investigation is a top priority.

“At this stage, builders are not required to replace all the pipes, but they will be notified if the situation changes depending on the findings of the investigation.



📷 The Iplex piping issue. It has ruined carpets and wrecked furniture. Credit: Supplied/Supplied

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“We encourage home owners to notify Building and Energy (via the [plumbing complaint form](#)) about their situation so we can update them on the investigation outcomes.”

Despite halting sales, Iplex doesn't yet accept it is to blame in any way for the crisis, which has not been mirrored in other parts of the country.

Most of the affected houses were built between 2018 and 2020, but The Sunday Times has received complaints from homeowners who built more than a decade ago, claiming their pipes are failing as well.



Building and Energy said it was unaware of historical issues with the product.

“Prior to those matters currently being investigated there have been no reports to Building and Energy indicating a concern with this particular polybutylene product,” the spokesman said.

“Anyone whose home exceeds the six-year statutory warranty period for lodging a complaint with Building and Energy, and is unable to achieve a satisfactory resolution with the builder, is encouraged to seek independent legal advice regarding their options for a civil remedy.”