

Office estates & Building standards Division
River House, 48 High Street, Belfast BT1 2AW
Tel: 028 90257326
Fax: 028 90518359
www.buildingregulationsni.gov.uk

Information Notice

Amendment to the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000

The Department of Finance and Personnel which has responsibility for maintaining the building regulations is working on an amendment to the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000. The amendment which will include revised requirements for Parts L, R and F, will be made in August and will come into operation in November.

The amendment to Part L (Heat producing appliances and liquefied petroleum gas installations) will include clarification of existing provisions and references to other standards that have been published since this Part was last amended. The most significant change will be the inclusion of requirements relating to the storage of liquid fuel storage systems. The Part will be retitled "Combustion appliances and fuel storage systems" reflecting the content of the revision.

The amendment to Part R (Access and facilities for disabled people), relates only to buildings other than dwellings. The overall objective of the amendment will be to ensure that new buildings meet reasonable standards of accessibility and to secure cost effective improvements to the accessibility of the existing building stock when certain building work is carried out. Although the amendment will support and complement the aims of the Disability Discrimination Act, Part R will be retitled "Access to and use of buildings" indicating a more inclusive approach to access. The revised requirements will satisfy the needs of disabled people and in doing so will better cater for the needs of society in general. As a result of the amendment to Part R there will

be consequential amendments to Part H (Stairs, ramps, guarding and protection from impact) and to Part V (Glazing).

The most radical amendment will be to Part F (Conservation of fuel and power) which will require higher thermal standards for buildings, reducing their carbon emissions by up to 40%. The amendment is being driven by a requirement to implement a number of the requirements of the EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive.

In January 2005 the Department took the unprecedented step of running a series of seminars during its public consultation exercise on proposed amendments to Part F to highlight the radical changes. Some of the finer detail has changed since the consultation exercise, however the main thrust that compliance will be on a "Whole Building Approach" has not changed. The elemental approach will disappear but limiting U values will be given to provide against inappropriate trade offs. For the first time buildings over 1000m² undergoing major refurbishment will have to be upgraded to comply with the energy performance requirements. The standards will be based on the presumption that condensing boilers are the norm. The use of renewable energies will also be encouraged.

In support of the new requirements, new Technical Booklets will be published which will give methods and standards of building which, if followed, will satisfy the requirements of the regulations. The Department will also be holding a series of seminars in September/October at which the writers of the regulations will introduce the new requirements, outline the background to them and demonstrate how compliance may be attained. They will also demonstrate the SAP 2005 and SBEM software with which designers will need to be familiar so that they can show how designs meet the requirements of the new Part F.

30 March 2006