



Menu

Policy

Providing effective building regulations so that new and altered buildings are safe, accessible and efficient

Organisations: Department for Communities and Local Government

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government>) and Building Regulations Advisory Committee (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/building-regulations-advisory-committee>)

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Topic: Planning and building (<https://www.gov.uk/government/topics/planning-and-building>)

Ministers: The Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP (<https://www.gov.uk/government/ministers/secretary-of-state-for-communities-and-local-government>) and Stephen Williams MP (<https://www.gov.uk/government/ministers/parliamentary-under-secretary-of-state-17>)

Applies to: England (see policy for Scotland (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Building/Building-standards>), Wales (<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/buildingregs/?lang=en>) and Northern Ireland (<http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/index/law-and-regulation/building-regulations/>))

Issue

Building regulations contain the rules for building work in new and altered buildings to make them safe and accessible and limit waste and environmental damage. People carrying out building work must usually arrange for their work to be checked by an independent third party to make sure that their work meets the required standards. In some cases the installer can certify themselves that their work complies.

Building practices, technology and construction techniques are constantly evolving. We need to make sure that building regulations are fair, efficient, up to date and effective.

Actions

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has enacted a package of deregulatory changes (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-building-act-1984-building-amendment-regulations-2012-circular-02-2012>) to the building regulations in 2012 to make sure they continue to be up to date and effective.

DCLG also carries out many ongoing actions to provide effective building regulations. These include:

- publishing supporting guidance known as Approved Documents (<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/providing-effective-building-regulations-so-that-new-and-altered-buildings-are-safe-accessible-and-efficient/supporting-pages/approved-documents>) which shows builders how compliance with building regulations may be achieved
- overseeing and supporting building control organisations (<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/providing-effective-building-regulations-so-that-new-and-altered-buildings-are-safe-accessible-and-efficient/supporting-pages/building-control-system>)
- authorising competent person self-certification schemes (<https://www.gov.uk/building-regulations-competent-person-schemes/current-schemes>) and third party certification scheme for domestic electrical work (<https://www.gov.uk/third-party-certification-schemes-for-domestic-electrical-work>)
- producing circulars (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/series/building-regulations-circulars>) and divisional circular letters (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/building-regulations-divisional-circular-letters>) to tell interested parties formally about changes to building regulations policy
- publishing research (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/series/building-regulations-research>) to provide a scientific basis to underpin the regulations
- adjudicating in disputes between people carrying out building work and a building control body through processes called determinations and appeals (<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/providing-effective-building-regulations-so-that-new-and-altered-buildings-are-safe-accessible-and-efficient/supporting-pages/determinations-and-appeals>)
- providing the secretariat for the Building Regulations Advisory Committee for England (BRAC) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/building-regulations-advisory-committee>), which advises the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on the exercise of his or her power to make building regulations and on other related subjects in England
- being the UK lead on Construction Products Regulation (CPR) (<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/buildingpolicyandlegislation/cpr>) where DCLG provides guidance and represents the UK at the European Commission

Background

The first set of national building standards were introduced in the Building Regulations 1965. These were a set of prescriptive standards that had to be followed. The Building Act 1984 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/55>) brought fundamental changes to the building regulations regime. It introduced:

- functional performance standards, set in terms of what was adequate, reasonable or appropriate, supported by statutory guidance in the Approved Documents
- competition into the building control sector through the addition of private sector approved inspectors

These changes were introduced to:

- make the standards more flexible
- support innovation
- make the system more efficient and effective

Over time, there have been further changes to the legislation and the supporting guidance. These have sought to:

- improve the overall quality of buildings
- improve the effectiveness of the building regulations system
- reduce any unnecessary burdens on those who use the system

Who we've consulted

The department published on 18 December 2012 a combined summary of responses (PDF 1.11MB) (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/38700/2012_BR_SOR.pdf) to the building regulations consultation package issued on 31 January 2012. The consultation contained a range of proposals to improve the building regulations regime in England.

- section 1: consultation overview and proposals on various technical aspects of the regulations (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/building-regulations-access-statements-security-changing-places-toilets-and-regulation-7>)
- section 2: energy efficiency of buildings (Part L) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/building-regulations-conservation-of-fuel-and-power>)
- section 3: electrical safety in homes (Part P) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/building-regulations-electrical-safety>)
- section 4: changes to the building control system (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/building-regulations-the-building-control-system>)

Alongside this DCLG process, the Cabinet Office's Red Tape Challenge (<http://www.redtapechallenge.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/building-regulations-and-related-legislation/>) has also looked at the potential to reduce the amount of regulation in this area. Following this challenge, DCLG launched a review of the building regulations framework and voluntary housing standards (<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/providing-effective-building-regulations-so-that-new-and-altered-buildings-are-safe-accessible-and-efficient/supporting-pages/technical-housing-standards-review>) in October 2012. The review aimed to achieve further deregulation where this would reduce unnecessary cost and complexity in the house-building process.

A written ministerial statement (http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-vote-office/March_2014/13%20March/4.DCLG-Building-regs.pdf) with a supporting note (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-regulations-housing-standards-review>) was published on 13 March 2014 setting out the outcome of the housing standards review. The statement was accompanied by a press notice, (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/stephen-williams-announces-plans-to-raise-housing-standards>) the summary of responses (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/housing-standards-review-consultation>) to the review consultation and the government's response (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/response-to-report-on-code-for-sustainable-homes-and-the-housing-standards-review>) to a report by the Environmental Audit Committee on the code for sustainable homes and housing standards review.

Legislation

Building Regulations 2010 and Building (Approved Inspectors etc.) Regulations 2010

The Building Regulations 2000 and the Building (Approved Inspectors etc.) Regulations 2000, and all amendments to both, were revoked from 1 October 2010, and are no longer in effect.

The Building Regulations 2010 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/2214/contents/made>) and the Building (Approved Inspectors etc.) Regulations 2010 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/2215/contents/made>) consolidated the Building Regulations 2000 and the Building (Approved Inspectors etc.) Regulations 2000, and incorporated all of the amendments made since 2000. The regulations were also renumbered and reordered to make them easier to use and with a more logical structure.

Further amendments that should be read in conjunction with Building Regulations 2010 and the Building (Approved Inspectors etc) Regulations 2010 are:

- The Building & c (Amendment) Regulations 2014 (SI 2014/579). (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/579/contents/made>), which comes into force on the 6 April 2014

- The Building (Amendment) Regulations 2013 (SI 2013/1105), (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/1105/contents/made>), which came into force on the 3 June 2013
- The Building Regulations etc (Amendment) Regulations 2013 (SI 2013/181), (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/181/contents/made>) and correction slip, which came into force on the 5 February 2013
- The Building Regulations etc (Amendment) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/3119), (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/3119/contents/made>) and correction slip, to come into force at various times in 2013
- The Building (Repeal of Provisions of Local Acts) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/3124), (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/3124/contents/made>) which came into force on 9 January 2013
- The Building (Amendment) Regulations 2012(SI 2012/718), (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/718/contents/made>) which came into force on 6 April 2012
- The Building (Amendment) Regulations 2011(SI 2011/1515), (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/1515/contents/made>) which came into force on 15 July 2011

The department has published the following circulars which help to explain the above regulations:

- circular 01/2014 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-of-third-party-certification-schemes-and-simplification-of-schedule-3-circular-0114>) explains the amendments made by the Building &c (Amendment) Regulations 2014
- circular 01/2013 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-building-act-1984-building-amendment-regulations-2013-circular-012013>) explains the amendments made by the Building (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- circular 02/2012 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-building-act-1984-building-amendment-regulations-2012-circular-02-2012>) explains the amendments made by the Building Regulations etc (Amendment) Regulations 2012 and the Building (Repeal of Provisions of Local Acts) Regulations 2012
- circular 02/2011 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-building-act-1984-building-amendment-regulations-2011-circular-02-2011>) explains the amendments made by the Building (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- circular 07/2010 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-building-act-1984-and-building-regulations-2010-circular-07-2010>) explains the 2010 regulations