

A GENERAL GUIDE TO BUILDING REGULATIONS

STEP 1

WHAT ARE BUILDING REGULATIONS (BUILDING CONTROL) ?

The Building Regulations are made under powers provided in the Building Act 1984, and apply in England and Wales.

They exist to ensure the health and safety of people in and around all types of buildings (i.e. domestic, commercial and industrial).

They also provide for energy conservation, access to and use of buildings.

The Building Regulations are a set of functional “minimum” standards that reflect all the technical requirements associated with the construction process.

Building Control Surveyors undertake checks on site to ensure works are in accordance with plans approved under planning legislation and to inform planning of any variations.

Building regulations and planning permission are often linked, however are two separate applications and should not be confused.

STEP 2

DOES MY PROJECT NEED BUILDING REGULATIONS?

The general answer to this is YES. Virtually all build projects will need to comply to building regulations.

There are certain buildings and works that are exempt from building control. These include:

- certain small detached buildings;
- greenhouses and agricultural buildings;
- certain temporary buildings; and
- certain porches and conservatories to dwellings (generally less than 30m² and subject to the installation of appropriate safety glazing).

Contacting your local authority or independent building control advice agency will be able to advise on the project correctly.

If you have any doubt concerning approvals under The Town and Country Planning Act or Building Regulations please always check with the relevant section of the council.

STEP 3

MAKING A BUILDING REGULATIONS APPLICATION

There are usually two methods of applying for approval for new work controlled under the Building Regulations. The type of application will be dependent upon a number of factors and will be advised by the council. The inspection notification process is the same whichever route you choose.

APPLICATION (A) - Full Plans Applications - advised for commercial projects.

With this type of application you submit two copies of the application form, the required plan charge and two copies of plans and supporting details

showing exactly how your proposal will be constructed. Building control will then carefully check the information against the requirements of the building

regulations, carry out any consultations, communicate to you or your agent any areas that need addressing or where further information is required.

Once the plan is approved, building control then carry out site inspections during the construction period.

The main advantage of this type of application is the comfort of having an approved plan to work with which if followed will satisfy the requirements

of the building regulations. In addition, more accurate costing can be achieved when you are considering which building contractor you wish to use.

Plans are often submitted by an architect or designer who understand the level of detail required, although some applicants do produce drawings themselves.

APPLICATION (B) - Building Notice

This type of application requires the applicant to submit two copies of the application form and the relevant charge. The Building Notice is intended

for minor works (usually small domestic applications) but cannot be used where the building is put to a 'Relevant Use'. Detailed plans and supporting

information are not usually submitted with this type of application. However, enough detail must be provided in the first instance, in order for building

control to ensure the correct fee has been paid. The major disadvantage of this form of application is that NO FORMAL APPROVAL is given and

therefore greater reliance is placed on the owner/builder to ensure compliance with the requirements of the building regulations.

STEP 4 COMPLETION CERTIFICATES

A completion certificate is available upon satisfactory completion of the work and is a very important document.

When you sell the property you will be asked for proof that any work carried out during your ownership complied with all relevant regulations

This guideline provides an introduction to the Building Regulation requirements in England and Wales and is intended as a general guideline for anyone proposing to carry out an application
It is not a statement of the law but is intended to simply help you to understand the system.
