

Building Control Guidance leaflet 13

Conservation of Fuel and Power

Guidance for householders

Environmental Services Department



New Building Regulations concerning energy conservation

From 6 April 2006 there are some important changes to the Building Regulations regarding energy conservation that will affect homeowners. The changes mean that Building Regulation approval is now needed for more types of repairs or improvements to your home.

The aim of the new Regulations is to improve the energy efficiency of existing houses when alterations are being made to walls and roofs. The energy efficiency of a house built before 2002 is about half that of a house built after 2002. This means that heating and lighting costs are much higher for older houses and they produce more carbon dioxide, which is damaging our environment. About 95% of our houses are built before 2002. The government wants to reduce the harmful waste gases we produce by 60% before 2050.

What work is affected?

Building Regulations have applied to replacement windows since 2002 and the government now wants to improve alterations to walls and roofs. This could be when you are building an extension, converting a building such as a barn into a house, making alterations internally or when renovating your house. These new Regulations represent a significant change, as you may need to improve the insulation of your roof, wall or floor if it is to be replaced or renovated.

This means building work such as the replacement of external render or tile hanging to a wall, extensive re-plastering internally or having new roof tiles or slates may need extra insulation to be added at the same time. The government calls this work the alteration of a 'thermal element'.

Complying with the new rules

If you are having work done to a 'thermal element' such as new roof tiles, a new brick skin to a wall or re-rendering or re-plastering, you must now get Building Regulation approval by submitting a Building Regulation application.

How do I do this?

In most cases you will need to complete a 'Building Notice' form. This can be downloaded from our Building Control pages at www.wigan.gov.uk.

Or, you can request a form by ringing Building Control on 01942 404227. This form must be submitted with the appropriate fee and must give details of the work to be carried out and the proposed improvements to the insulation of the thermal element being worked on.

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You must notify Building Control two days before starting work and also when the work is complete. A Building Control Surveyor will visit your property to assess whether the work will comply and will advise you if any further inspections are necessary. It is important to note that the Building Control Surveyor is not supervising the building work and is not responsible for ensuring that the work is carried out competently. You or your builder will be informed of any contraventions of the Building Regulations noted at the time of inspection and it will be your responsibility to make sure that the work is carried out correctly.

Why is it important to get approval?

It is a legal requirement to get Building Regulation approval for relevant building work. More detailed information is available on our website which can either be downloaded or requested by telephone.

If you come to sell your house you will need to provide evidence that you have obtained approval. This will form part of the Home Information Pack to be introduced in 2007. If you do not have the required approvals you may experience problems with the sale.

By complying with the new rules you will reduce your energy costs and contribute effectively to reducing the carbon dioxide emissions that are damaging the environment.

Examples of additional works that were not previously controlled but now require the submission of a Building Regulation application under these new Regulations include:

- Renewal of pitched or flat roof coverings, including re-tiling, re-slating or re-felting of roofs.
- Renewal or replacement of ceilings under a roof space or flat roof, with or without the renewal of the supporting structure.
- Renewal of cladding to external walls or dormer cheeks.
- Renewal of a finish or cladding to an external wall area or elevation (render or other cladding) or applying a finish or cladding for the first time.
- Rebuilding an external wall including the outer leaf of brickwork or stonework only.
- Renewal of internal wall plaster or plasterboard to an external wall or where plaster or plasterboard is being applied for the first time, for example, re-plastering or dry lining of walls.
- Renovation or replacement of a solid or suspended floor, involving the replacement of a screed or a timber floor deck.

How much insulation should be provided?

The Regulations expect the cost of improving the insulation of thermal elements to be recovered within 15 years through reduced energy costs.

If the cost of upgrading the insulation to modern standards cannot be recovered within 15 years or less, or they are not technically feasible, the element should be upgraded to the best standard possible at a cost that can be recovered within 15 years.

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How do I calculate the cost that can be recovered?

In some cases it may be possible to agree what is reasonable with the Building Control Surveyor. But for more complicated situations you may need to employ a suitably qualified person to advise on technical and economic feasibility. Depending on the circumstances, Building Control may ask you to provide this information.

Note

Replacing windows, roof lights and doors that are more than 50% glazed also requires a formal Building Regulation application, unless they are installed by a company registered with either:

FENSA (Fenestration Self Assessment Scheme)

www.fensa.co.uk

0870 780 2028

British Standards Institution (BSI)

www.bsi-global.com

01442 278607

CERTASS Limited

www.certass.co.uk

01292 266636

Window manufacturers will start to include an energy label on their windows, similar to the labels you now see on washing machines and fridges. Rated at bands A to G, band A being the most efficient and band G the least efficient. These labels will show how energy efficient the window is. Replacement windows will generally have to be band E or better, new windows should be band D. A separate information leaflet relating to replacement windows and doors is available from Building Control.

Emergency repairs

In certain situations it may be necessary to carry out emergency repairs to thermal elements, for instance if your roof is damaged in a storm.

If this situation arises a Building Notice must be submitted at the earliest opportunity after commencement and the repairs must comply with the new Regulations.

Changing the energy status of a building

Changing the energy status of a building or part of a building may also require upgrading of the insulation. This can occur when converting a space that was not previously heated or cooled into one that is, for example, the conversion of a domestic garage into a living space. When such a change occurs, the existing envelope of the building, which includes the walls, the floor and the roof, may need to be upgraded to reduce the amount of energy needed to heat or cool the space.

What about new houses and new extensions?

As well as introducing new Regulations for existing dwellings from 6 April 2006, the government has revised the standards required for new dwellings and extensions.

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New built homes will have to have an energy rating calculated at the design stage and this will be checked again when the building is completed.

New standards of thermal insulation for the walls, floors and roof and improved efficiency of heating, ventilation and hot water systems will apply. There is also an emphasis on making buildings less air permeable (greater control over air leakage and draughts). New requirements for air leakage testing have been introduced. In total, these new measures aim to provide a 20% reduction in carbon emissions than the previous standards allowed.

The government has also announced that **energy ratings** similar to the consumer-friendly fridge ratings will have to be produced for every home bought or sold in England and Wales from June 2007.

An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) will be part of the Home Information Pack which is also being introduced in 2007. These Energy Performance Certificates will give buyers and sellers A to G ratings for their home's energy efficiency and carbon emissions. They will also tell them the current average costs for heating, hot water and lighting in the home as well as how to cut costs with energy efficiency measures.

Further information

More information on energy saving and the effects of climate change can be obtained from:

The Energy Saving Trust: An independent government funded body which provides advice on insulation and energy conservation and provides details of grants and offers available.

www.est.org.uk

Wigan Council: Private sector housing energy efficiency page, for links to energy advice centres and information on energy efficiency grants.

boston/pub/ehcp/eh/housing/ee.htm

Climate Challenge website: A government website with information and links to other sites on the effect of global warming and climate change and what it means for the UK.

www.climatechallenge.gov.uk/

Contact us

For more information on Building Regulations you can contact our Building Control Section at:

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Building Control
Civic Buildings
New Market Street
Wigan WN1 1RP

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