

Building Regulation Changes 2015

New and amended Building Regulations are being introduced from 1st October 2015.

The main changes are in respect of water efficiency, accessibility in dwellings and security in dwellings.

These changes apply to applications submitted on or after 1st October 2015, but don't apply to applications submitted before this date, provided that the works start before 1st October 2016.

These changes are being introduced as a direct result of the recent Housing Standards review and are intended to introduce greater consistency in housing standards.

There were four main outcomes from the review:

- 1) Significant reduction in the powers of Local Planning Authorities to impose local technical standards.
- 2) The winding-down of the Code For Sustainable Homes
- 3) A set of 'Nationally Described Space Standards'. This standard has not been incorporated into the Building Regs, but may be imposed by local Planning authorities as a condition.
- 4) New standards in respect of water consumption and accessibility in dwellings can be imposed by Planning authorities and enforced by Building Control.

The new standards can, however, only be applied where there is a local plan policy based on evidenced local need.

Main Changes to Building Regulations

Approved Document G

Currently the maximum water usage per-person per-day is 125L in new dwellings.

The proposal in October allows planning departments to decide on a reduced water allowance, bringing down the water usage down to 110L per-person per-day depending on local requirements such as proven water shortages etc.

If this requirement is imposed as a condition of Planning Permission, it will be enforceable through Building Control legislation.

It will be duty of the person carrying out the work to inform building control if this higher standard has been imposed by a Planning condition.

If this requirement is not imposed, the 125L standard continues to apply.

Alternative ways of calculating water usage are also contained within the new approved document.

Approved Document M

Approved Document M will be separated into two documents, Approved Document M (Volume 1) – Dwellings, and Approved Document (Volume 2) Buildings other than dwellings.

“AD M (Volume 1) – Dwellings” will be split into three separate sections.

M4 (1) – Visitable dwellings

M4 (2) – Accessible and adaptable dwellings

M4 (3) – Wheelchair accessible dwellings

Each category is an improvement on the last. This means that M4(2) incorporates further requirements over the ones explained in M4(1).

Some examples of further requirements are bulleted below:

M4(1) – Visitable dwellings

- Generally, M4(1) remains the same as current guidance for new dwellings, but there are a few important changes (e.g. Consumer unit switch position must be between 1350 and 1450 above the floor).

M4(2) – Accessible and adaptable dwellings

- Must meet the requirements set out in M4(1) and:
- All flats are to be provided with a lift. (It may be agreed by planners that all Category M4(2) and (3) dwellings can be located on the ground floor of a block of flats to eradicate the installation of a lift).
- Dwelling must be provided with a provision for a future stair lift/lift. This will require a suitable power supply to the stairs etc.
- Principle living areas are to have low level windows no more than 850mm from the floor.
- Bedrooms must have minimum direct route to the window at least 750mm wide. This means that the rooms should be suitably sized to ensure that when a bed/wardrobe/drawers etc. are in place they will not be detriment to the width of the path to the window. Appendix D of the AD provides sizes of bedroom furniture that must be shown on the proposed plans when submitted for plan checking.
- Walls must be adapted to allow for future grab rails in bathrooms/around the stairs etc.
- Drainage must be provided for future level access shower room on the ground floor.
- Window handle lock to the ground floor level must be between 850mm and 1200mm.

M4(3) – Wheelchair accessible dwellings

- Must meet the requirements set out in M4(1), M4(2) and:
- Scooter/wheelchair storage must be provided to all dwellings.
- Where there is a rise across the development over 300mm a stepped approach must be also be provided along with a ramp.
- Communal entrances – if power assisted doors are not going to be provided initially, provisions for the future must be installed such as power etc. This will also be required to every flat door.
- Bedrooms must have minimum direct route to the window at least 1000mm wide. This means that the rooms should be suitably sized to ensure that when a bed/wardrobe/drawers etc. are in place they will not be detriment to the width of the path to the window. Appendix D of the AD provides sizes of bedroom furniture that must be shown on the proposed plans when submitted for plan checking.
- Depending on the number of bedrooms provided in the dwelling specified space/storage must be provided. For example a three bedroom house should be constructed with 2.5m of storage space not including wardrobes etc.
- Provisions for through floor lift must be provided with power supply.
- Stairs are to be installed in accordance with the guidance followed for ambulant person's stairs.
- Living spaces including bedrooms will have a minimum size.
- The kitchen worktop length will vary depending on the number of persons in each dwelling.
- All bedroom ceilings must be capable of taking a load of 200kg for possible future hoist requirement.
- Door entry systems will be required at the front entrance with answering systems at the head of the bed in the main bedroom and in the lounge.

What standard of accessibility will be required will be decided by the Local Planning Authority, but the higher standards can only be applied where there is a local plan policy based on evidenced local need.

If the planning permission does not state a category, then it is assumed that there is no specific category for any of the dwellings and M4(1) should be followed for all.

It will be duty of the person carrying out the work to inform building control if a higher standard has been imposed by a Planning condition.

Approved Document M (Volume 2) - Buildings other than dwellings – guidance unchanged.

Approved Document Q

This new AD deals with security in new dwellings (including new dwellings formed by a change of use).

Easily accessible doors and windows need to be secure. Easily accessible is defined as any door or window within 2m of the ground or within 2m of a roof with a pitch of 30 degrees within 3.5 m of the ground.

The guidance states that if doors and windows are installed in accordance with PAS24:2012 – Enhanced security performance requirements for door sets and windows in the UK – the requirements will be met.

Alternatively, bespoke windows and doors can be used provided that they satisfy certain criteria which are explained in the AD – Appendix B. For example:

- Doors to be fitted with a viewer, door chain and mechanically fixed as the manufactures installation guide.
- Lightweight wall construction must incorporate a resilient layer to reduce the risk of anyone breaking through the wall to access the locking system.
- The door set should be manufactured from solid or laminated timber with a minimum density of 600kg/m³.
- Any panel in the door must be a min.15mm thick and suitably secured in place.
- The smaller dimension of panel must be no larger than 230mm in either width or height.
- Main front doors should be fitted with multipoint locking system.

For further information or project advice please contact building.control@iow.gov.uk.

Please note that this guidance sheet is aimed at raising awareness of the new requirements and for full details, reference should be made to the Approved Documents.

Approved Documents can be viewed at www.planningportal.gov.uk

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