

# LABC Building Regulation Key Updates 2015



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# Building Regulation Update 2015



## Housing Standards Review

### Key Updates

The Housing Standards Review has seen Government move to restrict Planning departments from imposing locally defined technical building standards on new housing. The results are some major changes to Building Regulations and the Approved Documents. The aim is to reduce red tape for developers created by numerous local standards: for instance there were 12 wheelchair accessible housing standards in London alone! The Review outcomes can be summarised as 4 main issues:

- The reigning-in of planning departments' abilities to set local standards. National technical requirements have been created but they can only be applied by planners where they form part of the local plan.
- The winding-down of the Code for Sustainable Homes (CfSH). Building Regulations Part L will become the sole tool to control the energy efficiency of new homes.
- A 'Nationally Described Space Standard' replaces all local space standards but again can only be applied where justified to the planning inspectorate as part of the local plan – this is enforced by planning and not building control.
- Amendments to the Building Regulations. A new Requirement Q1 and Approved Document covers security in all new dwellings, including change of use. Part G2 (Water Efficiency) and M4 (Accessibility) introduce new 'optional requirements' that can be invoked by Planning based on local need, but again this can only be imposed where forming part of the local plan.

Once the higher 'optional requirements' are made a condition of the planning permission the developer has a statutory obligation to inform the Building Control that the higher level is in place – it is not for Building Control to liaise with planning. Building Control will then check and inspect the dwellings in question to the higher standards and become responsible for the enforcement of the optional requirements.

The changes to Building Regulations are effective from 1st October 2015 unless otherwise stated below.

Normal transitional provisions apply (to avoid the changes an application must be deposited before 1st October 2015 and commenced on site before 1st October 2016).

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The key changes are summarised below:

## Approved Document B (Wales Only)

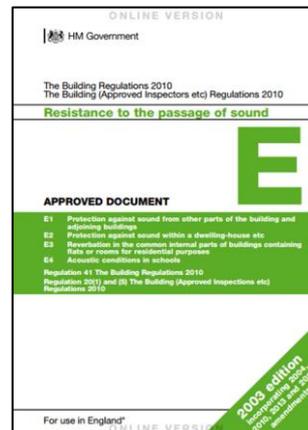


Unrelated to the housing standards review, new regulations require the installation of fire suppression systems to all new domestic premises in Wales from January 1st 2016.

This will include properties formed by change of use and covers residential occupancies in dwellings, flats, care homes, sheltered accommodation and some 'rooms for residential purposes'.

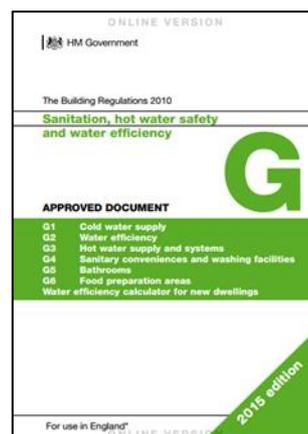
Both volumes of Approved Document B are amended to give guidance on the design, installation and commissioning of fire suppression systems. The transitional provisions are as usual – to avoid the requirements applications must be deposited before the above date and commenced before 1st January 2017. Exemptions exist for temporary and historic buildings.

## Approved Document E



Not related to the housing standards review, Approved Document E has been amended to reflect the changes made to Building Bulletin 93 – Acoustic Conditions in Schools. Effective 6th April 2015

## Approved Document G



A new optional requirement is introduced at 110 litres per person per day. This is only applied by Building Control where planning conditions dictate. ADG also

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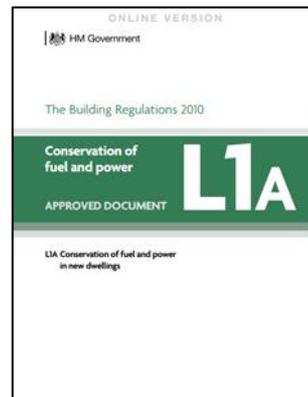
introduces a 'fittings based' approach as an alternative to carrying out the water efficiency calculation – this method requires the specification of maximum flow rates for fittings to demonstrate compliance, and is easier than carrying out the calculation.

## Approved Document H



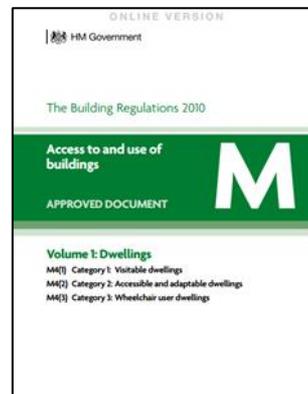
Additional design guidance is included to tackle bin-blight. Not a requirement of H6, designers are signposted to good practice documents. The application of H6 to a change of use forming dwellings is confirmed in the AD.

## Approved Document L



No changes here but Government have confirmed that the zero-carbon policy will no longer be pursued: there will be no changes in 2016.

## Approved Document M



The guidance is now split into 2 volumes.

The document 'Volume 2: Buildings Other Than Dwellings' has no technical changes. Volume 1 splits the requirements for dwellings into 3 different dwelling types, which can be implemented as optional requirements by planning.

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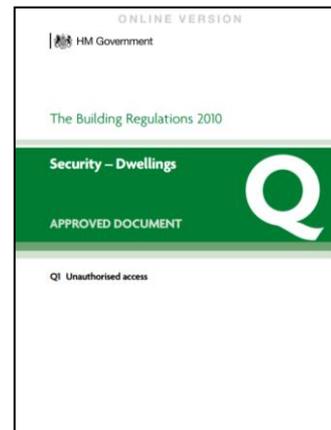
The default type is the Category 1 'visitable dwelling' which is the same as the current ADM standard with one key change – the height of the domestic consumer unit is controlled.

The Category 2 'accessible and adaptable dwelling' is an optional requirement. This has additional controls over features both outside the dwelling (car parking, gate widths, entrance canopies, step-free approach, lifts to flats), and within the dwelling (entrance / internal door widths, sanitary accommodation, access routes around bedrooms, position of and features within living areas).

The Category 3 'wheelchair adaptable dwelling' optional requirement takes this further by imposing additional requirements externally (level access to all areas, additional parking issues) and internally (minimum storage areas and room sizes, future provision for lifts, hoists and adaptations to create more accessible kitchens and bathrooms). Designers will need to show furniture layouts and details of how future adaptations will be provided to demonstrate compliance.

A further category of dwelling exists (3B – wheelchair accessible dwelling: all adaptations completed) but can only be invoked by planning where the Local Authority are placing a specific individual into the dwelling unit.

## Approved Document Q



A new requirement: Q1 'Unauthorised Entry' is included in the Building Regulations and supported by a new Approved Document.

The requirement applies to all new dwellings including those formed by change of use. The sole aim of the document is that accessible doors and windows must meet certain security standards, or in the case of doors, meet guidelines for bespoke construction.

## Further Information:

For more information on these changes, further training resources, and to download the new approved documents please visit [www.labc.co.uk](http://www.labc.co.uk)

## Contact us

LABC  
Third Floor  
66 South Lambeth Road  
London  
SW8 1RL

T. 020 7091 6860  
E. [info@labc.co.uk](mailto:info@labc.co.uk)  
W. [www.labc.co.uk](http://www.labc.co.uk)

LABC represents all local authority building control teams in England and Wales who work with industry and building professionals to ensure compliance with the Building Regulations. There are 3,000 surveyors working in LABC providing a consistent national service that is delivered at a local level.

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