

NEWS RELEASE

Revised building regulations to tackle climate change laid in parliament

ODPM News Release 2006/0043

15 March 2006

Revised building regulations that increase energy efficiency standards for new buildings were laid in Parliament today. The new measures taken together with changes to strengthen Building Regulations in 2002 will improve standards by 40 per cent.

The tough new standards which come into effect on 6 April apply to all new buildings and when building work is carried out in existing buildings. The improved standards mean that developers will need to make greater use of energy saving insulation, more efficient boilers and consider using Low or Zero Carbon Systems such as solar panels and mini-wind turbines to demonstrate compliance.

Housing and Planning Minister Yvette Cooper said:

“By increasing energy efficiency standards by 40 per cent our changes to building regulations make a significant contribution to the Government’s effort to tackle climate change and offer householders reduced fuel bills too.

“Alongside making new homes more sustainable we are also looking at further measures to improve the sustainability of existing homes and new planning guidance to further promote micro-generation and tackle climate change.”

The new regulations will also improve compliance by requiring air pressure testing for new buildings, simplifying the process for calculating energy performance and establishing new competent persons self-certification schemes.

To help builders and building control bodies adapt to these changes ODPM has launched the largest ever training programme for new building regulations including train the trainer events, regional road shows and an e-learning pack to be issued to every Building Control Surveyor.

A review of building regulations was announced last December to make them simpler, more transparent and less piecemeal. The review aims to reduce regulatory burdens, make the regulations easier to understand and comply with, and align them with the new Code for Sustainable Homes which will point the way for future uplifts in mandatory standards.

Last week Yvette Cooper announced proposals to strengthen the Code for Sustainable Homes, which sets higher standards in order to increase environmental sustainability and gives home owners better information about the running costs of their homes.

ODPM is also leading a review to identify measures to increase the sustainability of existing homes. In addition ministers are considering new planning guidance to further promote micro-renewable technology and tackle climate change.

Notes to editors

1. An Order enacting changes to Part L (Conservation of Fuel and Power) of the building regulations was laid in Parliament today and comes into effect on 6 April 2006. The Order can be viewed at:
<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2006/20060652.htm>
2. Updated guidance documents accompanying the new regulations including a new edition of the Approved Document F (Ventilation) have also been published today and can be viewed at:
<http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1130474>
3. The guidance was published in draft form in September 2005. There are no changes to the technical requirements in the final documents.
4. The revised Part L implements parts of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive including a requirement that when existing buildings with a floor area over 1000 m² undergo major renovation, their energy efficiency should be upgraded in so far as is feasible.
5. Last month ODPM announced a two thirds cut from the usual transitional arrangements for the implementation of the revised Part L in order to maximise the impact on climate change. All major building work without full plans approval by 6 April must comply with the 2006 regulations, and work with approval must begin within 12 months in order to comply with the existing 2002 regulations.
6. The revised regulations set overall performance standards for new building but do not prescribe particular methods for meeting them in order to allow flexibility in design. However the requirement to meet these standards provides a strong incentive for developers to make much greater use of low and zero carbon technology.

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