

How the Building Regulations Work

A brief overview, England and Wales

The Building Regulations are made under powers provided in the Building Act 1984, and apply in England and Wales. The current edition is "The Building Regulations 2000" (as amended) and the majority of building projects are required to comply with them. 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 and for access and facilities for disabled people.

The "requirements" which must be complied with under the Building Regulations are grouped under thirteen "parts". The "parts" deal with individual aspects of building design and construction such as "fire safety". Each "part" contains "functional requirements" which must be achieved.

The Approved Documents

Practical guidance on ways to comply with the "functional requirements" is contained in a series of Approved Documents which are to be read alongside the Building Regulations.

They provide:

- Guidance on the performance expected of materials & building work in order to comply with each of the requirements within the Regulations.
- and
- Practical examples of how to achieve compliance.

They refer directly to "the standards and technical approvals" such as the British and European Standards, the B.B.A. etc, as detailed sources for compliance.

While the guidance in the documents is not a statutory requirement in itself proof of compliance with the Regulations is, and "there is a legal presumption that if you followed the guidance, then this is evidence that your work has complied with the Building Regulations". (Building Regulations Explanatory Booklet).

Approved Document in support of Regulation 7

This deals with the quality of materials and workmanship under - "The Requirement: Regulation 7"

- "Performance - requirements of Regulation 7 will be met where materials are :-
- 'Of a suitable nature and quality in relation to the purpose and condition of their use'. -
- 'Materials include products, components, fittings...'. -
- "Materials- ways of establishing the fitness of materials :-
 - a. British Standards 'The material conforms to the relevant provisions of the appropriate British Standard'.
 - b. Other national and International technical specifications '...as long as such specifications provide in use at least an equivalent level of performance to the relevant British Standard'".
- "Workmanship - ways of establishing adequacy of workmanship :-
'the workmanship is covered by a scheme which complies to the relevant recommendations of BS EN ISO 9000: Quality management and quality assurance standard'".