



Approved Inspectors

# Salus Technical Update

## Building Regulations Update: **October 1st 2015**

### **Update on this years' changes to the building regulations, don't worry there are not too many changes – even if some appear a little over officious!**

At Salus Approved Inspectors we produce these technical guidance notes to keep our clients informed of upcoming changes.

**The majority of the updated building regulations comes into force on 1st October 2015. As with the last Part L changes, the transitional arrangements are for all applications made before this date, that start onsite before 1st Oct 2016 will be assessed under the old Approved Documents. Going forward all of the updated Approved Documents should be followed.**

Start of work in the eyes of the department consists of the following:

Excavation for strip or trench foundations or for pad footings; digging out and preparation of ground for raft foundations; vibro-floatation (stone columns) piling, boring for piles or pile driving; drainage work specific to the building(s) concerned.

### General

The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 and the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (Fines on Summary Conviction) Regulations 2015 have removed the maximum fine limit of £5000 for prosecutions under sections 35 and 35A of the Building Act 1984 for breaches of the Building Regulations. New legislation enables the court to issue unlimited fines.

This ruling came into force 12th March 2015.

### Approved Document E

There has been a very minor change to Part E with all guidance regarding sound within schools pointing to a building bulletin update, BB93:2003 to BB93:FEB2015. The update to ADE came into force on 6th April 2015.

### 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. It is advised that the Building Control body requires a copy of the planning conditions for a new development to ascertain whether this is required or not.

To go towards helping developers meet the water calculation requirements, there is to be a 'Table of fittings' provided in ADG that show what fittings will comply. Potentially, if the proposed plan states fittings mentioned in the AD, a requirement for a water calculation will no longer be required, depending of course what has been specified on plan matches what has been fitted onsite. In addition there is also a step-by-step calculation that can be followed by developers to enable them to provide their own calculation by inputting the details of their chosen fittings.

### Approved Document H

AD-H3 has an addition to the requirement to ensure that where any new dwellings are to be constructed in accordance with ADM, paved areas should be suitably drained free from storm water.

In addition, ADH directs building control bodies to assess bin storage in accordance with BS 5906:2005 Code of Practice for waste management in buildings to ensure that there is suitable spaces/enclosures for bins. Further advice/imagery is provided in NHBC Foundation report NF60.

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### Approved Document M

Part M has the largest change of all of the Approved Documents for October 2015. Ready...?

Approved Document M will be separated into two documents.

#### ADM – Dwellings

ADM – Commercial: Commercial guidance will remain the same.

#### ADM – Dwellings (M4) will be split into three separate sections.

M4 (1) – VISIBLE dwellings

M4 (2) – Accessible and adaptable dwellings

M4 (3) – Wheelchair accessible dwellings

The above options will be decided by the Local Authority Planning Department dealing with the permission for a new dwelling or a housing site. For example if there is a proposal for a new housing site, the planners will decide how many should be built under each of the above categories. These numbers will change on a site by site basis. 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 client to inform building control to how many of each category is required for their new site, and in turn building control bodies will be required to check each dwelling category with the proposed plans using the revised Approved Documents.

#### Example:

*Planners grant permission for a new housing site of 50 dwellings and decide that the following should be constructed:*

35 – M4(1) properties

10 – M4(2) properties

5 – M4 (3) properties

When receiving the construction plans it is advised that the building control body requests a copy of the planning permission to understand how many of each category is required.

With the above numbers, building control must then check that the proposed plans for each dwelling are in compliance with the Approved Document (M4-1, M4-2 or M4-3) depending on the accessibility category of that dwelling.

When issuing the initial notice it will be a requirement that the number of dwelling types under each category must be mentioned. In addition, on completion of the dwellings the housing site must not receive a final certificate if the planning permission has not been followed.

#### What is the difference between the categories?

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 outlined below:

#### M4(1) – VISIBLE dwellings

Generally, M4(1) remains the same as current guidance for new dwellings.

#### M4(2) – Accessible and adaptable dwellings

Must meet the requirements set out in M4(1) and:

All occupants of the housing development must be able to approach bin stores.

Drainage for all paved areas must be installed with suitable falls to ensure there is no standing water etc.

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.

Must be drainage 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.

Ramps must have an incline of no more than 1:15.

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.



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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.

*The above items are only a few of the requirements mentioned throughout ADM.*

## What about 'The code for Sustainable Homes'?

With the addition of the amendments to ADM, the code for sustainable homes will be wound down leaving ADM as the only guidance on how to achieve standards for accessible housing.

This means from Oct 2015 no reference to sustainable homes should be made.

## Warm welcome to Approved Document Q

This new AD targets security in new dwellings. The guidance points towards the advice provided in PAS24:2012 – Enhanced security performance requirements for door sets and windows in the UK stating that all doors and windows are to be installed in accordance with the advice stated in PAS24.

The requirement will require confirmation that the doors and windows installed in a new dwelling will meet the performance targets set out in PAS24:2012 or alternatively a number of other requirements 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.

The door set should be manufactured from solid or laminated timber with a minimum density of 600kg/m<sup>3</sup>.

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.

## Food for thought

### With amendments being made in the Approved Documents; ask yourself the following?

With a reduction of water usage in new dwellings and the general reduction of flow through our existing storm and foul water drainage, will we see any changes to Part H?

With the changes to Part M being more directed at meeting planning requirements, will building control bodies be asked to check compliance of all planning conditions?

Will there be any flexibility from a building regulations point of view? Approved Documents are guidance explaining methods of how the building regulations can be achieved. Does this mean that methods provided under each of the accessibility categories are strict rules and must be followed to ensure planning permission can be granted?

How will the change to ADM4 affect ADB? With provisions for through floor lifts being provided, this will enable wheelchair users to use upper floors of a dwelling. How will means of escape be assessed in this situation?

Want to find out more, informally and with your own team? We are able to provide CPD seminars on the upcoming changes. For more information or to book please contact us.

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