

19. How long should it take to get a Disability Access Certificate/ Revised Disability Access Certificate?

Normally two months, but this may be extended by written agreement between the applicant and the building control authority, e.g. when the authority seeks further information on your application. Both certificates may be granted with or without conditions, or refused.

20. Can I appeal if I am refused a Disability Access Certificate/ Revised Disability Access Certificate?

Yes. An applicant for either certificate can appeal to An Bord Pleanála against a refusal within one month of the decision (details of the appeal fee are available from your local authority or An Bord Pleanála).

21. Do the Regulations have specific requirements for access for people with disabilities?

Yes. Part M of the Regulations aims to ensure that buildings other than dwellings are accessible and usable by people with disabilities. From 1 January 2001 all **new** dwellings must be visitable by people with disabilities. The requirements cover the access and use of buildings, provision of sanitary facilities, audience or spectator facilities.

Technical Guidance Document M 2000 - Access for People with Disabilities provides guidance on the provision of:

- ◆ at least one entrance accessible to wheelchair users;
- ◆ an internal layout which allows disabled people to circulate freely;
- ◆ a passenger lift in buildings above a certain size;
- ◆ a proportion of hotel guest bedrooms suitable for disabled people;
- ◆ wheelchair spaces in theatres, cinemas, concert halls and sports stadiums; and
- ◆ facilities for people with hearing impairments in theatres, cinemas, concert halls and places of religious worship.

Part M of the Regulations is currently under review and an updated Part M/TGD-M will be published in 2010

The law governing Building Regulations and procedures is primarily set out in the Building Control Acts, 1990, and 2007, the Building Regulations, 1997-2009 and the Building Control Regulations, 1997-2009. These may be purchased from the Government Publications Sales Office, Sun Alliance House, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2 (Phone 01-6476995/4).



Comhshaol, Oidhreacht agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Heritage and Local Government

PL. 11 - Guide to the Building Control System



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This leaflet is a simple guide to understanding the building control system, which applies to the design and construction of new buildings, extensions and material alterations to and certain changes of use of existing buildings.

The leaflet is intended as a practical guide. It is not a definitive legal interpretation of building control law. For more information, you should consult your local building control authority.

1. What are the Building Regulations 1997-2009?

Building Regulations are a set of legal requirements for the design and construction of new buildings, extensions and material alterations to and certain changes of use of existing buildings.

Building Regulations provide for, in relation to buildings, the health, safety and welfare of people, conservation of fuel and energy, and access for people with disabilities. The Regulations can be downloaded from the Department's website www.environ.ie

The Consolidated Regulations came into force on 1 July, 1998, and replace the Building Regulations, 1991 (as amended).

2. How are the Regulations framed?

The Regulations comprise a set of legal requirements, expressed in simple functional statements.

Structure	Part A
Fire Safety	Part B
Site Preparation and Resistance to Moisture	Part C
Materials and Workmanship	Part D
Sound	Part E
Ventilation	Part F
Hygiene	Part G
Drainage & Waste Water Disposal	Part H
Heat Producing Appliances	Part J
Stairways, Ladders, Ramps and Guards	Part K
Conservation of Fuel and Energy	Part L
Access for People with Disabilities	Part M

Technical guidance on how to comply with these requirements are set out in the twelve separate Technical Guidance Documents (TGD's), which deal with each of the above areas. Amended TGD's can be downloaded from the Department's website www.viron.ie

The Regulations and related TGD's were amended as follows:

Parts M and D—2000; Part B—2006 ; Part G—2008; Part F— 2002 & 2009; Part L (Dwellings) - 2007 ; Part L (Non- Dwellings) - 2008
TGD C—2004 & 2008

3. How do they affect me?

If you are having construction work carried out, the work must comply with Regulations. The Regulations do not apply to works consisting of repairs or renewal (as defined in the Regulations) except to any repair or renewal likely to affect the structural integrity of the building or building element being repaired or renewed.

Part L Regulations apply to renewal works to existing buildings involving the replacement of external doors, windows and rooflights. (S.I. 259 of 2008)

4. What if I fail to comply?

The primary responsibility for compliance rests with designers, builders and building owners. Building control authorities have powers to inspect design documents and buildings, as well as powers of enforcement and prosecution where breaches of the Regulations occur. There are heavy penalties, including fines and imprisonment, for breaches of the Regulations. In addition, when it comes to selling your property, you may have difficulties if you cannot satisfy the purchaser's solicitor that the requirements of the Regulations have been met.

5. What control arrangements are in place?

The Building Control Regulations, 1997-2009 supplement the basic system of enforcement referred to in Question 4 above.

Seven important control arrangements are provided:

- ◆ Commencement Notice
- ◆ Fire Safety Certificate
- ◆ Revised Fire Safety Certificate
- ◆ 7 Day Notice
- ◆ Regularisation Certificate
- ◆ Disability Access Certificate
- ◆ Revised Disability Access Certificate

6. What is a Commencement Notice?

A Commencement Notice is a notification to a building control authority that a person intends to carry out either works or a material change of use to which the Building Regulations apply.

The notice must be given to the authority not more than 28 days and not less than 14 days before commencement of works or a material change of use.

The notice must be accompanied by a Commencement Notice Fee, based on the number of buildings (details available from your local building control authority). Copies of a Commencement Notice can also be obtained from the building control authority.

Commencement Notices are required for the following:

- ◆ the erection of a building;
- ◆ a material alteration or extension of a building;
- ◆ a material change of use of a building;
- ◆ works in connection with the material alteration (excluding minor works) of a shop, office or industrial building.

A Commencement Notice is not required:

- ◆ for works or a change of use which are exempted development under the planning code, and for which a Fire Safety Certificate is not required; or
- ◆ where a 7 Day Notice has been submitted.

Information on exempted development is given in other leaflets in this series, including PL. 5 - Doing Work about the House, PL. 6 - Agricultural and Farm Development, and PL. 7 - Planning for the Business Person.

7. What is a Fire Safety Certificate?

A certificate granted by a building control authority certifies that the building or works, if constructed in accordance with the plans, documents and information submitted to the authority, would comply with the requirements of Part B of the Second Schedule to the Building Regulations, 1997-2009.

8. Do I need a Fire Safety Certificate?

With the exception of houses and certain agricultural buildings, a Fire Safety Certificate is required for all new buildings (including apartments and flats), as well as material changes of use and certain alterations and extensions to buildings. A Fire Safety Certificate must be obtained before work starts.

9. What is a revised Fire Safety Certificate?

A certificate granted by a building control authority which is required where:

- ◆ an application for a Fire Safety Certificate is made before grant of planning permission, if required by the subsequent permission, or
- ◆ where significant revision is made to the design or works of a building for which a Fire Safety Certificate has already been granted.

10. Where do I get a Fire Safety Certificate / Revised Fire Safety Certificate?

You should apply to the local building control authority for either certificate, before you commence work or where significant revision is made to the design or works of a building for which a Fire Safety Certificate has already been granted. Application forms are available from the authority and should be submitted together with –

- ◆ plans, calculations and specifications for the works or building;
- ◆ details of the nature and extent of the proposed use and, where appropriate, of the existing use of the building;
- ◆ the appropriate fee, based on floor area (details available from your local authority).

Any application not including the above can be rejected by the authority as invalid.

11. How long should it take to get a Fire Safety Certificate/ Revised Fire Safety Certificate?

Normally two months, but this may be extended by written agreement between the applicant and the building control authority, e.g. when the authority seeks further information on your application. Both certificates may be granted with or without conditions, or refused.

12. Can I appeal if I am refused a Fire Safety Certificate/ Revised Fire Safety Certificate?

Yes. An applicant for a certificate can appeal to An Bord Pleanála against a refusal within one month of the decision (details of the appeal fee are available from your local authority or An Bord Pleanála).

13. What is a 7 Day Notice?

A 7 Day Notice is a notification to a building control authority that a person intends to commence work on the construction of a building before grant of the relevant Fire Safety Certificate.

A 7 Day Notice must be submitted not less than 7 days in advance of the commencement of works. The notice must be accompanied by:-

- ◆ a valid application for a Fire Safety Certificate from the applicant in the form specified for that purpose in the Third Schedule and accompanied by such plans and particulars as required under paragraphs (a) and (b) of article 13(2) of the Regulations.
- ◆ a 7 Day Notice Statutory Declaration in the form specified for that purpose in the Third Schedule, and
- ◆ such fee as may from time to time be prescribed for that purpose in Part V.

Do I require a Commencement Notice as well as a 7 Day Notice?

No. A Commencement Notice will not be required in respect of buildings where a 7 Day Notice has been submitted.

14. What is a Regularisation Certificate?

A certificate granted by a building control authority where a building has been commenced or completed without a Fire Safety Certificate, where such a certificate is required and certifies that the building work is in compliance with Part B of the Second Schedule to the Building Regulations 1997 to 2009.

The application must be accompanied by:-

- (i) drawings of the relevant works as they have been commenced or constructed, so as to enable the building control authority to assess whether the said works, as commenced or as constructed in accordance with the said drawings,

documents and information submitted, will comply or are in compliance, as appropriate, with the requirements of Part B of the Second Schedule to the Building Regulations,

(ii) a Statutory Declaration from the applicant in the form specified for that purpose in the Third Schedule, and

(iii) such fee as may from time to time be prescribed for that purpose in Part V.

15. What is a Disability Access Certificate?

A certificate granted by a building control authority which certifies compliance, at design stage of non-domestic buildings and apartment blocks, with the requirements of Part M of the Second Schedule to the Building Regulations 1997 to 2009.

16. What is a Revised Disability Access Certificate?

A revised Disability Access Certificate (DAC) is a certificate granted by a building control authority in respect of works where significant revision is made to the design or works of a building for which a DAC has already been granted.

17. Do I need a Disability Access Certificate?

With the exception of houses and certain agricultural buildings, a Disability Access Certificate is required for all new non-domestic buildings (including apartments and flats), material alterations and extensions to buildings and certain changes of use.

18. Where do I get a Disability Access Certificate/ Revised Disability Access Certificate?

You should apply to the local building control authority for either certificate, before you commence work or where significant revision is made to the design or works of a building for which an Disability Access Certificate has already been granted.