

# SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

## *Building Regulation Note 6/2000*

### ***BUILDING STANDARDS (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 1990 (AS AMENDED)***

### ***ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS TO DWELLINGS — ACCESS AND FACILITIES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE***

[Distribution List enclosed](#)

Our ref: QTD 1/5  
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Dear Sir or Madam

Enclosed for your information is a copy of Building Regulation Note 6/2000.

This Note provides guidance and advice on the requirements of the Technical Standards for compliance with the Building Standards (Scotland) Regulations 1990 (as amended) with respect to access and facilities for disabled people in the case of alterations and extensions to dwellings. The Note supplements the guidance in Building Regulation Note 1/2000, *Application of the Technical Standards to Existing Buildings*.

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Yours faithfully



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This note provides guidance and advice on the requirements of the Technical Standards for compliance with the Building Standards (Scotland) Regulations with respect to access and facilities for disabled people in the case of alterations and extensions to dwellings. This paper supplements the guidance in Building Regulation Note 1/2000: Application of the Technical Standards to Existing Buildings.

## 2. THE ISSUES

2.1 Recent involvement with local authorities in cases concerning the application of the Technical Standards to existing buildings brought to light the fact that a number of different approaches were being adopted. It was therefore considered appropriate and helpful to issue Note 1/2000 containing updated information from earlier Building Regulation Notes.

2.2 However, Note 1/2000 covered the subject of existing buildings in general terms, with an emphasis on historically important buildings. The treatment of alterations and extensions to dwellings was not covered specifically, and since the introduction of the fifth amendment to the regulations a number of problems have arisen relating to access and facilities for disabled people. A separate Building Regulation Note setting out the intentions of the fifth amendment is therefore considered necessary.

2.3 In general, as for other Parts of the Technical Standards, new work on existing buildings must comply with Part Q. There is, however, no requirement to alter other parts of the building unless the new work causes the building to fail to comply where it previously did comply, or causes it to fail to a greater

degree.

### 3. APPLICATION OF Q2.1 TO Q2.7 TO ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS TO DWELLINGS

3.1 Q2.1 to Q2.4 are intended to require all dwellings to have suitable access to at least one entrance door. For most houses, ground floor flats, and common entrance stairs, this access must be level or ramped so as to be suitable for unassisted wheelchair access. The only exceptions are:

- houses built on sites which are too steep or too restricted to allow a suitable ramp to be constructed;
- houses with no apartments on the entrance storey; and
- entrances for flats or maisonettes above ground floor without lift access.

3.2 Therefore, where an existing dwelling is being altered internally, and access to the entrance or entrances is not affected, there is no requirement to provide access for disabled people.

3.3 Where a dwelling is being extended, or the outside of the building is being altered, there is again no need to alter the access to the dwelling. Q2.1 only requires access to at least one entrance door, not every entrance door. To require access to a new door would be unduly restrictive as it does not permit the flexibility of choice of entrance door implicit in Q2.1.

3.4 However, where there is an existing access which is suitable for disabled people the extension of alteration must not make that worse, and if accessibility is removed from one entrance it must be re-instated at another entrance. For example, where an extension would prevent the use of a ramp which at present permits an entrance to be accessible to disabled people, then an accessible entrance will have to be provided either to the extension or elsewhere in the dwelling.

3.5 Q2.5 to Q2.7 apply to entrances where an access suitable for a wheelchair has been provided. These requirements will therefore not apply to an entrance in an alteration or extension except in the instance noted above where an accessible access route is required to replace one lost by extension or alteration.

### 4. APPLICATION OF Q2.11 AND Q2.12 TO ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS TO DWELLINGS

4.1 These standards apply to corridors and doors within a dwelling. They are intended to apply *whether or not* an access suitable for wheelchairs to an entrance is provided, because the requirements are intended to assist people with temporary or permanent difficulties in moving around within the dwelling (which can arise from accidents, for example). New corridors and doorways in an extension will therefore have to comply with the requirements of Q2.11.

4.2 Generally alterations will not attract these requirements unless corridors are being altered anyway or new doorways are being formed.

4.3 In some extensions, especially small ones, the length of corridor and number of doors might be minimal and not provide access of any value to disabled people. In these instances a relaxation would probably be justified. Such a decision would of course have to be considered in the specific situation of a particular extension or alteration, and would be determined on the value provided to disabled occupants

or visitors. A relaxation would probably not be justified if the proposed corridors and doors provided wheelchair access between an apartment and a WC complying with M3.7, or between an apartment and a wheelchair accessible entrance to the dwelling.

## 5. APPLICATION OF M3.6 AND M3.7 TO ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS TO DWELLINGS

5.1 Requirements for additional WCs must be considered in relation to the other sanitary accommodation available in the dwelling. There is no requirement to provide an additional WC when alterations or extensions are being undertaken, but if it is intended to provide one then:

- if a WC complying with M3.7 is already available on the entrance storey, the new WC need not meet these requirements, but
- if there is no compliant WC, then the new WC must comply with M3.7.

5.2 When an existing WC is to be altered, then:

- if it meets the requirements of M3.7 it must continue to do so after alteration, however
- if it does not meet the requirements of M3.7 it need not be made to comply, unless the alterations include the door position, or the space provided, in which case the new door and/or space must comply with M3.7.

5.3 Where it is intended to move an existing WC which meets the requirements of M3.7 from the entrance storey to another storey, then a replacement which meets M3.7 must be provided on the entrance storey. This is because a building must not fail to a greater degree as a result of the alteration. However, if it is intended to relocate an existing WC which does not comply with M3.7 from the entrance storey to another storey, then there is no need to provide on the entrance storey a replacement which complies with M3.7. In this case the building is not failing to a greater degree.

## 6. EXEMPTED CLASSES OF BUILDINGS

Single storey conservatory and porch extensions to dwellings are exempt from compliance with the Technical Standards (provided they do not breach certain exceptions), and therefore do not have to comply with the requirements for access and facilities for disabled people. However, if such extensions result in the removal of an existing entrance accessible to disabled people alternative provision must be provided and this work might require a building warrant. For example, if it was proposed to build a porch on the level landing provided at the top of a ramp suitable for wheelchair access then provision must be made to permit continued wheelchair access either to this or another entrance to the dwelling.

## 7. FURTHER INFORMATION

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