

Common queries for Approved Documents L1 and L2

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Q - What is Part L?

A - Part L is the section dealing with energy conservation in the technical requirements of the Buildings Regulations. The recent revision of Part L is part of the Government's strategy to deliver real improvements in reducing CO2 emissions by conserving our use of fuel and power.

Q - What are Approved Documents L1 and L2?

A - They are two in a series of documents approved by the Deputy Prime Minister to give practical guidance to designers and builders on compliance with the requirements of the Building Regulations in respect of energy conservation.

Q - Why are there two Approved Documents for Part L?

A - During the review of Part L it became clear that a one size fits all approach would not work. The issues faced in developing a home are not the same as those faced when developing an office block. Those building homes tend to be separated from the rest of the construction industry. The two Approved Documents for Part L follow this divide.

Q - What is the difference between L1 and L2?

A - L1 is concerned with dwellings and L2 with buildings other than dwellings such as schools, hospitals, offices, and factories.

Q - Where can I get a copy of the Approved Documents?

A - Approved Documents L1 and L2 are available to be either downloaded from our web site

Or you can purchase them from -

The Stationary Office
Telephone 0870 600 5522
L1 - ISBN - 0117536091
L2 - ISBN - 0117536105

Q - I have heard there are "transitional provisions"! How will these affect me?

A - In brief the amended Regulations were legally binding from 1 April 2002. However, the amendments to the Building Regulations include transitional provisions that allow work proposals approved prior to the implementation date to be carried out after that date without the need for design changes. For more detailed information on these transitional provisions follow the link below see DTLR circular 03/2001.

Q - Will there be any more changes to the regulations?

A - The review for Approved Document Part L was divided into several stages as defined in the June 2000 consultation document - Section 5 Future thinking. Stage 2 is currently in progress although the scope for this is limited to the provision of supplementary technical guidance and possibly further new technical requirements that would not affect any of those changed in the Stage 1 amendment published in October 2001. There may be a Stage 2 consultation early in 2003. Further possible stages 3 and 4 were described in the forward thinking paper, Stage 4 being a further comprehensive review leading to substantial amendments coming into effect around 2008 following the normal round of consultations.

Q - Can I see your Regulatory Impact Assessment?

A - Yes. The draft Regulatory Impact Assessment formed part of The consultation package, and the final edition was signed by Local Government Minister, Nick Raynsford. It can be seen at www.odpm.gov.uk/br/consult.

Q - What is 'the Carbon Index'?

A - The Carbon Index is an indicator of the annual emissions of carbon dioxide per unit floor area, due to space and water heating in dwellings. The details of its calculation are given in 'The Governments' Standard Assessment Procedure for Energy Rating of Dwellings 2001'. You can request a free copy or download the document in PDF format by going to the following web page: <http://www.bre.co.uk/sap2001>

The value of the Carbon Index is influenced by the building fabric U - Values, but it also depends on other parameters such as ventilation, solar gain, heating system fuel and efficiency, water heating arrangements

Q - I disagree with my Local Building Authority on their decision. Can you overrule them?

A -It is the job of your Local Authority to enforce the legal requirements of the Regulations in particular cases. The ODPM is responsible for administering the development of the Building Regulations in accordance with Government directions and can only offer general guidance on the meaning of the Regulations and the Approved Documents.

If the Local Authority consider that building work does not comply with the Regulations, they can take action to require alterations to be made. A person who disagrees with decisions made by local authorities can appeal. Local authorities will supply details of the appeals procedures upon request.

Part L1

Q - Do I need a competent person to certify that the installation of; new or replacement windows, the installation of a space heating or hot water boiler and associated works or the installation of a hot water cylinder complies with the Building Regulations?

A - No. As a consumer you have two options, using a competent person or engaging the local authority or a private approved inspector.

Adopting the option of engaging either a Local Authority Building Control or Approved Inspector will require either a building notice or deposit of plans to be submitted in accordance with the normal procedures for building work that have been in place for some time.

Adopting the option of employing a relevant approved competent person may involve less time, cost and effort on the part of the person ordering the work. At present there are only approved competent person schemes covering the replacement of windows, the installation of combustion appliances (including attendant builders work on hearths, fireplaces and flues) and certain plumbing work (for more details follow this link: <http://www.hms0.gov.uk/si/si2002/20020440.htm>)

Q - I am building an extension to my house and have heard that I may be exempt from the new regulations. Is this true?

A - Not unless your proposed extension is a conservatory, porch, or car port built at ground level and having a floor area not exceeding 30 m2. See Schedule 2 to the Buildings Regulations 2000, SI 2000/2531 at <http://www.hms0.gov.uk/si/si2000/20002531.htm>

Q - I am building an extension and cannot figure out how to use Paragraph 1.14. What do I do?

A - The intention of the section is to establish reasonable area allowances for windows, doors and rooflights but not U-values. Sub-paragraphs 1.14(a) and 1.14(b) are simpler methods constrained so that compliance is certain. Sub-paragraph 1.14(c) gives more design flexibility but requires more survey and calculation work as follows.

Paragraph 1.14c says reasonable provision for area allowance is 25% of the floor area of the whole building including the extension. You have to subtract from this the area taken up by the existing windows, doors and rooflights that still survive after the extension is added. What is left is the basic area allowance that can be used as windows, doors and rooflights in the extension if their average U-value does not exceed the relevant value given in Table 1.

This basic area allowance can be increased (or decreased) by trading off with the average U-value.

Example

An existing dwelling has floor area 80 m² and is to have an extension 20 m². Total area at completion = 100 m². 25% of this = 25 m² (AA)

Existing house has 20 m² of windows, doors and rooflights. The extension covers over the patio door, 4 m², and kitchen window, 1.5 m². So existing windows, doors and rooflights that survive = 20 m² - 5.5 m² = 14.5 m² (BB).

Basic area allowance available for use in the extension is therefore (AA) - (BB)
i.e. 25 - 14.5 = 10.5 m²

This figure would apply if the average U-value of the proposed windows, doors and rooflights does not exceed 2.2 W/m²K (metal frames) or 2.0 W/m²K (plastic or wood frames).

If the designer wished to have a larger area this could be achieved by trading off with the proposed average U-value. For example, if the specified windows, doors and rooflights have predominantly plastic frames with an average U-value of 1.5 W/m²K, the proposed area can be increased to (2.0 / 1.5) x 10.5 = 14 m².

Part L2

Q - My structure is a lot bigger than 1000 m². Is this too large to air pressure test?

A - Only the very largest of buildings may be too big to test (such as Terminal 5 perhaps). At least one company claims to be able to test around 99% of the buildings in the Glannagans Guide. CIBSE TM32, published after the new AD L2 came into effect, gives more detailed advice.

Q - Who pays for these tests?

A - The persons who have ordered the building works or their contractors.

Q - How do the guidelines apply if I am dividing the main structure into separate units?

A - If the building is to be divided into smaller units then each one must comply with the requirements in Part L2. If an upper level was to be made into flats then they must each comply with Part L1.

Q - How do I apply these guidelines if I just want to refurbish a building?

A - Where a building other than a dwelling is to be refurbished the works must comply with the Building Regulations, if they constitute a material alteration, a material change of use, or the provision or extension of a controlled service or fitting. Controlled services or fittings now include replacing windows and work on energy consuming building services.

Q - Do the new regulations mean I need a 'Competent Person' to certify that the building fabric and services comply with Part L?

A - There is no legal requirement to have a competent person to certify compliance. The builder has to show compliance - there is no change here from what has always been the case. The Approved Document says that a way of showing compliance would be for the builder or their expert consultant to declare or certify that the building fabric has achieved compliance with Part L2 (a) and that the building services have achieved compliance with Part L2 (c), (e), (f) and (g). Paragraphs 2.3 and 2.7 of AD L2 say that Building Control Bodies may accept such evidence depending upon their view of the credentials of the in-house expert or the consultant.

To minimise the risk of difficulties, it is important to agree with the BCB at the outset that your tester's reports or certificates will be acceptable to them as a basis for judging compliance. Paragraph D20 in DTLR Circular 3/2001 gives advice to building control bodies on an approach to this situation.

Q - I am finding these questions a bit too basic. Is there a site taking greater account of the needs of industry?

A - Yes. Please see "Approve Document L1: Your Questions Answered" on our website at www.odpm.gov.uk.

Useful Contacts List

BRE General	Telephone - 01923 664 258
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Enquiry Service	energy.br@odpm.gov.uk
Corgi	http://www.corgi-gas.com
HETAS	http://www.hetas.co.uk/
FENSA	E- mail: - info@fensa.org.uk Telephone - 0870 780 2028
OFTEC	http://www.oftec.org.uk/

How Useful Have you Found This Site?

Why not let us know?

E-mail - enquiryservice@odpm-dft.gsi.gov.uk

Subject Line - Common Queries

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