

Building Regulations updates 1st October 2015

There are several new or revised Approved Documents coming into force on 1st October 2015. The transitional arrangements allow for all projects with Initial Notices submitted before this date and that start onsite before 1st Oct 2016 to be assessed under the current Approved Documents. In all other situations, all of the updated Approved Documents should be followed.

Approved Document E

There has been a very minor change to Part E with the guidance regarding acoustic design for schools now referring to building bulletin update BB93:FEB2015. This update 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 new revision recognises that planning permission can optionally reduce the allowance down to 110L per-person per-day. The Building Control body will require a copy of the planning conditions in this case.

There is also now reference to a “fittings” based approach as an alternative to using the water efficiency calculator which could prove useful and more accurate for developers. The document includes the full water efficiency methodology with minor alterations and removal of references to the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Approved Document H

Part H3 has an addition to the requirement to

ensure that where any new dwellings are constructed in accordance with ADM, paved areas should be suitably drained.

Part H6 has been updated with reference now to assessing bin storage in accordance with BS 5906:2005 Code of Practice for waste management in buildings.

Approved Document M

Approved Document M will be separated into two documents.

ADM – Volume 1: Dwellings

ADM – Volume 2: Buildings other than dwellings

Note that ADM – Buildings other than dwellings guidance remains the same as the updated version released in 2013 with sections 6-10 (dwellings) omitted.

New ADM – Dwellings (M4) is split into three separate sections.

M4 (1) – Visitable dwellings

M4 (2) – Accessible and adaptable dwellings

M4 (3) – Wheelchair accessible dwellings

M4 (1) applies to all dwellings unless the optional requirements of M4 (2) and M4 (3) are

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required under the planning permission for a new site. If the planning permission does not dictate requirements, then M4(1) should be followed for all houses on the site. It will be duty of the client to inform the Building Control Body of how many of each category is required for a new site.

An Initial Notice issued for a new housing site should specify the number of dwelling types under each category.

The main differences between M4 (1), (2) and (3) requirements are set out below, noting that each category is an enhancement on the one before.

M4(1) – Visitable dwellings

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

M4(2) – Accessible and adaptable dwellings

This includes the requirements set out in M4(1) as well as the following:

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.

Access to upper floor flats should be available by lift.

Dwellings should have provision for a future stair lift. 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 or similar is in place the minimum width of the path to the window is achieved. Appendix D of the AD is a furniture schedule providing standard sizes that should be indicated on the proposed plans when submitted for review.

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.

For further detailed guidance see the new ADM – Volume 1: Dwellings

M4(3) – Wheelchair accessible dwellings

This includes the requirements set out in M4(1), and M4(2) as well as the following:

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 a gradient of no more than 1:15. Communal entrances –power assisted doors should be provided where the door opening force exceeds 20N. Also, provisions for the future powered doors must be installed to private principal entrances.

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 or similar is in place the minimum width of the path to the window is achieved. Appendix D is a furniture schedule

providing standard sizes that should be indicated on the proposed plans when submitted for review.

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 have a minimum size, plus there is detailed guidance for kitchen worktop length and location of fittings etc which 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.

Note that these are only a few examples of the detailed guidance in the new ADM – Volume 1: Dwellings.

Approved Document Q

Approved Document Q: Security-Dwellings applies to easily accessible doors and windows.

The requirement is generally to ensure that external doors and windows (as well as between communal areas and private dwellings) meet the standards set out in PAS24:2012, which is a British Standards publication for security performance of door sets and windows.

There are alternative requirements set out for bespoke doors in Appendix B.

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 came into force 12th March 2015.