

What are Building Regulations?

Building regulations are standards set in place by the Government to ensure that any building work is completed in a safe, efficient and healthy manner. Since the 1st of April 2002, building regulations have applied to all replacement glazing. Other areas such as safety, air supply, means of escape and ventilation are also covered by the regulations.

A window or door is classed as a 'controlled fitting', and any standards relating to this classification will need to be met when you are installing a window and/or door.

This article acts as a general guide on what to look out for and be aware of in terms of choosing windows and doors that comply with Building Regulations. We will update this article as and when more information becomes available.

Do I need to comply with Building Regulations?

The short answer to this question is YES! The reason is straightforward and it's important that you understand the standards and accept them for what they are. The purpose of the building regulations is to ensure the safety and health for people in or about any given building.

The difference between doing it right and doing it wrong just isn't worth it and if it is not done right, the full force of the Building Inspectors may be felt. When it comes to the Building Regs, we will never compromise and we believe neither will you once you understand what's at stake.

Who's responsible for complying with Building Regulations?

The published documents clearly state that it is the person carrying out the works e.g. the installer who's responsible for ensuring that the project and building elements comply with the regulations. Tradespeople will be required to register with a Competent Persons Scheme to prove their ability to carry out certain work to the required standards. Once an installation is completed the installer will be required to provide proof of compliance in the form of appendices. This is where the importance of choosing a reputable fabricator kicks in. Be sure to choose one who understand the standards and can provide you with the paperwork you need to prove compliance .

Document F - Ventilation

Valid From: 15th June 2022

Document F covers means of background ventilation, which essentially refers to the requirements of trickle vents. Airflow is very important as it'll improve the overall condition of the dwelling and wellbeing of the people living there. The type and extent of ventilation will depend on the use and size of the room. Vents are the most contentious part of any detail on a window. They are hugely important because they remove stale air and reduce condensation and help to prevent mould. They also allow ventilation whilst the windows are locked, and security is a key requirement of most homeowners.

2022 Changes to Document F

- Replacement windows that contain background ventilation must include at least the equivalent ventilation.
- Where windows do not contain background ventilation, or the rate of ventilation is unknown, then the replacement windows must contain the following;
 - Habitable rooms and kitchens – min. 8000mm² equivalent area (EQA) or 10,000mm² equivalent area (EQA) in single story dwellings.
 - Bathrooms (with or without a toilet) – min. 4000mm² equivalent area (EQA).
- If the dwelling will have continuous mechanical extract ventilation, then a minimum of 4000mm² EQA of background ventilation should be installed in each habitable room.

Challenges

- It's a dramatic change! 5000mm² EQA has been the norm for years and fabricators will have to work hard to come up with a vent that can achieve 8000mm² EQA. Rest assured that Quickslide is ahead of the game!
- Challenges to the supply chain with increase in demand for vents.
- Increase in cost for manufacturers and potential increase in energy usage to heat the cooler air for homeowners.
- Our industry will need to work together to overcome the negative customer perception of vents.

Our Advice

- Ensure your supplier has a compliant trickle vent solution lined up. The changes to Document F sit at the top of the toughest changes to the Building Regulations 2022 and to some suppliers the change will have come as a surprise and may therefore not be ready in time to supply a fit for purpose product.
- Start to educate your customers now and raise awareness of the new regulations. Get into good habits and if you're asked by customers to change the specification of their windows and doors, perhaps because they are trying to shave a bit off the cost, or because they've decided that they don't like the

look of something, such as trickle vents, push back with advice that explains why such things are in place.

Document L1A - Conservation of Fuel and Power (New Dwellings)

Valid From: 15th June 2022

However, the new regs will not apply to work subject to a building notice, full plans application or initial notice submitted before the 15th June 2022 – provided the work commences on site before 15th June 2023.

The windows and doors you go with for your new-build home must comply with the requirements of the amount of heat that can pass through the glass and framework, which is measured as a u-value. Now then, what is a u-value? A u-value is a set value calculated by the thermal transmittance performance of a system. You should know, the lower the u-value the better.