

Demystifying Part L of the Building Regulations



Are you ready for the new Part L regulations?

If you are a builder or developer with construction under way on your project, you'll soon face radically different compliance requirements under the updated Part L of the Building Regulations. The grace period ends in June 2023 and you must be ready for the new regime.

Here we break down the key points, what it means for everyone involved in construction, what you need to do to comply and how change can actually benefit your organisation.

What is the uplift in Part L regulations?

Part L of the Building Regulations covers the conservation of fuel and power. Changes were made in 2022 to 'uplift' energy efficiency of new builds and renovations, as a stepping stone towards the Future Homes and Buildings Standard. The Future Homes standard, which takes effect in 2025, aims for reductions in carbon emissions of 70-80%.

The aim of the updates is to reduce carbon emissions from the heating and lighting of new buildings by 31% by improving the efficiency of building fabric. New homes will now be assessed under a new Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) calculation called SAP10. Formerly calculated using SAP 2012, SAP10 is an update to this methodology, setting greater insulation requirements and a new target primary energy rate, expressed as kWhPE/(m² per year).

The regulations specify the minimum energy efficiency requirements, measured in U-values, for new fabric elements in walls, floors, roofs etc. The regulations also set standards for workmanship in the building work.

The regulations have four volumes:

- ✓ Part L1A is for new homes
- ✓ Part L1B is for extensions and renovations with some exceptions to the requirements
- ✓ Part L2A is for commercial buildings
- ✓ Part L2B is for 'other' buildings.

If you are building a large-scale development, you may have to adhere to both volumes 1 and 2.

Key changes you need to know



PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Builders and developers will be responsible for providing photographic evidence that the building fabric and workmanship meets the standards in the regulations for thermal continuity, quality of insulation and airtightness.

Evidence must be produced for each key building stage – from foundations to the roofing and openings. Each photo must be geotagged with the exact location and time and date stamped in the metadata. The photographs should be provided to the energy assessor and the building control body.



DWELLING LEVEL COMPLIANCE

The regulations require housebuilders and developers to have evidence of compliance for each dwelling rather than the site as a whole. Reports at the site level won't pass the test. Photographs should be taken for each plot on a development as a record during the construction of a property, at the appropriate times before closing up to show the details required.



NEW BREL REPORT

Housebuilders and developers are responsible for submitting a new report to prove compliance with the regulations. This report – The Building Regulations England Part L (BREL) report – comes in two parts. The first is the design stage report, and the second is the 'as built' report. The building control body uses these reports to ensure the designs were actually built as approved.

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When do the new regulations come into force?

Part L (volumes 1 and 2) came into effect on 15 June 2022. A grace period takes effect until 15 June 2023 for developments where construction has already begun.



What does it mean for you?

There's no doubt the regulations increase the evidence required from builders and developers, but compliance is not optional. You won't be able to complete and handover your building without a compliant SAP10 BREL report.

If you don't have full photographic evidence of compliance at each stage of the build for every dwelling, the building control body may order to open your works to obtain proof the fabrics and workmanship meets the standard required. This will lead to delays and unhappy end clients. Extensive or repeated failure to comply can also lead to heavy fines.

The good news is we have a simple checklist of steps you can take to ensure you are ticking all the boxes.

How to comply



1. PLAN YOUR SCHEDULE OF WORKS

It's a lot faster and easier to get evidence of compliance as you go. Create a detailed scope of works that lists all the evidence requirements for each dwelling at each stage of the build.



2. CAPTURE INFORMATION AT EVERY STAGE

Share the scope of works with your site teams so they can capture the photos you need at the right time. Tick off each plot as you receive the photos to ensure you don't miss a dwelling.



3. ENSURE YOUR INFORMATION HAS METADATA AND GEOTAGS EMBEDDED

Photos must be of sufficient quality and have metadata proving when and where they were taken. Each image file name should include the plot number and detail reference. Ensure your teams' devices geotags photos with exact latitude and longitude coordinates, and date and time stamps, and saves them correctly. Otherwise they may be rejected by the assessors.



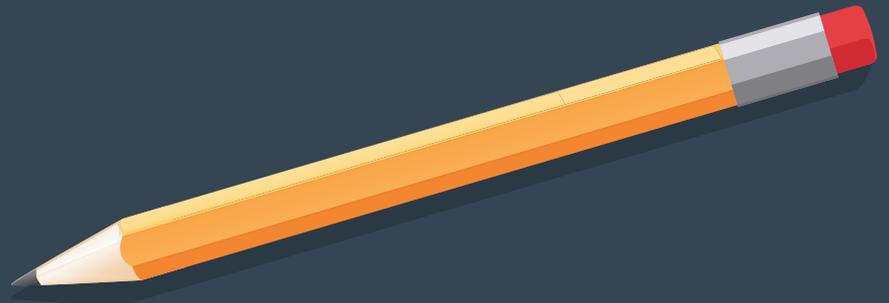
4. KEEP DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE

Consider how you are storing and managing the captured information. Ideally, you want to keep it in a single, secure cloud location to prevent important documents getting lost and enable your teams to access it whenever they need to, whether they are on-site or in the head office.



5. ACCESS REPORTS ON-DEMAND

Having all the information and photos is one thing. Producing them for reports is another matter. Ensure your projects are not delayed while your teams scramble to produce and send reports for an audit by using systems that populate the reports automatically, when you need them. This also helps avoid errors that can creep in during paperwork. Manually combining data from multiple sources is a recipe for a long, boring day at best and crucial mistakes at worst.





Beyond compliance

In following the tips above, you can actually create a whole host of benefits for your organisation that extend beyond merely complying with the new regulations.

The automation of systems and processes through a single tool for example, enhances productivity and means more work can be done with the same level of resources. When projects are run on such fine margins, squeezing out as much efficiency as possible can make a big impact on your bottom line.

Additionally, having a single source of truth can also drastically cut down on miscommunication across different teams. This will likely ultimately save you time and money through keeping every team member updated as well as not having to complete re-work for example.



Getting ready for Part L

Now is the time to be thinking about how you will adapt to the new Part L regulations. You should have your systems and processes in place well before June 2023, or risk projects being delayed or incurring expensive, unnecessary work to go back and prove you did everything right the first time.

For more insight on how you get ready for the new regime and make compliance easy, talk to one of our experts today.

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