

Building Control Solutions
Homeowner Guide 17

Site Inspections



Site Inspections

What is the purpose of building regulations

They are minimum construction standards to secure the health and safety of people in or about buildings. The Regulations cover several issues including the health, safety and welfare of people in and around buildings, the conservation of fuel and power, misuse or contamination of water and the access and use of buildings. The owners of the building are legally obliged to ensure that the work on site complies with the Building Regulations.

Aims of the leaflet

This leaflet gives information to a building owner who is proposing to carry out building works to their property. It is not a statement of law but is intended to help you understand the system. For further information please contact Building Control Solutions.

What service can I expect to receive?

To ensure that your building works comply with the Building Regulations and other relevant legislation, the Building Control Surveyor will carry out inspections of your project as it progresses.

Following deposit and acceptance of your Full Plans application or Building Notice you are able to start work. You must however give us at least two days notice before you start the work. A Building Control

Surveyor will call shortly after the commencement date. They will introduce themselves, briefly discuss the job and answer any questions you or your builder may have. The surveyor is there to help you to comply with the regulations and may be called upon for advice. They are not however able to design solutions.

If the job is being carried out on a Building Notice, the Building Control Surveyor may ask how the work is to be constructed, the types and sizes of materials etc.

To help you and your builder proceed, we provide a next day inspection service. Various stages of the work require inspection;

Commencement of work (48 hours) Statutory Inspection

Excavation of foundations before concreting (24 hours)

Foundations when constructed (24 hours)

Damp Proof Course when laid (24 hours)

Site concrete or floor slab (before being laid) (24 hours)

Drains (before backfilling) (24 hours)

Drains (after backfilling) (5 days)

Occupation (in respect of new property) (5 days)

Completion of project (5 days) Statutory Inspection

These inspections refer to works covered up below ground but are not necessarily the only ones your Building Control Surveyor will make. Some projects require extra specific inspections such as reinforcement of concrete foundations and floor slabs, fire protection to the structure, roof structure, structural steelwork and electrical work. Often you will be asked to tell your Building Control Surveyor when you intend to plaster or line a ceiling or wall so that he or she may call to inspect before work is covered.

We will provide an Inspection Plan on receipt of your application to outline which inspections are relevant and the methods of contacting us.

These inspections require at least 24 hours prior notice to be given to the Local Authority. If you fail to give an adequate notice or proceed without inspection, the Local Authority has the power to require you to expose the work for inspection and require possible remedial work to be undertaken.

By ensuring that your Building Control Surveyor is notified of the various stages we can often avoid conflict between the builder and yourself.

Charges

Charge is payable to the Local Authority for the services it provides. If you applied for consent via the Full Plans route then you normally need to pay a Site Inspection Charge after the first inspection has been carried out by the Building Control Surveyor. (The Building Notice Charge is payable at the time of its submission). **The charge covers all of the inspections carried out on site, irrespective of number.**

An invoice is usually sent to you within a few days. For works to a domestic property, the total charge payable may comprise of more than one work category. For example, if you are building an extension and a loft conversion then you need to pay a charge comprising of the sum of two elements of the work.

Completion Certificates

When the work is complete you must notify your Building Control Surveyor to enable a final inspection to be carried out. When they are satisfied that the work complies with the Building Regulations a Completion Certificate will be issued. A Completion Certificate is important to you as proof that your project complies with the Building Regulations. **It will be required for any future sale of the property or to obtain a loan secured against your property. It is also advisable to obtain the certificate before settling the final account with your builder, as confirmation that the Local Authority are not going to take action against you for non compliance with the Regulations.**

Work not covered by the building regulations

The Building Regulations cover mainly the structure, drainage, weather, thermal and fire resistance of your project. They must be considered as minimum standards.

Examples of work not covered include:

- Standard of workmanship
- Water and central heating installations (except boilers, flues and heating controls)
- External works such as paths, garden walls and driveways
- Decoration
- The installation of gas heating boilers and fires when fitted by an approved installer (Gas Safe)
- Work undertaken by members of Competent Persons Schemes (CPS)

The Standard and inspection of the works referred to above are your responsibility.

Your legal responsibilities

The owner of the building or the person having the work carried out is legally responsible for complying with the Building Regulations. This includes applying to the Building Regulation Authority to carry out the work and ensuring that work on site complies with the Regulations.

The builder is only responsible (on your behalf) for notification of statutory site inspections. If you do not have a main contractor then you are also responsible for the notices. Although the Building Control Surveyor is there to ensure that the Regulations are complied with, they are keen to help and with your co-operation will assist you to achieve a reasonable standard.

The choice of builder is yours but it is in your best interest to obtain competitive quotes from reputable builders and it may be worth using a builder who belongs to a trade association which operates a guarantee scheme. General guidance on how to choose a builder is given in our Homeowner Guide 11.

Enforcement

Work which complies with the Regulations will, in most cases, enhance the value of your property. However work that does not can lead to problems and be a financial liability.

If the work on site fails to comply with the Building Regulations, the Local Authority may take legal action against the owner. This may take the form of a notice requiring you to alter or pull down the work or they may take action in the magistrates court with a view to obtaining a fine against the owner. The fines are unlimited for each for each offence and may include a continuing fine until the work is corrected.

Your Building Control Surveyor will try to avoid legal action by requesting your co-operation to put the work right. Usually you or your builder will be verbally requested to rectify the work. If the work is not put right within a reasonable period, the Local Authority may write to you giving warning that they may take legal action. In practice, common sense usually prevails and the work is put right before full legal proceedings start. If the owner, the builder and the Building Control Surveyor work together then the project should run smoothly and achieve compliance with the Building Regulations.

Other Approvals

In addition to Building Regulation approval, you may also require Planning Permission in certain circumstances. Please contact the relevant authority's Development Control team.



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