

HOW TO GUIDES

BUILDING REGULATIONS

PART M (ACCESS TO AND USE OF BUILDINGS)



In the process of development, whether it is the erection of a new building, extending or altering an existing building, or changing the way a building is used, you will normally need to seek Building Regulation approval and possibly Planning approval.

Planning approval establishes that the building or proposed use of land is acceptable in principal. Building Regulations specifically relate to the technical aspects of construction and cover such matters as structural stability, fire resistance, means of escape, disabled access, weather resistance, thermal insulation, drainage etc. Building Control is the part of Environmental Services which ensures that buildings are constructed and altered so that they comply with the Building Regulations, that dangerous structures are made safe and that demolitions are done in as safe a manner as possible.

The purpose of the regulations is to protect the health and safety of people in or around buildings. They also deal with conserving energy and with access and facilities for disabled people. Building Control Surveyors manage the Building Regulations. Building Control Surveyors have a wide knowledge of materials and building methods, and will assist at all stages throughout the building process.

In Part M, 'people with disabilities' means people who have an impairment which limits their ability to walk or which requires them to use a wheelchair for mobility or have impaired hearing or sight.

Reasonable provision shall be made for people with disabilities at entrances to and within new dwellings and buildings.

Part M Building Regulations UK

According to the government document, the remaining sections of the Part M of the building regulations determine that you or your chosen contractor (whoever is listed as in charge of overall construction of the said property) is also obliged...

- M2** To provide suitable independent access to a building (including disabled access)
- M3** To provide sanitary conveniences in extensions to the building other than the ordinary dwelling (although this doesn't apply if reasonable provisions are being made elsewhere in the building so that those already in the extension have ease of access)
- M4** To provide sanitary conveniences in dwellings at the entrance storey or elsewhere in the principal building (the entrance meaning that principal means of entering the building to the nearest habitable – or most used – room)

So how can you make sure you adhere to Part M in the initial planning phases?

Well, you should make sure that the property...

- ▶ Has level paving on entry, as well as all the appropriate ramps, steps and handrails installed for easy disabled access
- ▶ Includes adequate parking (including for disabled peoples) and the appropriate corresponding signage
- ▶ Has in-built accessible doors that comply with the appropriate height and width requirements, as well as alternative routes of entry for disabled access if the primary door is inaccessible (i.e. as with a revolving door)

- ▶ Contains the appropriate toilet facilities on all floors
- ▶ Includes smoke detectors, fire alarms and appropriate safety signage and fire exit points
- ▶ Controls the spread of draughts and includes transitional lighting upon entry to reduce glare
- ▶ Includes slip-resistant flooring on entry and elsewhere in the building where the property is used for non-sporting activities
- ▶ Provides suitable emergency communications appliances in the event of a security or emergency event

Part M of building regulations in the UK doesn't apply if you are merely altering an existing dwelling (even via an attached extension), or in parts of any building or extension that are used solely to enable the repair, maintenance and inspection of the property in question (such as a cleaning cupboard or cellar). If you want to read further about the building regulations Part M, or prefer to find out the exact details relating to your particular building, you can download the entire document from the government's planning portal website.

Eurocell helping you achieve Part M

Eurocell offers an extensive range of low threshold door options with our In-Line Patio Doors, Aspect Bi-Fold Doors, French Doors as well as the Dales Collection of composite doors which have all have fully Part-M compliant options.

All Eurocell low thresholds provide easy access for the elderly and infirm as well as helping building designers comply with Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements. Eurocell low thresholds are available with single and double ramps, which offer unimpeded, easy access for wheelchair users, prams, walking frames and mobility scooters.

As well as external applications, low thresholds can be used as part of internal room divider applications, where a bi-fold, or patio door is specified.

Sources: Approved Document M, Planning Portal