



Building Control and Works to Existing Dwellings



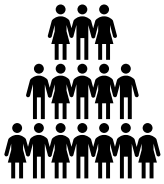
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A Changing Domestic Landscape

- Surge in home extensions, energy retrofits, renovations and self-build projects
- Driven by:
 - Housing demand and affordability
 - Changing family needs
 - Adapting for lifetime living
 - Higher energy efficiency goals





Why Building Regulations Matter

- Many homeowners may not realise
 - Building Regulations apply to all works even if Planning Permission is not required.
 - Non-compliance can lead to safety risks, increased energy bills, and reduce property values.
- Building Regulations are there to ensure safe, sustainable, future proofed homes.
- Compliance is a mandatory, legal obligation

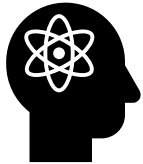




Our Role as Building Control Officers

- We are here to guide, support and protect
 - Homeowners
 - Builders
 - The built environment
- We have powers to carry out site inspections
- We can help people to
 - understand when and how Building Regulations apply
 - to avoid common pitfalls
 - find further support and guidance





Understanding Where Building Regulations Apply

- Building Regulations apply to the construction, material alteration, material change of use or extension of a dwelling or other building
- Building Regulations apply to most works on existing dwellings, even if planning permission is not required
- Common works include
 - Extensions including attic conversions
 - Alterations which affect structure or fire safety of the dwelling
 - Converting a garage to a habitable room
 - Deep energy retrofits





Some Common Misconceptions

- 'It is exempt from Planning, so it is exempt from Building Regulations'
 - False – Building Regulations and Planning are separate systems
- 'It is a small job; sure we don't need to worry about that'
 - False – Even minor works can be subject to compliance. Works that cause a new or greater contravention of the Building Regulations are prohibited.
- Common domestic works include
 - Extensions including attic conversions
 - Alterations which affect structure or fire safety of the dwelling
 - Converting a garage to a habitable room
 - Deep energy retrofits





The Role of Building Control – Support, Not Surveillance

- Building Control are there to support safe, sustainable and compliant construction; not to delay or obstruct projects
- We can offer advice and opinions
- We can assist with alternative options when working with older or complex buildings
- Through site inspections, identify issues before they become a costly defect
- Building Control is a resource for homeowners
- Dublin City Council Building Control Officers are available to meet homeowners planning a new extension or other works to their home.



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Some Common Errors to Avoid

- No early professional advice
- Selecting a builder on price alone
- Budget not fixed, no contingency
- Inadequate design information, specification or detailed quotes
- No written agreement or contract with the builder





The Importance of Competence, Choosing the Right Builder

- Competence is a combination of
 - training
 - experience and
 - Knowledge
- It is not about qualifications alone
- For the builder it is a track record of safely delivering high quality, compliant work that stands the test of time
- Most builders have voluntarily registered with the Construction Industry of Ireland (CIRI)





Competent Professional Advice

- Persons putting themselves out as professionals must be qualified
- Professionals working in the industry include members of
 - [Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland](#) (SCSI): Building Surveyors, Quantity Surveyors, Project Management Surveyors, Conservation Surveyors, Geomatic Surveyors, Planning & Development Surveyors, Building Control Surveyors
 - [Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland](#) (RIAI)
 - [Engineers Ireland](#), Chartered Engineers
 - [Association of Consulting Engineers of Ireland](#) (ACEI)
 - [Chartered Association of Building Engineers](#) (CABE)
 - [Chartered Institute of Building](#) (CIOB)
 - [Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists](#) (CIAT)
 - Other specialist associations in timber frame, plasterwork, masonry etc

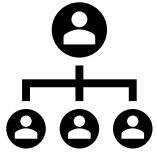




Building Control Inspections

- They are carried out by people who are specifically authorised for the task by the local Building Control Authority
- They verify compliance with building regulations and provide public oversight to application of the building control system
- They are a support to builders and professionals in achieving quality and compliance
- They can protect homeowners or occupiers from substandard or defective work
- Not all projects are inspected and responsibility for compliance rests with the owner of the works, the builder, designers and others directly involved.





Who is Responsible for Compliance?

- The Owner of the work
 - Ultimately responsible and are obliged to ensure they have engaged a competent builder
- The Builder
 - Must build in compliance with building regulations
- The Designer
 - Must design the work to comply with building regulations
- Certifiers
 - Must inspect the work at the appropriate stages to certify compliance





Sometimes things can go wrong



Domestic extension



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Blockwork removed from inner leaf of gable wall to accommodate roof truss



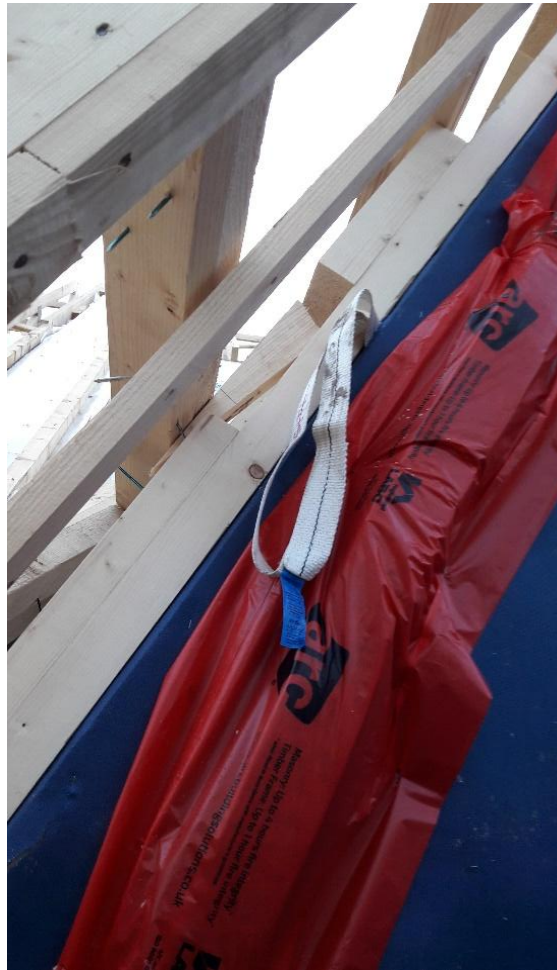
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Workmanship in slating and roofing is so important



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Important there is a detailed design with coordination and adequate oversight to ensure everything fits together as it should



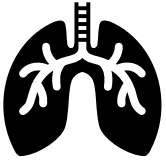
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Masonry – common to find grossly defective work



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Air Permeability and Ventilation – Getting the Balance Right

- What is Air Permeability?
 - A measure of how much air leaks through the building envelope.
 - Regulated under Part L – Conservation of Fuel and Energy.
 - Maximum allowable air permeability: 5 m³/hr/m² @ 50 Pascals
- What Happens if It's Too Airtight?
 - If air permeability is below 3 m³/hr/m², the home is considered very airtight.
 - This triggers a requirement under Part F – Ventilation where natural ventilation is no longer sufficient
 - Mechanical ventilation must be installed and properly commissioned
- Ventilation Options
 - MEV (Mechanical Extract Ventilation): Extracts stale air from wet rooms (kitchen, bathroom)
 - MVHR (Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery): Supplies fresh air and recovers heat from extracted air. Ideal for new builds or deep retrofits
- Commissioning is Critical
- Ventilation systems must be:
 - Properly designed by competent persons
 - Installed to specification
 - Commissioned and balanced to ensure performance
 - Validated by certified persons to ensure the necessary flow rates are being achieved
- Key Message
 - Airtightness improves energy efficiency—but only if paired with effective ventilation.
 - Poor ventilation can lead to condensation, mould, and poor indoor air quality, adversely affecting the fabric of the building and the health of the occupants





Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Why you need proper ventilation in your home



This guide will help you better understand the ventilation in your home. It does not replace manufacturer's instructions, which you should always follow. It explains ventilation, what you need to know if you own or rent your home and if you are planning renovations.

[Why you need proper ventilation in your home](#)



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Installation and Commissioning of Ventilation Systems for Dwellings - Achieving Compliance with Part F 2019



Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
Housing.gov.ie

[installation-and-commissioning-of-ventilation-systems-for-dwellings-achieving-complian.pdf](#)



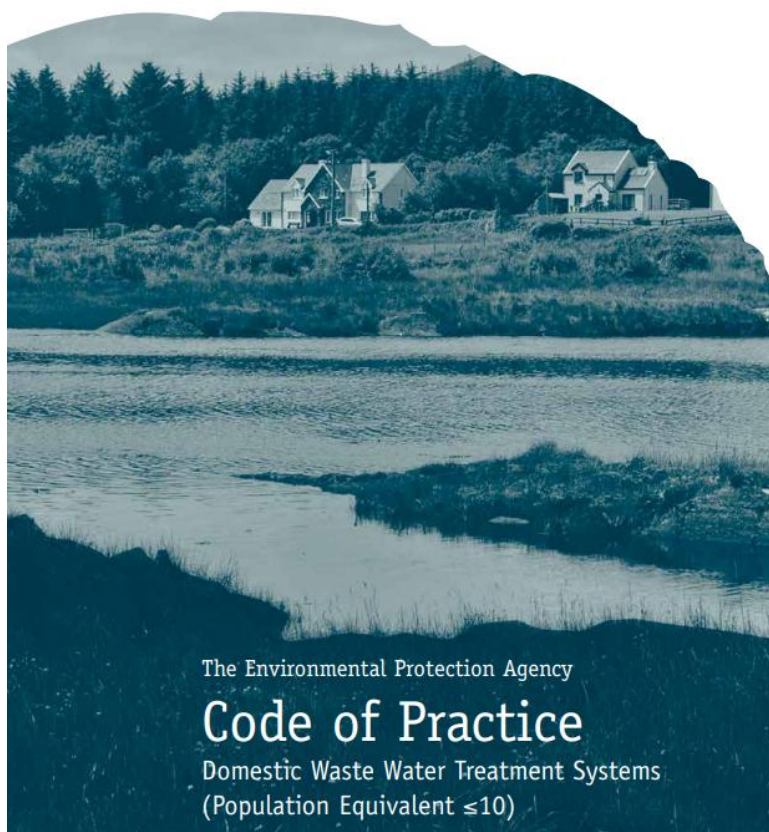
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Septic Tanks and Drainage – Getting Wastewater Right

- All drainage systems must be:
 - Properly designed and installed
 - Tested for leaks and flow
 - Compliant with Part H – Drainage and Waste Water Disposal
- Drainage systems must undergo:
 - Air or water pressure testing to confirm integrity
 - Flow testing to ensure proper discharge
- Septic Tanks and On-Site Treatment must comply with the EPA Code of Practice (2021 edition):
 - Design, installation and commissioning of domestic waste water systems should be carried out and supervised by an appropriately trained and qualified assessor
 - Site suitability assessment required
 - Percolation testing to determine soil absorption capacity
 - Proper siting to avoid contamination of water sources
- Certification and Documentation is required for:
 - Planning and Building Control compliance
 - Future property sales or mortgage approvals
- Key Message
 - Wastewater systems are often overlooked—but they're critical to health, environment, and compliance.

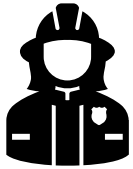




[2021 Code of Practice for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems](#) [| Environmental Protection Agency](#)



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Fire Alarm Systems – Testing and Commissioning in Domestic Homes

- I.S. 3218:2024 – Fire Detection and Alarm Systems – System Planning, Design, Installation, Commissioning, Servicing, and Maintenance
- Applies to domestic dwellings
- Commissioning Requirements
 - Must be carried out by a competent person.
 - Includes:
 - Verification of system design
 - Functional testing of all detectors, sounders, and interfaces
 - System configuration and documentation
 - Written certification of compliance
 - Maintain all commissioning and certification documents
- Test the system regularly by pressing the test button
- Why all this matters:
 - Ensures the system will operate in the event of a fire.
 - Essential for life safety





Key Take Away Messages

- **Building Regulations apply** to most works—even if Planning Permission is not required
- **Engage early** with your expert advisors to avoid costly mistakes and ensure compliance
- **Competence matters** – choose qualified professionals and experienced builders
- **Ventilation, drainage, and fire safety** are critical to health, safety, and sustainability
- **We're here to help** – Building Control is a resource, not a roadblock.





Further References and Information

- Bringing Back Homes - Manual for the Reuse of Existing Buildings 2nd Edition - [Bringing Back Homes](#)
- Technical Guidance Documents
- Government of Ireland – Loft Conversion Guidelines [Template 1 Cover Front and Back Gov](#)
- Government of Ireland – Why you Need Proper Ventilation in Your Home [Ventilation](#)
- [2021 Code of Practice for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems | Environmental Protection Agency](#)
- RIAI – Working with an Architect 2nd Edition [Work With An Architect | RIAI.ie \(The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland\)](#)
- SCSi - [Starting a project – Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland](#)
- [SCSi Guide to Engaging a Contractor | A Checklist for homeowners – Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland](#)
- [SCSi - Traditional Buildings – Guide To The Application Of Building Control And Building Regulations – Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland](#)





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