

NEW BUILDING REGULATIONS: PART L

All schools need to be aware of the implications of the revisions to Part L of The Building Regulations, which came into force on **6th April 2006**.

This is a short summary of the parts of the regulations, which were published in mid-March 2006. These may have a serious impact on the extent and cost of future projects that schools may be planning. The new regulations require a 40% improvement of carbon emissions resulting from building use as compared to the outgoing 2002 regulations. All new build and extension work has always had to comply with whichever regulations were current at the time and that requirement has not changed. The new, and potentially extremely onerous, requirement is Regulation 17D – Consequential Improvements.

There are two parts to consequential improvements:

- The first part requires the whole area directly affected by the proposed work to be brought up to current Part L standards – in the case of an extension, that would obviously have to be built to those standards. There is no cost limit put on this – it must be done – so if all you wanted was to install some cooling in your hall, which previously may have cost perhaps £10,000, you could now find yourself facing a consequential improvement cost of many times that amount on top of the principal work cost.
- The second part is the requirement for consequential improvements to the rest of the building to the value of at least 10% of the cost of the principal work as certified by a suitably qualified person – this person is defined for example as being a Chartered Quantity Surveyor.

This regulation takes effect for any existing building whose floor area exceeds 1000m² when:

- an extension is planned or
- there is to be the initial provision of any fixed building services or
- there is to be an increase in installed capacity of any existing fixed building services.

This means any school, whose floor area exceeds 1000m², planning an extension or the installation of any cooling system or any additional heating over and above what is presently installed **will have to comply with Regulation 17D**.

Only improvements which are technically, functionally and economically feasible need to be carried out – these are defined in the regulations by giving a list of possible improvements and stating that anything with a simple payback of 15 years or less is by definition economically feasible.

This also means that any proposed work is now 'controlled' by the regulations and will require a Building Regulations application.

The appointment of a professional adviser to administer such projects is still therefore essential. They should be aware of both all existing regulations, and this new regulation, and ensure that schemes comply.

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