

Building Standards Newsletter November 2014

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Welcome to the 1st edition of our Newsletter

This is the first issue of our local Building Standards newsletter. The main purpose of the newsletter is to provide up-to-date information relating to all aspects of the Building Standards system in Scotland. With an added focus on local issues in an attempt to enhance our customer's knowledge and understanding of procedures and performance related matters.

Section 6 (Energy) - Information for October 2015

The changes proposed to Section 6 (Energy) for October 2015 have been published early to aid the development of solutions to meet the new standards. You can access the revised standards and all supporting guidance at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Building/Building-standards/techbooks/s62015>

Time to Grant a Building Warrant

A suite of 9 Key Performance Outcomes for Building Standards verifiers were introduced in May 2012, and includes KPO1 – Year-on-year reduction in the average time taken to grant a building warrant. Currently, our KPO1 average stands at 53.8 days to grant a warrant which is believed to be higher than the Scottish national average.

Verifiers have powers to 'refuse' a warrant where approval has not been granted within 9 months of the 1st report and we may have to consider applying this clause more vigorously in future should current performance against KPO1 persist. A recent example being a house application where 260 days passed from receipt of application to approval, where only one request for additional information was raised by the verifier.

It's in everyone's interest to gain Building Warrant approval in good time, and you can help by ensuring that the initial submission includes a comprehensive package of all required plans, specification, test results, certificates etc.; and by responding to requests for additional information as quickly and precisely as possible.

Customer Satisfaction

In an attempt to gauge the level of customer satisfaction in the services we provide a local Building Standards Customer Satisfaction Survey was undertaken during February 2014. You can access the analysis of survey response at: http://www.orkney.gov.uk/Files/Planning/Building-Standards/2014/Building_Stan_Cust_Sat_Surv.pdf

A national survey by the Scottish Governments – Building Standards Division ran between April/June 2014. You can access the analysis of the National Report from the survey findings at:

http://www.orkney.gov.uk/Files/Planning/Building-Standards/2014/National_Survey_Findings_%20July2014.pdf

And the Orkney Report at: http://www.orkney.gov.uk/Files/Planning/Building-Standards/2014/Orkney_Islands_Council_National_Survey_Findings_July2014.pdf

eBuilding Standards

The procurement process for the development and delivery of eBuilding Standards is progressing well, with the forecasted launch in summer 2016.

It's anticipated that eBuilding Standards will allow our customers to submit building warrant applications electronically, in similar fashion to the current ePlanning portal.

Link between air-tightness and ventilation strategy

Based on air-tightness test results submitted to OIC Building Standards over the past few years, it would appear that most new dwellings in Orkney achieve infiltration rates of less than 5m³/h/m².

As noted in clause 3.14.2 of the Domestic Technical Handbook, natural ventilation alone may not suffice to maintain air quality inside the building where the corresponding infiltration rate is less than 5m³/h/m².

There may be a requirement under Standard 6.2 to carry out air-tightness testing on completion of a new dwelling. Where air-tightness test results indicate that the ventilation strategy adopted is not compatible with the building's infiltration rate, remedial work may be required in order to ensure compliance with Standard 3.14. (See sections 3.5 and 5.5 of BSD - Sound and Air Tightness Testing (www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0041/00415385.pdf) for additional information.)

Sections 7 and 8 of the following publication contain guidance on suitable mechanical ventilation systems for dwellings with low infiltration rates: BSD – Domestic Ventilation (www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00409104.pdf). Designers may wish to consider specifying mechanical ventilation in accordance with this guidance as a matter of course for new dwellings in order to avoid potentially disruptive and expensive remedial work on completion.

Compliance during construction

In an attempt to promote a consistent level of inspection during construction, Building Standards verifiers across Scotland have adopted a risk based methodology to reasonable inquiry.

A Construction Compliance and Notification Plan, based on the complexity and risk associated with each development is produced during warrant assessment, the project specific CCNP is included with the building warrant approval package.

It is important that you follow the CCNP and notify Building Standards of all the relevant key inspection stages e.g. commencement of works; foundations; dpc and solum, superstructure; drainage; and completion. Failure to do so may lead to a request for disruptive inspection and a delay in accepting the Completion Certificate submission.

Works commenced prior to building warrant approval

We have experienced a number of unfortunate instances recently where works have commenced prior to building warrant approval. This has resulted in finished works having to be uncovered to permit inspection before the Completion Certificate was accepted. Don't get caught-out; always ensure your approval is in place and follow the CCNP instruction before starting works.

Contact Us

If you have any comments on how the Building Standards Service in Orkney can be improved please do not hesitate to contact us by writing to us at

Building Standards, Council Offices, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1NY

Alternatively you can email your suggestions to: building.standards@orkney.gov.uk

Or by calling 01856 873535

The Building Standards Team are:

Principal Building Standards Officer:

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Officers are available from 09:00 – 13:00 and 14:00 – 17:00, Monday to Friday, with a duty officer covering 13:00 – 14:00

We hope you found the information from our 1st newsletter interesting and helpful. Customer engagement is important to us and we intend to make the newsletter a regular feature. If you require any further information or clarification regarding anything contained in the newsletter please do not hesitate to contact us at the Building Standards office