

New Building Regulations

TIMSA welcomes clarification of insulation regulations

Thermal Insulation Manufacturers and Suppliers Association, TIMSA, welcomes the changes to the Building Regulations Part L: 2006 together with the publication of the associated Approved Documents L1A/B and L2A/B and the accompanying revised guidance note BR 443: 2006 *Conventions for U-value calculations*.

In particular TIMSA welcomes the determination by ODPM to ensure that the new higher energy efficiency standards, determined by the allowable level of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, the so-called 'whole building' approach, will be more effectively implemented both in design and in construction through more rigorous certification of materials and testing of completed buildings. Insulation will continue to play a dominant role in achieving these targets, thereby ensuring that the emphasis does not shift away from the long-term benefits of insulating the building fabric towards the short-term benefits of the 'renewable' elements.

The 2006 edition of BR 443, drafted by BRE for the ODPM, clarifies the certification requirements for thermal insulation materials, and defines the usage of other aspects such as emissivity values in U-value calculations, which underpin the data needed to demonstrate compliance with the new CO₂ based requirements.

Most mainstream insulation products are now covered by harmonised European Standards (hENs), which ensure that the specifier or regulator can confidently compare dissimilar materials, knowing that they have been certified according to common, internationally recognised standards.

BR 443 now addresses the issue of non-standardised materials, such as multi-foil insulants, which have become increasingly popular in recent years, due to their apparently high thermal resistance to thickness ratio. From now on such materials, which have hitherto relied on ad-hoc, unorthodox testing procedures for thermal performance, will be subject to testing using the methods given in relevant international standards i.e. BS EN 12664, 12667 and BS EN ISO 8990, or certification by Notified Bodies accredited for thermal testing by an EU national accreditation service eg the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) (www.ukas.org). The latter is a requirement of the ODPM as stated in their Circular Letter C1/62/04/03 dated March 30 – see Sections 26 and 27. This guidance resolves a growing problem whereby claims for thermal resistance of multi-foil materials based on arbitrary testing indicated much higher values than have been obtained when these materials are subjected to proven, relevant standard test procedures – sometimes by a factor of five.

The British Board of Agrément (BBA) has recently announced its first contract for certification of a multi-foil insulation product. Under the Construction Products Directive, materials not subject to hENs, may still obtain independent certification in the form of a European Technical Approval (ETA). BBA is the UK representative of EOTA, the body which regulates the ETA scheme. BBA is also, among others which include the BRE and National Physical Laboratory, a UKAS accredited body for thermal insulation materials.

One of TIMSA's members, the major UK producer of foil bubble pack insulants, already complies with BR443 and has had an Agrément certificate for more than 10 years. In addition a multi-foil insulant manufacturer, a non-TIMSA member, already complies with the requirements of BR443 and is in the process of obtaining an Agrément- certificate.

TIMSA points out that over recent years many buildings have been completed with foil materials not certified by accredited bodies which may not even satisfy the standards required by Part L: 2002, putting seriously at risk the Government's stated intention to raise buildings' energy performance standards in line with other EU member states, and help to achieve its ambitious Kyoto targets for CO₂ emission reduction.

END

Editors Note

For immediate release

TIMSA is a trade association formed in 1978. It is the only association representing all the materials in the Thermal Insulation market and includes all the major companies as well as many of the distributors and specialist manufacturers of ancillary products.

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