

Chief Executives – Scottish Local Authorities
Copy and email: Local Authority Building Standards Managers (LABSS)



Your ref:
Our ref: A10277781
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Dear Chief Executive

The Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004
Schedule 5: Mandatory Standard 6.2
Airtightness testing of new buildings – evidence of competence of testers

This letter is issued to update local authorities on recent changes in the UK airtightness testing industry and the implication for the verification process for new buildings.

Background

During the second half of 2014, industry and government have worked towards a rationalisation of the airtightness testing industry in the UK. This was driven principally by the intention, in England & Wales, to formally recognise registering organisations through the DCLG 'Competent Persons Scheme'. In support of this, a Minimum Technical Competence document and a suite of National Occupational Standards¹ to support the defined function of airtightness tester were developed. UK administrations, including the Scottish Government, were involved in this process.

Guidance to standard 6.2 notes that "*Testing should be carried out by persons who can demonstrate relevant, recognised expertise in measuring the air permeability of buildings. This should include membership of a professional organisation which accredits its members as competent to test and confirm the results of testing*".

As part of this process, to maintain the recognition of registering organisations which previously existed, it was agreed that an organisation that has already demonstrated it meets the provisions within the published MTC and applies the UK NOS in the assessment, training and management of their tester members would be recognised in Scotland as such a *professional organisation* without the need for further evidence or action on that organisation's part.

¹ ASTATT1 to 10, suite: 'Air Tightness Testing', available at: <http://nos.ukces.org.uk>

Industry changes from 1 January 2015

Previously, there were two recognised industry schemes operated by ATTMA and BINDT. As of 31 December 2014, the BINDT scheme was closed. A new registration scheme, operated by ATTMA and approved under the MTC and NOS is now in operation. Other registration schemes may follow.

Registration schemes will be identified in guidance on air tightness testing of buildings in Scotland in relation to section 6 (energy) of the building regulations. The information in this letter, together with further information on registration schemes and the criteria that apply to them is available at www.scotland.gov.uk/soundairtesting.

Implications for verifiers and applicants

- From 1 January 2015, recognition of competence of air tightness testers within building regulations will be on the basis of their registering organisation implementing requirements for Minimum Technical Competency and application of the new UK [National Occupational Standards](#) for Air Tightness Testing.
- Each registering organisation will publish and maintain a list of current individuals/organisations registered to undertake air tightness testing and the categories of buildings they are registered to test.
- As identified in the UK NOS ([ASTATT3](#)), the basic category of tester under new registration schemes now covers testing of **both** dwellings and simple non-domestic buildings (with a volume less than 4,000 m³). This is of particular relevance and benefit in access to testing services in remote and rural areas.
- At time of issue, one registering organisation which implements the MTC and NOS is approved – that operated by [ATTMA](#).
- As a transitional measure, testers who hold a current BINDT registration may continue to test and report **on new dwellings only** until the expiry date of that registration. Verifiers may accept dwelling tests on this basis. Details of registered testers and their registration expiry dates may be accessed [here](#).
- Where neither of the above criteria apply, a verifier may accept a test if they have first satisfied themselves that the party who performed the test meets the provisions set out within the MTC and NOS by other means.
- There is no change to guidance within the BSD Technical Handbooks. Reference to these new provisions is made within section 5 of the BSD publication '[Sound and Air Tightness Testing](#)'. BSD will host and update a list of registering organisations on our website at www.scotland.gov.uk/soundairtesting.

It is hoped that the information in this letter and changes to related supplementary guidance will continue to promote a pragmatic and consistent approach across Scotland when applying the building standards.

Yours sincerely

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