

Solar Panels and Wind Turbines

If you are planning to fit a solar panel or wind turbine to your property you will normally require building regulation approval.

Solar Panels

The installation of a solar panel to a building will generally require a building regulation application. The issues requiring approval are:-

- The increased loading on the roof and the ability of the existing structure to take the additional load. (Part A) In some cases additional strengthening may be required to the roof.
- Any penetrations through the roof covering will need to comply with Part C of the building regulations (resistance to moisture).
- Any alterations/additions to the heating or hot water system will need to be carried out by a competent person and certification will need to be provided.
- All electrical work required to meet the requirements of Part P (Electrical Safety) must be designed, installed, inspected and tested by a person competent to do so. Prior to completion, the Council should be satisfied that Part P has been complied with. This may require an appropriate BS7671 electrical installation certificate to be issued for the work by a person competent to do so.

Wind Turbines

As with solar panels wind turbines will need to comply with the building regulations with regard to:-

- Part A – Structural stability/safety.
- Part P – Electrical Safety.

This means a building regulation application will most likely be required if you are planning to connect a wind turbine to your property. If you require any further guidance or advice please contact the Building Control section.

With wind turbines the fixing to the structure will need to be carefully considered to ensure that the turbine is very securely fixed to any building.

There are a number of Competent Persons Schemes (CPS) in operation whereby the installers self certify their work for compliance with various sections of the building regulations and then notify the Local Authority. It is advisable for you to discuss this with your installer to see if they are a registered member of such a scheme and that they are covered by the CPS to certify compliance with all necessary sections of the building regulations.

Please also note that planning permission may be required for solar panels and/or wind turbines and you are advised to contact the Council's Development Control section for advice on this when considering such works.

LABC is the national body which coordinates the technical application of the Building Regulations and has influence on new or revised regulations covering new technology, new building methods and environmental performance. Effectively, the LABC is the body to which individual local authorities look to for guidance. Barry Turner, Director of Technical Services at LABC advised that the LABC is working towards a guidance document on solar panel installations, which should start to unify the approach. He very positively affirmed that Building Regulations Approval was required for these installations.

A common question

“But if I use an **MCS installer**, shouldn't I be covered without notifying Building Control?”

Answer

In line with the above guidance, unfortunately, the answer to this is no. Many installers will tell you otherwise. They will say as they are a Competent Person for the purpose of installing panels, they can self certify the work and therefore no application is necessary.

The confusion arises because they are entitled to self-certify the electrical component of the work. However they are not entitled to self-certify the structural component of the work (the “can the roof take the weight?” part).

What are the benefits of involving Building Control?

The benefits of involving building control include; a record of the building work will be kept with the local authority for review by any prospective house purchaser via a local authority search, avoiding any potential difficulties when selling a property in the future. Paperwork, certifications and equipment will be double checked by an independent third party and everyone will have the comfort of knowing the installation has been carried out correctly, safely and in compliance of the Building Regulations.

Primary Responsibility

You should also bear in mind that if you are the owner of the building, it is ultimately you who may be served with an enforcement notice if the work does not comply with the regulations or the appropriate applications have not been made. So it is important that you choose your contractor carefully and that you and they are each aware of their obligations.

If you have any questions regarding your installation please contact Building Control on 01572 758303 or email: buildingcontrol@rutland.gov.uk and we will do our best to assist.