

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM 014
(Edition 1)
AIR LEAKAGE TESTING OF DOMESTIC BUILDINGS
WITH A USEFUL FLOOR AREA OF LESS THAN 1000m²

Material change of use

Regulation 5 defines a ‘material change of use’ in which a building or part of a building that was previously used for one purpose will be used for another.

The Building Regulations set out requirements that must be met before a building can be used for a new purpose. To meet the requirements, the building may need to be upgraded in some way, where perhaps existing thermal elements (roof, wall, floors etc) may have to be upgraded, and additionally other features may need to be addressed by upgrading (i.e. new space heating provisions, energy efficient lighting, thermally efficient glazing)

New dwellings and Material changes of use

Approved Document L1A applies to the conservation of fuel and power in newly erected dwellings.



The act of erecting a **new dwelling (i.e. a new dwelling being erected on perhaps totally new foundations, with new walls, floors, roof, drainage, fenestration, gas, electrics, etc)** - is not classified as a material change of use.

Where an existing building envelope is subjected to a “material change of use”, e.g. *Was originally an Office building, and now will be converted and therefore changed into self-contained dwelling flats.*

Then Approved Document L1B will apply where a dwelling is being created within in an existing building as the result of a material change of use of **all** or **part** of the building, or as part of that building work process, the building is being extended.

Air leakage testing

NEW DWELLINGS :

If you are constructing **NEW dwellings** then Approved Document L1A states that, with few exceptions, you must perform an air leakage test. For developments of two or more dwellings an air leakage test should be carried out on the lower of:

- *Three units of each dwelling type; or*
- *50% of all instances of that dwelling type.*

For developments where no more than two dwellings are constructed, it may be possible to avoid the need for any pressure testing by using an assumed value of 15m³/h/m² within the DER/TER calculations. Your SAP assessor will be able to confirm if this is the case for your dwelling, and also will offer further advice if your project involves mixed use developments.

DWELLINGS FORMED BY A MATERIAL CHANGE OF USE:

Where an existing building has been subjected to a material change of use, then an air leakage test will not be required subject to consideration of the next paragraph.

You should note that there may be instances whereby building projects which become subject to Regulation 28 (Consequential Improvements) as a consequence of having a total useful floor area over 1,000m², where building work consists of or includes —

- (a) an extension;
- (b) the initial provision of any fixed building services; or
- (c) an increase to the installed capacity of any fixed building services

may give rise none-the-less to a need for air tightness testing, you should consult your professional advisors accordingly for advice.

SUBMISSION OF STANDARD ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE DOCUMENTS (SAP/EPC)

You are none-the-less required to submit energy performance certificates appropriate for your project development which demonstrates compliance with the Building Regulations.

A SAP EPC refers to an Energy Performance Certificate issued by an On Construction Domestic Energy Assessor using SAP methodology and software [New dwelling] or dwellings created by conversion or change of use, are required to have SAP Calculations carried out.

- **SAP 2012** (Software) is used to produce Energy Performance Certificates for NEWLY CREATED DWELLINGS.
- **RdSAP 2012** (Software) is only used to produce Energy Performance Certificates for EXISTING DWELLINGS. Note : RdSAP 2012 v9.94 (third link below) should be used from 22nd September 2019.