



Circular Letter: BC 03/2016

30th November 2016

**Competency of Sound Insulation Testers - Building Regulations (Part E Amendment)
Regulations 2014**

To: All Building Control Authorities,

1. I write in connection with Circular Letter: BC 04/2015, dated 03 June 2015, which advised you of the coming into operation of the *Building Regulations (Part E Amendment) Regulations 2014* (S.I. No. 606 of 2014) on 1st July 2015.
2. These regulations were accompanied by *Technical Guidance Document E – Sound 2014* (TGD E 2014) which provided detailed technical guidance on how compliance with the updated requirements could be achieved in practice. TGD E 2014 is available on the Department's [website](#).
3. TGD E 2014 provides for, amongst other things, mandatory sound testing on a proportion of attached dwellings. This requirement represents the primary method of ensuring the achievement of the minimum performance requirements for sound, as set out in Part E, through the adoption of improved quality control procedures on site.
4. TGD E 2014 places a strong emphasis on the competency of the sound insulation tester, the procedures for sound insulation testing and reporting requirements in order to ensure consistency and credibility of the sound insulation tests.
5. In this regard, it is important to note that TGD E 2014 reiterates this emphasis on competency on several occasions, such as in -

“2.1.2 Competency of tester

2.1.2.1 To ensure a proper standard of testing, it is essential that persons are competent in the measurement of sound insulation in buildings² possess sufficient training, experience and knowledge appropriate to the nature of the work he or she is required to perform having particular regard to the size and complexity of such works.

² Sound insulation tests carried out by a person certified by an independent third party to carry out this work offers a way of ensuring that such certification can be relied upon.”

and in -

"A.3 Information for inclusion in test reports

The test report should contain at least the following information, in the order listed below:

(e) Organisation/ person carrying out testing, including:

(i) Name and address,

(ii) Proof of competency⁹, and

(iii) Name(s) of client(s).

⁹ Sound insulation tests carried out by a person certified by an independent third party to carry out this work offers a way of ensuring that such certification can be relied on."

6. It is envisaged that the testing requirements in Part E will lead to an improvement in the quality of housing into the future and will contribute to greater compliance more generally with the requirements of Part E; this in turn will help to address the issues associated with exposure to noise and the level of reported noise problems arising from attached dwellings.
7. It has come to the Department's attention that sound insulation testing services are being offered by individuals who may not be appropriately qualified to conduct sound insulation testing and who offer no proof of competency in accordance with TGD E. This represents a serious threat to the credibility of sound insulation test results and undermines the means of demonstrating compliance with Part E.
8. Industry led schemes exist which follow the principles of 'ISO/IEC 17024: 2012: Conformity assessment - General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons'. Sound Insulation Test Register Ireland (SITRI), www.soundtestingireland.com is such a scheme and holds a register of suitably qualified professionals who carry out sound insulation testing for the purposes of demonstrating compliance with Part E.
9. Enforcement of the Building Regulations remains the responsibility of local Building Control Authorities each of whom may take such steps as are reasonably necessary for the purpose of verifying compliance with the regulations; in this regard, the Department urges all Building Control Authorities to remain vigilant and ensure that sound insulation tests, where required, are conducted by competent persons.
10. Further enquires about this circular can be addressed to Ms. Claire Darragh, Executive Officer (Tel: 01 888 2893) or to Mr. Nason Fallon, Higher Executive Officer (Tel: 01 888 2466). Alternatively, queries can be e-mailed to buildingstandards@housing.gov.ie.

Yours sincerely,

David Hannigan

David Hannigan,
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To: Each Chief Executive
Each Building Control Authority