



## **BUILDING CONTROL SERVICES**

### **BUILDING CONTROL SITE INSPECTION POLICY**

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### **BUILDING CONTROL PERFORMANCE STANDARD**



## **1.0 Introduction**

To enable Building Control to operate effectively and efficiently requires an up to date inspection plan, which will demonstrate commitment to maintaining performance standards.

With any plan it is not practical for the Building Control Surveyors to inspect every item of work that is undertaken. Ultimate responsibility for compliance rests with the developer who has day to day control over all aspects of the work being carried out.

- 1.1 Any laid down policy must incorporate flexibility to enable professional officers to use their skill and judgement in selecting priorities when choosing to make inspections. Site work which is not subject to prior plans appraisal and approval such as Building Notice applications, must take a higher priority in the inspection policy. This is always subject to the complexity of the construction being undertaken under the full plans procedure and may call for officers with greater experience to undertake such inspections.
- 1.2 The level of inspection will rely on the inspection assessment made during the plans approval process.
- 1.3 The site inspection plan should be evaluated on a project by project basis taking into account the ability of the contractor, complexity of the project especially if it is a fast track development, and the professional experience of the officer inspecting the project.
- 1.4 The inspection policy for each project must be undertaken to ensure as far as possible that work complies with the Building Regulations taking into account the financial restraints which may be placed on the inspection system relative to the fee charged.

## **2.0 The Legislation**

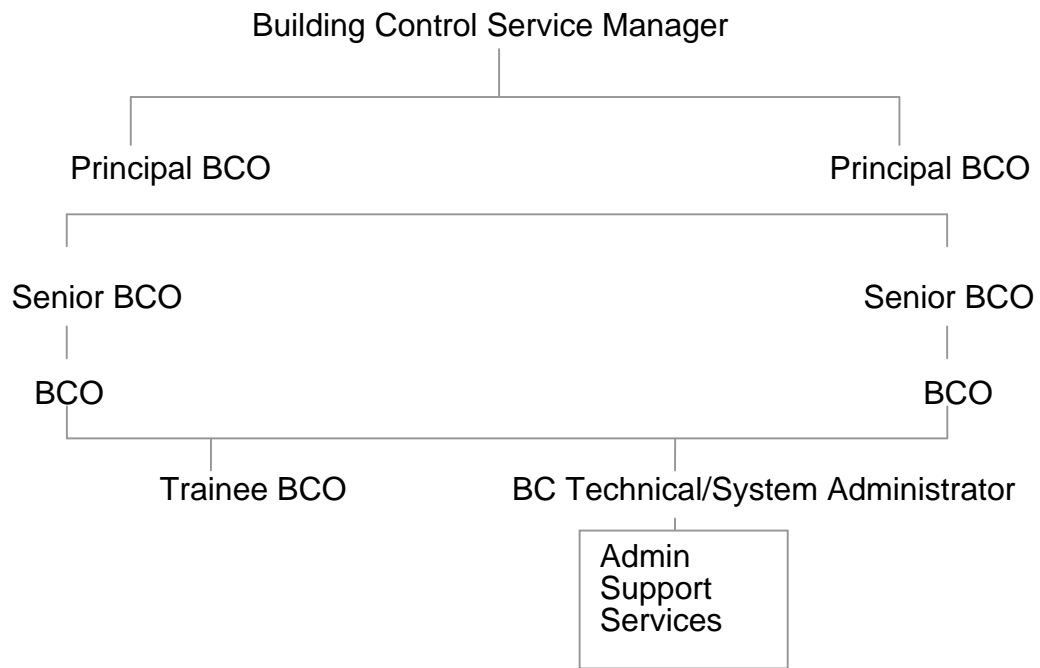
The Building Act 1984

The Building Regulations 2000 (As amended).

The Building (Local Authority Changes) Regulations 1998.

### 3.0 The Establishment

3.1 The Building Control Service Manager will deploy Staff in the most effective manner to provide an efficient and cost effective inspection service to customers.



### 4.0 Site Inspections

4.1 The Council will carry out all of the following statutory inspections of work subject to notification from the contractor, to fulfil the Council's statutory duty.

- a. Commencement of work.
- b. Excavations.
- c. Foundation Concrete.
- d. Damp Proof Course.
- e. Oversight.
- f. Drains 1.
- g. Drains 2.
- h. Completion.

4.2 The following other intermediate inspections will be made subject to risk assessment and the evaluation made at the Plans Approval or Building Notice stage of the application. These inspections will be subject to owner/contractor notification.

- a. First floor level.
- b. Roof construction.
- c. Key structural elements and components.
- d. Construction relating to fire safety.
- e. Construction involving unusual design elements or unusual methods of construction.
- f. Any type of construction or equipment installation that may have serious impact on the Building Regulations if it was not carried out properly.
- g. 6-monthly site revisits where notifications or inspections have not been received or made.

- 4.3 The need to make any or all of the intermediate inspections listed are subject to the professional judgement and risk assessment by surveyors. An inspection notification framework guide will be sent to the applicant with the plans approval notice or in the case of a Building Notice submission with the letter of acknowledgement.
- 4.4 Where owners or contractors fail to give any statutory notification, surveyors will determine if they can be satisfied that the work complies with the requirements of the regulations. Where this is not possible, the option available to have the work exposed will be used. Action for failing to give the statutory notices will be subject to the seriousness of the offence and in accordance with the Enforcement Plan.
- 4.5 Applications where work has commenced but no work has been carried out during the last 6 months will be subject to standard letters advising the owner that no further inspections will be carried out unless notification by them is made. These visits will be based on weekly reports provided by the Building Control Technician.

## **5.0 Site Inspection Regime**

- a) Requests or notification for site inspection made to the BC office before 10.30am will be inspected on the same day.
- b) Statutory inspections will take priority over intermediate visits.
- c) Surveyors will need to assess the complexity of the construction being undertaken when a commencement notice and first site visit is made.
- d) The experience of the contractor will be assessed and the level of inspections made accordingly.
- e) The Building Control Officer may make unannounced inspections between the normal inspection stages.
- f) BC surveyors will make dated photographic records when necessary, which will be retained on file.
- g) Follow up site inspections will be made to ensure that contraventions have been rectified during the course of construction. These may be subject to appropriate notification from the owner or contractor.
- h) All site notes will be clearly written and retained on file. These will clearly indicate the date and officer making the inspection. These notes will be as comprehensive as necessary to demonstrate that the work that was inspected complied. They will be sufficient to protect the Council from any future legal action. These records will be retained on the computer system where possible.
- i) If a site record book is provided on site the Building Control Officer will complete an entry on each visit to site.
- j) If the inspection is in connection with a Building Notice the plan-checking sheet will be completed in all cases together with the performance standards inspection form.
- k) Inspection in connection with regularisation applications must ensure that all concealed work is exposed or clearly excluded from the final certificate. If areas of construction need exposing the applicant

should be informed in writing and given 28 days to respond. If after that time the owner has not responded the officer may decide to complete the application and not issue a certificate, informing the owner of their decision. If the surveyor cannot be satisfied that the work complies after an application for Regularisation is made, a certificate will not be issued and the owner will be notified accordingly.

## **6.0 General Building Inspection**

6.1 The concept of a general survey can be misunderstood and should not be used unless all aspects of the construction has been inspected at one time. Such a survey is often recorded as a “general inspection”, together with such qualification as “satisfactory”. This expression could mean anything and if challenged a Court might reasonably suggest that the Building Control Officer recording that a “general inspection” was made and that the result was “satisfactory” might well conclude that all of the building work which was available to him to inspect at that time was found to be in order. When a Building Control Surveyor visits a site he/she will note what he/she inspected and whether the work was of adequate standard. Building Control Surveyors will therefore be specific about what has and as the case may be what has not been inspected at any one time and record accordingly.

- (a) In all cases the date of the inspection and, where it can have any significance, the time should be recorded.
- (b) The part of the building or location of the work will be described, e.g. “Plots 32 and 34 steel reinforcement - first floors, bays 6 to 12”, or “damp proof course to north and east walls”.
- (c) All records will be made to enable future reference to them. It will be reasonable to expect that the technical content will be referred to by a person having professional knowledge of construction.
- (d) Departures from approved plans submitted under the Full Plans procedure will be recorded. Where major departures are made, revised plans will be requested from the owner.

## **7.0 Siting a Building**

7.1 The Building Control Officer will not normally be expected to check the site by making a detailed survey of the building relative to local physical features. However, if the siting of the building is critical in relation to Building Regulation requirements and plans show the relevant dimensions, it will be appropriate to check and record the setting out. Where foundations are in close proximity to points of likely failure, such as former excavations, drains or sewers, etc., notes and/or sketches will be made showing depths and distances.

7.2 Any major deviations from approved plans will be referred to Development Control for action.

## **8.0 Excavations, Foundations and Oversite**

8.1 The inspection of excavations for foundations is important and a clear and concise record will be made of the following:

- a) The extent of the ground inspected.

- b) The depth and width of the excavation throughout the site and the relationship to finished ground level.
- c) The type of soil and any unusual features such as differences in soil types within the site or disturbed ground.
- d) Proximity to drains and other services.
- e) Method of assessment of bearing capacity.
- f) Proximity to living and recently felled trees.
- g) Where special concrete design mixes are used a copy of the delivery note or a record that it was seen will be made.
- h) Masonry central to the foundations.
- i) Thickness of the foundation concrete.
- j) Type and thickness of hardcore or details of suspended floor, DPM, insulation and floor void ventilation.
- k) A record of any exceptional climatic conditions at the time of inspection.

## **9.0 Drainage**

- 9.1 All foul and surface drainage will be inspected before backfilling and were in position as shown on the approved plans, that they were of the prescribed material, and were to the levels shown. Any variations to the plans will be recorded in the inspection notes and plans.
- 9.2 Following the covering over of drainage subsequent inspections will be made to confirm that the drains were watertight and inspection chambers were correctly constructed. If all of the drainage work was not surveyed then the parts not examined will be noted and any drain tests will be recorded.

## **10.0 Masonry**

- 10.1 The height of the walls at the time of the survey, and whether any cavities, cavity trays, cavity insulation, lintels or wall ties were examined, will be recorded. Any work not examined will also be noted. Masonry chimneys will be inspected for the adequacy of flue liners where possible.

## **11.0 Reinforced Concrete**

- 11.1 The extent of reinforcement checked will be recorded either on the normal records, by reference to bay or column numbers, or by notes on the structural engineer's drawings which will become part of the permanent records. There will be quality checks made as and when necessary on the concrete provided and where possible concrete results will be recorded in the files.

## **12.0 Structural Steelwork**

- 12.1 The extent of the examination of structural steelwork will be noted. The Building Control Surveyor will only be expected to note what is seen on

a particular visit and will not be expected to inspect every fine detail but will make general inspections of any structural steelwork.

### **13.0 Structural Timber**

13.1 Floors, roofs and timber frame constructions will be inspected to check the sizes, centres, spans and grades of timber, and the positioning of connectors. Any variations will be noted and marked on the drawings or inspection notes. Attention to notching and cutting of structural timber members will be noted.

### **14.0 Occupation and Completion Inspections**

14.1 Following receipt of notification of occupation or completion of the construction work a final inspection of the premises will be made and any aspects which do not satisfy the provisions of the Building Regulations, will be recorded. The building owner, contractor, or architect, will be informed in writing within 5 days of the inspection. The serving of contravention notices will be done in accordance with the Enforcement Concordat.

14.2 Contraventions of a minor nature will be notified to the owner in writing for rectification of work within 28 days. Minor contraventions will not be pursued, files will be closed and the owner notified that completion certificates will not be issued. These details will be entered onto the Local Land Charges system.

### **15.0 Part P – Electrical Safety**

15.1 Site inspection and certification will be provided in accordance with the separate policy for Part P Electrical Safety, Policy of Application.

### **16.0 Inspection Frequency**

16.1 Site inspections will be made to cover statutory and other intermediate visits described in this document together with others depending on the duration of the contract period. These will be based on the performance standards document and risk assessments made during work progress and of the time of plans examination.

16.2 Officers daily workloads must be used to ensure inspections are carried out at the appropriate times.

16.3 The frequency of the inspections will be the responsibility of the Building Control Officer taking into account the guidance laid out in this document. Without exception scheduled date for further inspections will be entered in the computer system.

### **17.0 Enforcement**

17.1 All enforcement procedures will be followed to the Enforcement Concordat where work on site fails to comply with the Building Regulations interested parties will be informed verbally where possible. If contraventions have not been rectified within 5 days all parties will be notified in writing. BCO's will follow the procedure laid down in the BC Enforcement Policy.

17.2 Details of offending works will be clearly documented and recorded to enable the Authority to successfully sustain its case of action.

- 17.3 Building Control Officers will keep their Principal Building Control Officer informed of developing contravention issues.
- 17.4 Correspondence informing all parties of contraventions will give 28 days to comply. Contraventions of a serious nature will result in the issue of notices immediately with 7 days to comply. This will only apply where serious breaches of Part A (Structure) and Part B (Fire Safety) have been made.
- 17.5 Where response to the first notice is not received a further 7 day letter will follow.
- 17.6 The Principal Building Control Officer will consult with the Building Control service Manager for approval to issue a notice under Sections 35 or 36 of The Building Act. Once issued by the Director of Planning, information will be held by Land Searches.
- 17.7 Legal proceedings will follow subject to advice from the Head of Legal Services.
- 17.8 Where Approved Inspector Initial Notices ceases to be in force and the work reverts back to the Local Authority the City Council will request detailed plans of the work and carry out such inspections as are necessary to satisfy the Council's policy. The Council will be mindful of the restraints of the Approved Inspector Regulations but will exercise its duty to enable it to issue completion certificates with confidence.

**If you would like this information in an alternative format:- large print or electronically, please do not hesitate to contact us on (01522) 873390 or email: [building.control@lincoln.gov.uk](mailto:building.control@lincoln.gov.uk)**