

**Topic:** Replacement Conservatory Roofs

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This leaflet provides guidance on how to attain compliance with The Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 (as amended) in relation to

## Replacement Conservatory Roofs

It is important to note that many existing conservatories will have been built as structures exempt from Building Regulations and therefore will not have been inspected by Building Control when erected.

There has been a recent trend for replacing existing conservatory roofs with a variety of insulated, non-translucent, roof structures in order to improve the thermal performance & ultimately comfort level of the internal environment of the conservatory. These include adding structural roof timbers, insulation & roof coverings of tiles, slates or metal manufactured roofing systems. The role of Building Control is to protect people & the environment.

The following is intended as a guide to the Building Control process in such cases.

### Q.1 Is my conservatory suitable for a replacement roof?

A. Prior to making a Building Regulation application, serious consideration and investigations should be made to establish if fitting a replacement roof is a viable option. The existing structure including foundations should be assessed by a suitably qualified professional such as a structural engineer to establish suitability for additional loadings. Consider if any necessary upgrading of existing structural elements, or foundations will be required. This could prove to be prohibitive in terms of cost and disruption.

## Q.2 Do I need a Building Regulation application for replacing my conservatory roof?

- A. If the replacement roof has less than three quarters of its area translucent, a Building Control application must be made to the Council prior to commencement.

## Q.3 What type of Building Regulation application is required ?

- A. The work may be carried out under a Building Notice or a Full Plans application. In either case we will require the following with your application:
- Details of the type of replacement roof to be fitted, including information on structure, covering and insulation, all of which must comply with the current Building Regulations.
  - A structural engineer's report is likely to be required to confirm that the existing conservatory structure is capable of supporting the new roof loads.
  - A correct fee based on the estimated cost of the works.

## Q.4 What will Building Control be looking for on site?

- A. You must inform Building Control before you start the work. Building Control inspections will include the following:

**Structure:** a visual inspection of the existing structure of the conservatory will be required. The existing foundations will need to be exposed to determine if these are adequate to carry the new loads from the replacement roof. These observations may be compared to the information given in your structural engineer's report.

**Weather resistance:** adequate flashing will be required where the new roof abuts the existing wall of the house; cavity trays will be required especially if the external skin of this cavity wall is built in brick.

**Heat loss:** if the existing conservatory is not already separated from the house by double glazed draught sealed doors these should be fitted (unless previous Building Regulation approval was obtained). Alternatively heat-loss calculations may be required, the result of which may require some upgrading of the insulation to the house.

Adequate insulation must be provided to the replacement roof itself in any case.

**Ventilation:** there must be adequate ventilation provided where necessary to avoid condensation within the roof structure.

**Q.5 Will I receive a certificate when the works are complete?**

- A. Providing all necessary paperwork has been provided and the works on site are deemed compliant with the Building Regulations, the Council will Issue a Building Regulation Completion Certificate for the works as described in your application.

**Q.6 Does this mean I will have a Building Regulation certificate for a sun-room?**

- A. **No.** The certificate will cover the works to the roof only ([see note 1](#)).

If you wish to convert your conservatory to a sun-room this could possibly involve up-grading works to the existing structure to meet the current health & safety standards as set out in the Building Regulations. Such works could include;

-Upgrading the thermal qualities of the floor, walls or windows.(or alternatively, the energy performance of the existing dwelling could be upgraded to offset against any thermally non compliant sunroom floors, walls or windows. This may require SAP calculations to justify compliance with the Equivalent Carbon Approach.

-Ensuring suitable safety glazing where necessary to doors & windows.

-Ensuring that steps/landings are safe for use.

Also, note that when undertaking work, that alters the thermal characteristics of a building or part of a building, the designer has a responsibility to ensure that sufficient measures are put in place to mitigate the risk of condensation damaging the building or adversely affecting the health of its occupants.

Furthermore, if the heating system is to be altered/extended into the conservatory, this will require to be compliant with the Building Regulations.

**Note 1 –**

Building owners should note that as result of the roof conversion the former conservatory will no longer enjoy any “exemption” it may have been previously granted by The Northern Ireland Building Regulations. This may have an effect on any future works being carried out in this part of the dwelling.

For further information please contact your local Council Building Control department.

**Q.7 What if I decide to have the works carried out without involving Building Control?**

- A. You will have carried out illegal works, thus leaving yourself and the installer liable to prosecution by the Council. Having unauthorised works carried out to your home may prejudice the sale or remortgaging of your property and will generally result in the works having to be regularised by Building Control. This can prove to be a disruptive and costly process.

*‘This guidance has been produced by the BCNI Standards And Performance Panel as an interpretation of a specific requirement of the Northern Ireland Building Regulations 2012 (as amended) & may be subject to changes as result of any future changes in Building Regulations or associated legislation*