

FEATURE: DECEMBER 2010

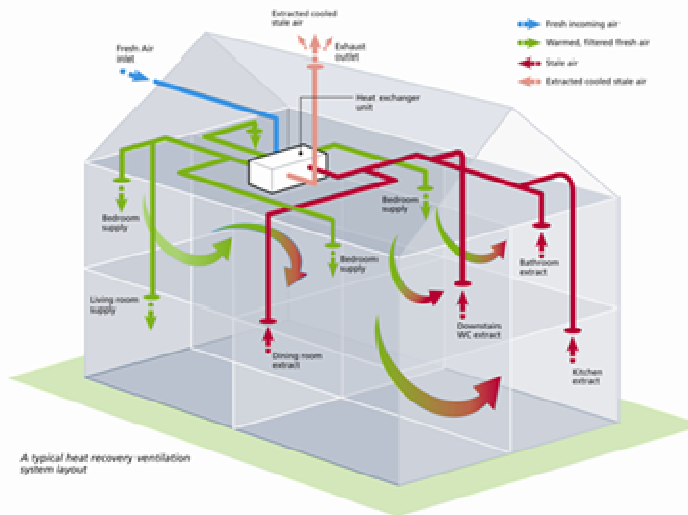
PART F: IMPROVING INSTALLATION STANDARDS

Chris Marriott, Managing Director of ADM Systems, looks at the reasons why installation standards have been tightened as part of the latest updates to Building Regulations Part F (Ventilation) for 2010.

“Changes to Part F are designed to ensure adequate ventilation provision in more air-tight buildings, whilst also covering new requirements and guidance for installation and commissioning of ventilation systems.

The 2010 revisions to Part F came into force in October and are welcome news for the industry. They now make it legally binding to ensure that all fixed mechanical ventilation systems (MVHR) are commissioned by a qualified person and that the relevant Building Control Body is notified. The updates to the regulations also ensure that the householder is given sufficient information about the ventilation system and its maintenance requirements, ensuring correct operation.

As the housebuilding industry moves towards higher levels of the Code for Sustainable Homes, it is essential that all ventilation systems, whether simple extract fans or whole-house MVHR systems, are correctly installed. The updates are designed to ensure that they reach the energy efficiency levels required whilst maintaining a healthy indoor environment.



It is interesting to note that until now there has been no specific qualification for the installation of domestic ventilation systems, although the legislation now looks likely to create, what will in effect be a common standard across the industry. This is similar to that of a Gas Safe installer, but in this case for domestic ventilation. The previous unregulated approach, prior to the October updates of Part F, meant that it was not uncommon for ventilation systems to be installed that were inadequate or failed to deliver the energy efficiency savings promised. In some cases, lack of adequate ventilation could actually put the health of the occupants at risk.

The changes to Part F were brought about due to recent updates to Part L (conservation of fuel and power), which introduced the concept of pressure testing buildings, to ensure they were energy efficient. This woke housebuilders and specifiers up to the fact that they would need some form of powered ingress/extraction – such as an MVHR system – that would provide adequate ventilation, whilst keeping the building warm and comfortable. That is one of the reasons why Part F now requires that post-completion testing of ventilation equipment is carried out to ensure it delivers the required air flow efficiently and quietly.

With higher levels of air tightness, choosing a qualified domestic ventilation installer is therefore essential to ensure that the building maintains a healthy indoor air quality



– and meets latest legislative requirements. Many in the industry don't yet have all the skills, for example, a plumber or electrician may not, which can lead to time consuming and costly remedial work due to non-compliance.

That is why we always advise our customers to use a qualified supplier and

installer when they purchase our MVHR systems – and one of the best ways of doing this is to choose an HVCA (Heating and Ventilation Contractors Association) member. For over a century, the HVCA has been representing the interests of companies active in the design, installation, commissioning and maintenance of heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration (hvacr) products in the UK. Choosing an HVCA member provides customers with independent verification that the contractors they employ deliver the highest quality and expertise. Ultimately that means the building will meet the ever more stringent building regulations laid out in Part F and Part L.

In reality, updates to Part F are simply putting into legislation what is essentially a common sense approach, making sure the ventilation system does what it is supposed to do. Housebuilders and specifiers can meet the new requirements by choosing a 'qualified person' to install it. That can be either an HVCA member or an installer that has attended an appropriate training course, many of which are currently available. Installers that do gain the required qualification, will find it leads to new business opportunities for them, as their services will be much in demand on site. Ultimately updates to Part F will result in increased standards across the industry and that can only be good for the homeowner and the environment."

For more information on ADM Systems, telephone: 01756 701051. Alternatively visit the website at: www.admsystems.co.uk

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