

## **EU Rules on Energy Efficiency Mean Maintaining Ductwork in Public Buildings**

There are Health and Safety Executive guidelines on the air quality in buildings used by the public and for commercial purposes but they are advisory rather than legally binding.

Measuring the energy efficiency of new, larger buildings above 250m<sup>2</sup>, however, is more closely regulated through EU regulations first introduced about five years ago and subsequently amended in 2010. For existing buildings the threshold for the requirement to measure efficiency is 1000m<sup>2</sup>.

H & S guidelines say that adequate ventilation and temperature control contributes to worker comfort and therefore buildings may need to have either air conditioning or heating systems installed, as well as extraction systems where substances being used in the workplace could be harmful to health. There are downloadable guidelines available here:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg244.pdf>

Since 2009, in terms of energy efficiency regulations, there are now mandatory requirements for such systems as air conditioning systems with a rated cooling output greater than 12kW to be regularly inspected. For systems with rated cooling output of between 12kW and 250 kW the deadline for first inspection was January 2011. The inspections must be carried out by an approved and qualified inspector.

The Government's advisory body on energy efficiency is called DIAG (short for Directive Implementation Advisory Group). It is a very good source of information for facilities managers, business owners and owners of commercial and public buildings and offers advice on how to ensure that an air conditioning system is maintained and operated efficiently.

The DIAG says that energy consumption can increase by as much as 60% if the system is poorly maintained or its components are dirty. Components that might be affected include condensers, refrigerant systems, pipework insulation, thermostat calibration, fans, filters and air ducts.

There is a lot of useful information as well as downloadable pdf guides available here:

<http://www.diag.org.uk/key-information/for-building-owners-operators.aspx>

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