



Solar PV panel update position statement

A Best Practice note has recently been published by LABC on retrofitting solar pv panels, but it was felt LABC members would value a further update on the topic with the information currently in the public arena.

As members are aware over recent months there has been considerable confusion with regard to the eligibility/capability of companies and individuals to install solar pv panels on domestic buildings. This confusion has much to do with the various competent persons schemes (CPS) that exist, and the scope and extent of such schemes as to whether they cover all relevant regulations or merely restrict their scheme to Part P matters only. This issue has been further complicated by the lack of information as to membership qualification criteria each CPS places on its members to undertake the full range of work entailed in such work.

The DCLG website lists relevant authorised CPS with all installers expected to be members of one of these, with many installers also being registered under one of the micro generation certification schemes (MCS), however it should be noted membership of an MCS alone does not permit an installer to 'self-certify' work, they must also belong to a CPS.

At present there is no easy way to identify which CPS require members to be competent with regard to Part A structural matters in addition to the more obvious Part P elements of the work, although all CPS registered under item 17 of Schedule 3 of the building regulations are according to DCLG expected to ensure their members deal with all relevant regulations, which should include all parts of the regulations.

LABC is very conscious that many installers do indeed take Part A matters seriously and are competent to fully self-certify their work. However, there are many pv installers whose skills are limited to dealing with Part P only, and it is this issue that is giving LA's most concern.

What is the most appropriate course of action to follow?

CPS where membership criteria requires Part A, C & P competency

In such cases LA's would in general leave the installer to carry out the work with no involvement. The only time for an LA to become involved is where it believes the work to be in contravention of regulations; i.e. no strengthening carried out to a roof where it is reasonably known the roof is not capable of carrying any additional loads. Under such circumstances the LA are entitled (required) to consider what, if any enforcement action it should carry out to have the work rectified. Such action would follow the normal route of addressing a non-compliance issue.

CPS where membership criteria only requires Part P competency

The self-certification aspect of any work is restricted to electrical installation only, the remainder of the work would be subject to formal consent under the building regulations, this could be through a LA or AI. In the case of an LA the work could be dealt with via a building notice and it would be for the LA to determine the extent and level of information needed to ensure compliance and the number and extent of site inspections needed.

Work carried out by a person not registered with an appropriate CPS

In all such cases a building regulation submission would be required for the full extent of works being undertaken. This again could be through an LA or AI.