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Part L fails to address overheating issues

By: Rebecca Hubbard
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Despite recent energy-efficiency amendments that come into force today, Part L 2010 of the Building Regulations fails to adequately take into account the impact of solar gain and internal heat sources on most commercial buildings in the UK, claims solar energy experts from Solar Gard. As a result, although buildings that comply with the new regulations will benefit from excellent insulation, they are at increased risk of overheating.

According to Ian Penfold, UK Architectural Manager at Solar Gard: "While these buildings meet strict Part L energy-efficiency guidelines they are more likely to require the installation of air-conditioning as a result."

The Approved Documents for Part L 2010 of the Building Regulations apply to all domestic and non-domestic buildings. They attempt to address issues around conserving fuel and power and play a key part in helping the government meet its wider goal of carbon-neutral buildings.

The latest amendments to Part L focus on storing heat and insulating buildings. While these methods are useful in homes and residential buildings, for many commercial and industrial buildings they could have detrimental consequences due to the widespread use of glass walls.

The use of glass walls in buildings has often been questioned due to safety, durability and solar gain flaws. However, with energy-efficient glass readily available its U-Value often being similar to that of a wall, Penfold argues that it could be considered that Part L 2010 encourages the use of glass as a building material. He said: "Heating is rarely an issue for commercial buildings. Heat is generated from employees, IT equipment and the sun and as a result many UK buildings don't use heating at all. Solar gain often leads to over-heating and businesses are more interested in how to keep the building cool in an environmentally sound way. With Part L 2010 encouraging the use of glass and promoting tightly-sealed buildings, offices are going to become unbearable, increasing the need for additional cooling systems."

Solar Gard is helping businesses to control internal temperatures by installing its solar-controlled window film. Once installed, it cuts solar energy by up to 82%, reducing the need for additional cooling systems.

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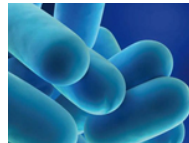


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