

Height of StoreysBuilding (Planning) Regulations 3(3) & 24

The **Building (Planning) (Amendment) Regulations 1987** were introduced in acknowledgement of changing circumstances and to enable greater flexibility in building design. Amongst other changes, the measurement of storey heights was simplified and a standard minimum height of 2.5 m was enacted; the differentiation between detached and semi-detached buildings (at least in the context of measuring storey heights) was removed.

2. Although the amendment simplified Building (Planning) Regulation 24, it brought to light a number of areas of concern regarding the measurement of storey heights and, accordingly, I wish to clarify the following :-

- a) It is the established practice of the Buildings Ordinance Office to measure storey heights between structural members, regardless of finishes such as false ceilings, screeding, plastering and flooring.
- b) Similarly, in measuring the clear height of balconies, in terms of Building (Planning) Regulation 3(3), the same principles apply.
- c) It is acknowledged that, in the case of peripheral beams in walls, it may be difficult to strictly adhere to the required minimum height of 2.3 m to the underside. Accordingly, where beams project internally (by not more than 150 mm) from the face of external walls, the minimum height of 2.3 m is not considered applicable and a height of 2 m is permissible.
- d) Similarly, the regulation is not meant to inhibit the provision of beams over doorways, which may, of course, be provided at the required door height.
- e) Although the minimum height applies generally to any part of any building used as an office or for habitation, it is recognised that the minimum height effective in staircases is 2 m and that beams across narrow corridors (where a doorway could have been provided) need only be at the appropriate door height. This is the 'notional doorway' situation.

3. It should be emphasised that 2.5 m is a **minimum height** and that for environmental reasons, especially in domestic buildings, a greater height would be preferable for the occupants.

4. This revised Practice Note replaces the one on detached and semi-detached buildings issued in May 1980 as it is now spent of effect.



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