

What will the Building Safety Bill mean for handovers?



The Building Safety Bill has been heralded by some as a golden opportunity to improve how buildings are designed. Housing secretary, Robert Jenrick described the bill as:

“**a significant milestone on our journey to fundamentally improving building safety and delivering real change that will keep people safer in their homes. I am calling on the industry to actively prepare for these changes now.**”

In this piece, we look at some of the salient points of the Building Safety Bill and what they mean for handovers.



What triggered the Building Safety Bill?

The Grenfell tragedy resulted in the largest loss of life in a residential fire since WWII. The subsequent inquiry led by Dame Judith Hackett exposed decades of systematic failings in building safety - especially a lack of accountability.

The Building Safety Bill was the response to this review. It aims to **'bring about the biggest change to building legislation in nearly 40 years.'**

How will the bill achieve this objective?

Initially:

- More stringent rules for all residential buildings that are either 18m+ in height or more than six storeys tall.

But the bill goes beyond only higher-risk buildings. All buildings will be covered (at least in part) by new rules.

Notable changes include:

- Introduction of a new national safety regulator: the Building Safety Regulator (BSR)
- Amendments to the Building Act 1984
- Increased powers to Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to improve Building Standards

Accountability

Perhaps most important to achieving the bill's objective is the focus on establishing direct accountability throughout the "life" of a building. This includes the design, construction and occupation phases.

This means the right people must have right information at right time to ensure the safety of applicable buildings.

In order to do that, contractors need to have a handover solution in place, before they've laid the first brick.

Duty holders could face severe penalties including fines and imprisonment if found in serious breach of their obligations.



The Golden Thread

You may have heard the term ‘the Golden Thread’ used in relation to the Building Safety Bill. For contractors, the Golden Thread is essentially synonymous with their existing duty to provide handover materials.

- **The Golden Thread:** Term used to describe flow of building safety information throughout a building’s lifetime.
- **Digital requirement:** This ‘Golden Thread’ is to be held digitally (there is no mention of hard copies anywhere!). If you still rely on outdated paper systems for your handover, now is the time to move to a digital handover system.

Gateways

The Building Safety Bill will impose a new ‘gateway’ regime. Projects will be subjected to a ‘HARD STOP’ if they fail to meet the required criteria set out for each gateway.

1. **Gateway One.** At this stage, developers will be required to submit a Fire Statement. The BSR will consider fire safety issues related to planning.
2. **Gateway Two is initiated prior to construction.** The BSR will assess the site and schedule repeat inspections to ensure that the project is progressing safely.
3. **Gateway Three takes place at completion.** It requires the duty holders:
 - a) To hand over the prescribed documents and information (the golden thread) to the Accountable Person (AP).
 - b) To submit to the BSR the prescribed documents and information on the final as-built building.

The crux of the bill for contractors

Although there are still many unknowns, (what rafts of secondary legislation will follow? How stringently will the BSR enforce the bill?) we can be certain there will be sweeping changes.

There will be a stronger onus than ever before to make handovers accurate and thorough.

In short,

IT'S NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT TO GET ON TOP OF THE HANDOVER PROCESS.

Digital handover systems



Digital, cloud-based handover systems provide contractors with the perfect platform to negotiate new regulations imposed by the Building Safety Bill. They improve efficiency, speed and safety throughout the whole lifecycle of a project, starting from the initial plans and lasting long after delivery.

Digital systems (unlike their outdated paper counterparts) cannot be lost or destroyed, and are easier to search, share and store. And don't forget - digital records are necessitated by the bill: they won't just be a convenient 'nice-to-have'; they'll be a statutory 'must-have'.

Finally, the best digital systems are designed to be agile and responsive, updating as regulations change. These automated updates will help contractors keep up to speed with new requirements and provide scheduled notifications to ensure projects maintain compliance.





Choose Zutec Handover

When it comes to preparing for the Building Safety Bill, here at Zutec, we believe that our Handover platform is the strongest proposition for a simple reason: it's the most intuitive, capable integrated platform for the full building life cycle. Integrating Zutec into your workflow is simple and, in turn, adapting to the raft of new measures imposed by the bill will be simple too.

With Zutec handover:

- Stay compliant as the platform updates with changes to legislation & regulations
- Create bespoke folder structures for your specific project to ensure you meet contractual & regulatory obligations
- Streamline & simplify the handover process, saving time and money
- Share folders simply & securely with colleagues and stakeholders
- Improve visibility & searchability of data & BIM objects for your construction team, the BSR & the AP
- Fulfil your duty to provide digital records to the BSR & AP
- Progress tracking, notifications & schedules make handover manageable throughout construction
- Achieve powerful visualisations of data – gain an accurate overview of your project & identify critical gaps in your handover records
- Manage projects of any size – from huge & iconic to small scale builds (& everything in between)
- Gain an expert partner – Zutec has been designing handover software for 20 years & knows how to make it work for both contractors & clients alike

Get ready for the new Building Safety Bill and manage every stage of your project lifecycle with Zutec Handover.

Find out more. Contact Zutec now.
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