

THE ASSOCIATION OF NOISE CONSULTANTS REGISTRATION SCHEME FOR PRE-COMPLETION TESTING

INTRODUCTION

Since the new Building Regulations, and their accompanying Approved Document were published in 2003, new and converted dwellings are required (except in certain circumstances) to be tested for sound insulation. Approved Document E (ADE) states that the ODPM (now CLG) regards members of the ANC registration scheme as suitably qualified to carry out pre-completion testing.



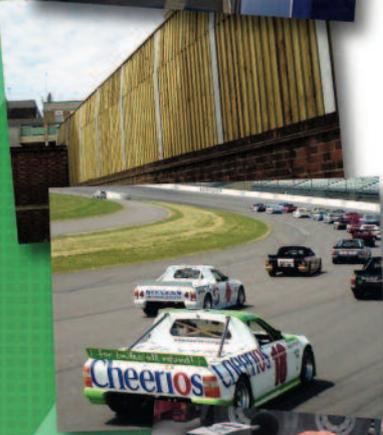
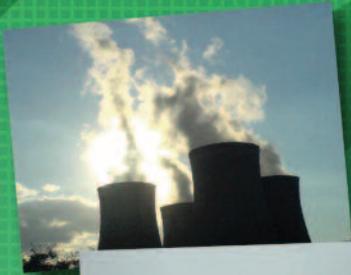
BACKGROUND TO REGISTRATION SCHEME

The Registration Scheme for pre completion testing (PCT) was started specifically for ANC members. Approved Document E (ADE) originally stated that people who carried out pre-completion testing should preferably be UKAS accredited. It was felt, however, that being a member of the ANC was a starting basis for being registered because for an organisation to be admitted to the ANC they need to convince the Association that their operation and technical ability is good. Access to the Registration Scheme is not automatic for members of the ANC, however, and there is a further stage of auditing prior to a member company being registered. The Scheme was created as a service to ANC members and a lot of voluntary time was spent developing the Scheme before it was launched. The ANC did not set up the Scheme to be a competitor to UKAS (some ANC members are also UKAS accredited), or a business venture.

THE REGISTRATION SCHEME

The Scheme registers the organisation subject to demonstration that the particular requirements of Approved Document E are being met over and above the basic ISO testing method and specific quality control measures being in place. The organisation has to be well set up with good filing practices as well as training, calibration and equipment care. The correct equipment and calculation method must be used.

In addition to the company being registered, there are approved testers in each organisation. We expect a tester to be at least a technician member of the IOA, and to have experience in carrying out these tests, or at least assisting with testing. We have paid examiners who look at each application to test, and each application is seen by two examiners. The Scheme asks for specific inclusions in the reports, those which are required by the ISO and by ADE, and although we do not insist that everyone's reports are the same, we need to know that they all



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contain the same information. We also ask that the final data is presented in the form suggested in the ISO.

The Registration Scheme only covers sound insulation measurements carried out to the relevant standard. Although most of those registered will have expertise in acoustic design, defect diagnosis and remedial advice, the Scheme itself only applies to the measurement and reporting of sound insulation tests. Once an organisation is registered, it can begin to carry out testing under the Scheme. An independent organisation logs the tests, puts the results in a database, and provides access to a secure server for Building Control Officers to check the test results. This is all done over the web, and the system works very well.

Each organisation registered on the Scheme is contacted annually by the secretariat and asked to provide the raw data and the report for a particular test which was carried out in the previous year, and which is selected randomly from the database. This is checked by an examiner and directions to change the operation or reporting of the tests are made if necessary. Once every 3 years, each organisation will have one of their tests witnessed by an examiner, and once again, comments and instructions can be issued as necessary.

BENEFITS

Pre-completion testing demonstrates that initial failure rates are now around 2.8% or less, which compares with 40% to 50% prior to the introduction of ADE (2003). Where failures are detected, remedial work is carried out, further improving overall performance.

Builders are forced to think about acoustic principles and better workmanship to avoid failures, due to the cost of remedial work and retesting.

Pre-completion testing, preferably with some 'expert' design input at the outset, is the only way in which satisfactory living conditions in converted property can be demonstrated.

The ANC has published a good practice guide to help test organisations with points which are not covered in the ISO Standards.

Because of the concentration and examination of the standards and test methods, the testing carried out by ANC members is consistent as far as we know from tester to tester.

The requirement for testers to be accredited or registered has raised the standard of testing.

We have a huge amount of empirical data going to the central database of measurements on various different types of construction.

To find out more about becoming a member of the ANC please visit our website (www.theanc.co.uk) or call 020 8253 4518

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