

G1 THE NATIONAL BUILDING CODE OF FINLAND

Housing Design

Regulations and Guidelines 2005

Ministry of the Environment Decree

on housing design

adopted in Helsinki on the 1st of October 2004

In accordance with the Ministry of the Environment decision, the following regulations and guidelines on housing design, applicable to construction, shall be enacted under Section 13 of the Land Use and Building Act (132/1999) adopted on the 5th of February 1999.

The regulations and guidelines have been notified in accordance with Directive 98/34/EC, amended 98/48/EC.

This Decree shall enter into force on the 1st of March 2005 and it shall reverse the Ministry of the Environment decision of the 17th of December 1993 on housing design (G1). However, previous regulations and instructions may be applied to permit applications initiated before this Decree entered into force.

In Helsinki on the 1st of October 2004

Minister Jan-Erik Enestam

Director General Jouni J. Särkijärvi

G1 MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT, Department of Housing and Building

THE NATIONAL BUILDING CODE OF FINLAND

Housing Design

REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES 2005

CONTENTS

1 GENERAL

- 1.1 Objectives of adaptation

2 HABITABLE ROOM

- 2.1 Minimum size and shape
- 2.2 Minimum height
- 2.3 Windows
- 2.4 Relationship to the surrounding buildings and to the environment
- 2.5 Relationship of the floor to the ground

3 APARTMENT

- 3.1 Minimum size
- 3.2 Facilities and fittings
- 3.3 Doors and passages

4 BUILDINGS, SITES AND BUILDING PLOTS

- 4.1 Floor height
- 4.2 Routes
- 4.3 Other facilities, structures and areas

LEGEND

Regulations in this column in this large font size are binding.

Guidelines in the right column in a small font size contain approved solutions.

Explanations in the right column in italics provide further information and contain references to statutes, regulations and instructions.

1

GENERAL

Section 117(3) of the Land Use and Building Act

A building must conform with its purpose and be capable of being repaired, maintained and altered, and, in so far as its use requires, also be suitable for people whose capacity to move or function is limited.

Section 51(1 and 2) of the Land Use and Building Decree:

It is specially important that the location of a residential building and the arrangement of its spaces and other planning of dwellings take environmental factors and natural circumstances into account. Sufficient natural light shall be provided for residential rooms.

Space intended for residential use shall be fit for the purpose, pleasant and comfortable. The design of dwellings shall promote the functionality and suitability of residential space for different and changing residential needs.

Section 52(1) of the Land Use and Building Decree:

- - -The requirements for dwelling design concerning residential rooms shall be observed in the design of work space, as appropriate. - - -

Section 53(2) of the Land Use and Building Decree:

Taking into account its design and the number of storeys and other circumstances, a residential building and associated spaces shall meet the requirements for accessibility in building.

Section 125(4) of the Land Use and Building Act:

- - - Alteration of intended use requiring a permit includes altering a holiday home so that it is fit for permanent residence. - - -

1.1 Objectives of adaptation

1.1.1 Regulation

Regulations and guidelines concern residential buildings as well as sites and building plots for these. Regulations and guidelines also concern apartments and habitable rooms in other buildings as well as other spaces and areas serving these, used for housing.

Regulations and guidelines shall concern the change of intended use of a holiday home to a permanent residence.

Explanation

It is possible to build a holiday home, only intended for summer use, deviating from the statutes imposed on residential buildings concerning, for instance, energy economy.

In these regulations and instructions, a walking frame with wheels shall refer to a walking aid with four or three wheels (also the terms rollator and wheeled walker are used).

In these regulations and guidelines references made to a toilet shall also concern toilet and washroom facilities, an earth closet and a closet based on a chemical or similar system.

These regulations and instructions shall also concern buildings intended for all-year use in accommodation business.

Guidelines

A habitable room is a room primarily intended to be used constantly for living. For instance, a hall, corridor, bathroom or any such room is not regarded as a habitable room.

A kitchen is a habitable room primarily intended for food preparation and eating. An apartment may also have another space intended for food preparation instead of a kitchen.

A multi-storey apartment block is a residential building with at least two storeys, consisting of several apartments where facilities in different apartments are one on top of the other.

In this document a one-family house refers to other than multi-storey houses, i.e. detached, semi-detached and terraced houses.

A net room area is an area of a room where the wall surfaces surrounding the room or their given extension are the boundaries.

A net floor area is an area defined on one hand by the wall surfaces surrounding the apartment and on the other hand by the surfaces of load-bearing walls inside the apartment and the surfaces on the apartment side of other structural elements necessary in a building.

A room height is the vertical dimension from the floor surface of a room to its ceiling surface.

A floor height is the vertical distance of two floor surfaces one upon the other.

2

HABITABLE ROOM

2.1 Minimum size and shape

2.1.1 Regulation

The size and shape of a habitable room should be appropriate taking into account the intended use of the room and its furnishability. However, the minimum net room area of a habitable room should always be 7 m².

A space lower than 1600 mm is not included in the net room area.

2.2 Minimum height

2.2.1 Regulation

The minimum room height of a habitable room should be 2500 mm. The said minimum height in a one-family house is 2400 mm. The room height of a small part in a habitable room may be even less than that referred to previously, however, not below 2200 mm.

If the ceiling of a room deviates from the horizontal, the room height is determined as an average height of the net room area.

2.3 Windows

2.3.1 Regulation

A habitable room should have a window with an opening of at least 1/10 of the net room area. The location and any other arrangement of the window should be appropriate in respect of light and a pleasant environment. The window in a room or a part of the window should be openable.

A window in a habitable room should be in direct contact with the open air. However, natural light to some of the habitable rooms in an apartment may be arranged through another space defined by a luminous cover or some other light penetrating building element.

2.4 Relationship to the surrounding buildings and to the environment

2.4.1 Regulation

The minimum distance to the opposite building in front of the main window of a habitable room in the same or neighbouring property should be equal to the height of the opposite building measured from the floor level of a room unless otherwise provided by the town plan. However, there should be up to a distance of at least 8 metres of unbuilt space in front of the main window. The said distance for a one-family house on a site or building plot may be even less taking into account the requirements for a pleasant living environment.

2.4.2 Regulation

The effect of cardinal points and of possible disturbances in the environment as well as the view from the windows should be taken into account in the design of habitable rooms.

Guidelines

A habitable room needs direct sunlight in proportion to its intended use. Views from the window of a habitable room are significant in respect of a pleasant living environment.

2.5 Relationship of the floor to the ground

2.5.1 Regulation

The floor of a habitable room should be above the ground where the wall with the main window is. However, some of the habitable rooms in an apartment may be, in the said respect, located below the ground to a minor extent.

3

APARTMENT

3.1 Minimum size

3.1.1 Regulation

The minimum net floor area of an apartment should be 20 m².

3.2 Facilities and fittings

3.2.1 Regulation

The facilities and the floor plan of an apartment should be appropriate in respect of the living environment taking into account the intended occupancy, circulation areas in dwellings and the changes in operational needs. Apartments should have enough space for resting, pastime and leisure activities, eating and cooking, bathing as well as for any necessary maintenance and storage connected with living.

There should be appropriate facilities for clothes maintenance and storage of personal property as well as for storage of bicycles, prams and outdoor recreational equipment in apartments or for the use of the apartments.

3.2.2 Regulation

The facilities should be provided with fittings, equipment and technical installations required by their use. However, apartments should always have a toilet and basic equipment sufficient for taking care of personal hygiene and for cooking.

3.2.3 Regulation

In apartments in multi-storey blocks where access requires a lift, pursuant to paragraph 4.2.1, it must also be possible to provide toilet and washroom facilities for users of wheelchairs and walking frames with wheels. Circulation areas in dwellings should be suitable for their purpose taking also into account the use suitable for disabled people.

Explanation

The Decree concerning accessible building (RakMk F1) shall provide for the dimensions of toilet and washroom facilities suitable for disabled people in apartments.

3.3 Doors and passages

3.3.1 Regulation

The minimum clear width of doors and passages, leading from a front door of an apartment to habitable rooms and to any other necessary facilities used for living, should be 800 mm. The same applies to doors and passages leading to any necessary facilities in a building and garden area used for living.

Guidelines

Any other necessary facilities used for living, referred to herein, include a toilet, a washroom and a sauna in the dwelling and in multi-storey blocks they include storage facilities for personal property, prams and outdoor recreational equipment, a communal laundry and a communal sauna as well as any other facilities designed for the use of residents in the property.

Here the clear width of a door refers to the actual width of a passage also in respect of an opened door panel.

4

BUILDINGS, SITES AND BUILDING PLOTS

4.1 Floor height

4.1.1 Regulation

The minimum floor height in a multi-storey block is 3000 mm.

4.2 Routes

4.2.1 Regulation

In multi-storey blocks where the access to apartments is on the third floor or higher including the entrance storey level, the stair route to apartments must be provided with a lift suitable for users of wheelchairs and walking frames with wheels. If the access to a building is between the storey levels, the lower of these is regarded as the entrance storey level. In addition, the lift route must extend to the attic and to the cellar if these have any facilities used for living.

Guidelines

A requirement concerning accessible entrance to service facilities may also be met with a building easement which gives the right for the facilities to be used in another property located nearby.

Necessary routes from the boundary of a site of a multi-storey block or of a building plot as well as from a parking space designed for disabled people leading to a building and also leading to a playground and to an area designed for recreation and any other routes used for living must be suitable for disabled people.

A route and an entrance leading to a dwelling on the ground level from the boundary of a site of a one-family house or of a building plot as well as from a parking space are also constructed to suit disabled people if it is possible when taking into account the shape of the terrain and the differences in level.

Explanation

The Decree on accessible building (RakMk F1) provides for routes suitable for disabled people as well as for lifts and ramps suitable for arrangements of differences in level.

4.2.2 Regulation

Stairs and ramps leading to apartments and to the necessary facilities used for living should be easy of access and provided with the necessary railings and handrails. The same applies to the necessary external routes on a site or building plot. Stairs between the storey levels should be covered. In addition, in multi-storey blocks without a lift, the stairs between the storey levels should receive enough natural light, and the stairs should have at least one half landing between the landings.

Explanation

The Decree on operational safety of buildings (RakMk F2) provides for ramps, stairs, railings and handrails as well as for any other operational safety of buildings.

4.2.3 Regulation

Staircases and landings must be dimensioned so that carrying people and goods may be arranged without undue difficulties. Carrying of goods may also be arranged with a lift which is sufficiently spacious for this purpose.

It must also be possible to carry people via a staircase in case the lift is not in use.

4.3 Other facilities, structures and areas

Section 155(1) of the Land Use and Building Act:

Adequate outdoor areas must be provided in connection with residential buildings for play areas and areas for the enjoyment of residents. They must be separated safely from areas reserved for traffic. When estimating the adequacy of the areas, the corresponding areas available in the vicinity and the joint arrangements of properties may also be taken into account.

Section 56 of the Land Use and Building Decree:

As separately prescribed on the matter, the type of activities in a building and possible location of recovery receptacles must be taken into account when premises and structures are provided for the waste management of a property. If needed, such facilities and structures shall be enclosed or otherwise protected to prevent the risk of fire or environmental hazard.

4.3.1 Regulation

There should be a convenient and safe access from the dwellings to the playground and to the facilities and areas designed for recreation. Parking spaces, vehicle access to the parking spaces, location of waste management facilities and driving maintenance vehicles in the courtyard must be arranged so that any disturbance on residents is insignificant.