



4.8.5 Access to manual controls

The location of a manual control device can have a significant effect on both the ease of operation of the device and safety in use. Positions that are inaccessible present a greater risk of accident when bending or reaching.

Any control that is intended for operation by the occupants of a building should be installed in position that allows safe and convenient use. This guidance is applicable to manual controls to openable ventilators, including windows and rooflights and to controls and outlets of electrical fixtures located on a wall or other vertical surface. Unless incorporating a restrictor or other protective device for safety reasons, controls should be operable with one hand.

Windows, rooflights and ventilators

An openable window or rooflight, that provides natural ventilation to meet standard 3.14, should have controls for opening, positioned at least 350 mm from any internal corner, projecting wall or similar obstruction and at a height of:

A : not more than 1.7 m above floor level, where access to controls is unobstructed; or

B : not more than 1.5 m above floor level, where access to controls is limited by a fixed obstruction of not more than 900 mm high which projects not more than 600 mm in front of the position of the controls, such as a kitchen base unit. Where obstruction is greater, a remote means of opening, in an unobstructed location, should be provided; or

C : not more than 1.2 m above floor level, in an unobstructed location, within an enhanced apartment or within accessible sanitary accommodation not provided with mechanical ventilation.

The above guidance does not apply to windows or rooflights openable only for cleaning or maintenance purposes or that are controlled by an automatic system, or to trickle ventilators.

Outlets and controls of electrical fixtures and systems should be positioned at least 350 mm from any internal corner, projecting wall or similar obstruction and, unless the need for a higher location can be demonstrated, not more than 1.2 m above floor level. This would include fixtures such as sockets, switches, fire alarm call points and timer controls or programmers. Within this height range:

A : light switches should be positioned at a height of between 900 mm and 1.1 m above floor level.

B : standard switched or unswitched socket outlets and outlets for other services such as telephone or television should be positioned at least 400 mm above floor level. Above an obstruction, such as a worktop, fixtures should be at least 150 mm above the projecting surface.

Where socket outlets are concealed, such as to the rear of white goods in a kitchen, separate switching should be provided in an accessible position, to allow appliances to be isolated.

