

The habitability or first occupation certificate.

Every building in Spain destined to residential use needs a habitability certificate. For new builds this certificate is required by utility companies in order to connect their services.

The habitability certificate ensures that a building has been built according to certain requirements or criteria, such as minimum surface area, ventilation and light, interior room sizes, staircases, green areas/patios and parking places.

In the Valencia region of Spain these regulations are summarized under two laws. The original one being HD-91 from 1991, updated in 2009 by DC-09.

The habitability certificate is provided by the local council. For new builds, the project manager provides a final assessment certifying that the works have been done according to the current habitability regulations. The local council then inspect the works to check the validity of the assessment before granting the certificate.

The length of time a habitability certificate is valid for depends on the regulations from each town council, but generally for buildings with certificates issued before 2004, they are valid for ten years. For certificates issued between 2004 and 2013, the validity is for fifteen years and for those after 2013, twenty-five years.

When the certificate expires a second habitability certificate is required. When a property is sold a valid certificate is required. Should the property be refurbished or extended it is essential the works meet current habitability regulations and as such an architect assesses and certifies that regulations have been met.

Again, the local council inspects the building before granting the second habitability certificate.

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