

Prescott Aims to End 'Aerial Blight'

Satellite dishes may be very popular, but few if any would argue that they are beautiful. In a bid to square the circle between the negative visual impact of satellite dishes and other antennae and the need for people to have access to digital services, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has issued planning guidelines on the siting of aerials and satellite dishes. These are intended to comply with the 'neutrality of technology' required by the Communications Act 2003. The regulations will apply to all forms of receiving apparatus.

The present guidelines require that an antenna is sited in such a way as to minimise the impact on the external appearance of the building. This requirement will remain. The additional requirements for dwellings and buildings under 15m in height are:

- up to two antennae are permitted, the larger of which shall not exceed 100cm in any direction and 35 litres in cubic capacity;
- the maximum size for the second (smaller) antenna is 60cm in any linear direction and 35 litres cubic capacity;
- antennae mounted on chimneys are restricted to the smaller of the above sizes. If there is a chimney, the antenna must not rise above it and must not in any event rise more than 60cm above the roof line; and
- if the property has no chimney, the antenna should not rise above the roof line.

The regulations are different for buildings in conservation areas and National Parks, buildings taller than 15 metres, and those located in areas of outstanding natural beauty. Listed buildings continue to require planning consent for the siting of an aerial.