Housing Rights

**https://www.housingrights.org.uk/landlords/getting-started-landlord/certificates-and-safety-checks**

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# Certificates and safety checks

This information is for private landlords of properties in Northern Ireland.

If you are a tenant, you can find advice here.

If you are a landlord or letting agent in Northern Ireland seeking advice, you can:

- send a message to Landlord Advice, or
- call 028 90 245 640 (Option 1)

Your property must meet fitness and safety standards. Keep your records up to date to show that your property meets these standards.

This page explains the certificates and safety checks you may need.

## Fitness certificate

If your property was built before 1945, you must apply for a fitness certificate to prove it meets these standards, unless:

- the Housing Executive gave you a renovation grant within the last 10 years, or
- your property is a registered or licensed house in multiple occupation (HMO)

In these cases, your property is a ‘prescribed dwelling’ and you do not need a fitness certificate.

To get a fitness certificate, apply to your local environmental health department for a fitness inspection. The law says you must do this within 28 days of starting a

tenancy.

### Fitness inspection

An environmental health officer will check the property to make sure it meets basic fitness standards.

If the property passes the inspection, the officer issues a certificate of fitness.

If the property fails the inspection, you will:

- receive a notice of refusal
- be unable to charge the full amount of rent
- need to carry out repairs to meet fitness standards

After you finish the repairs, you can apply for re-inspection.

## Gas safety record

If your property has any gas appliances, you are legally required to:

- maintain these appliances and fittings
- get them inspected every year by a Gas Safe registered engineer
- give tenants a copy of the gas safety record within 28 days of starting a new tenancy
- keep the gas safety record (and records of any gas-related works) for at least two years

You must have a valid gas safety record. Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) can prosecute landlords who do not meet gas safety standards.

If the boiler in your property is new, a gas safety check is not required until 12 months after its installation date. However, HSENI Guidance states it is good practice that every newly installed gas boiler should be issued with a safety certificate after installation.

### Carbon monoxide detectors

If your property is a HMO, you must fit a carbon monoxide detector in any room with a fuel-burning appliance.

From 1 September 2024 non-HMO properties must have carbon monoxide alarms.

A carbon monoxide detector should be installed in all rooms that have:

- a gas boiler
- a gas or wood-burning stove
- an oil-burning heater
- an open fire

Make sure your tenants know where the detectors are, how to use them and what to do in an emergency.

## Fire safety responsibilities for landlords

If your property is a HMO, you must provide specific fire safety equipment.

The law has changed for smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarms in private rentals in Northern Ireland.

These new regulations mean that landlords must install and keep in working order smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarms in all properties they rent out to tenants.

You must do this by:

- 1 September 2024 for all new private tenancies granted on or after this date
- 1 December 2024 for existing tenancies granted before 1 September

The Department for Communities has produced Guidance for landlords to explain these requirements.

**Your responsibilities**

The new regulations mean that landlords must ensure they install a smoke alarm in:

- the room most frequently used by tenants for example, the main living room
- every circulation space (hall, stairs, landing) on each floor

If fitting a smoke alarm would not be practical because it is too close to an open fireplace, then you may fit a heat alarm instead.

If the main living room is an open-plan living room and kitchen area, you may install a heat alarm instead of a smoke alarm, provided the heat alarm is installed in a position no more than 7.5 metres from any point in the room.

Landlords must install a carbon monoxide alarm in:

- any room or circulation space which contains a fixed appliance (excluding gas cookers /gas ovens) where any fuel is burnt for example, a boiler, fire, heater or stove
- any room a flue from a fixed appliance or a chimney from an in use fireplace passes through

You must install a heat alarm in:

- each kitchen

Landlords must repair or replace any faulty alarms in the property. All alarms installed in the property must be marked or referenced as British Standard compliant.

You must replace all alarms before the manufacturer’s specified date of expiry.

**Tenant responsibilities**

Tenants should tell their landlords if any alarms become faulty as soon as possible.

Tenants should take proper care of the alarms. They must not tamper with them and are responsible for any damage they willfully cause.

Tenants should allow access to landlords so you can install and maintain these alarms.

**Requirements for alarms**

You must ensure that:

- smoke and heat alarms are installed and maintained in accordance with the British Standard and ensure that they are interlinked
- carbon monoxide alarms are installed and maintained in accordance with the British Standard but do not need to be interlinked.
- installed alarms are either hard-wired or battery sealed, or a combination of both. Note that if an alarm is hard-wired but has a back-up battery to account for power cuts, the back-up battery does not need to be sealed.

**British Standards**

Below are links for help with the British Standards

**Smoke and Heat Alarms**

**Carbon Monoxide Alarms**

Any furniture you provide must have a label to show that it meets fire safety standards. These standards only apply to furniture included in a tenancy after 1993.

## Energy performance certificate (EPC)

Before marketing your property, you must have a valid energy performance certificate (EPC). The law says you must show any prospective tenants a copy of the EPC so they can see how energy efficient the property is.

First, check if your property has a valid EPC before applying for a new one. Failing to comply with these regulations can lead to prosecution and a fine.

## Electrical safety requirements for landlords

From 1 April 2025, you must ensure the safety of all electrical installations in your property. This applies even if you use an agent to manage the property.  It also applies to landlords of houses in multiple occupation.

The Department for Communities has produced **guidance** for landlords to explain these requirements.

You must get an electrician to inspect the electrical installations at least every five years.

The new rules apply:

- on 1 April 2025 for all new private tenancies granted on or after this date
- on 1 December 2025, for existing tenancies granted before 1 April 2025

This means that, as of 1 December 2025, all private tenancies must meet this new standard.

The local council may take action against you if:

- you do not have an inspection carried out or
- you do not repair any electrical faults

**What is a hardwired electrical installation?**

The inspection only relates to hardwired electrical installations, such as:

- fuse boxes
- switches
- sockets
- light fittings
- any visible wiring
- any parts of the property where there is electrical equipment (for example, a loft that has a supply of renewable energy)

The electrician must also look at some fixed electrical equipment. For example:

- hardwired smoke and fire detectors
- electric showers and over/under-sink water heaters
- fixed electrical heating equipment, such as storage or panel heaters
- boilers and other heat-producing equipment

Plugged-in appliances, such as cookers, fridges, and TVs, are not considered as part of the inspection.

**Certificates and paperwork**

After the inspection, the electrician will produce an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR).

The report will explain the results and whether you need to do any work to improve safety. If this is the case, you must do the repairs within 28 days or sooner if required.

**Your responsibilities as a landlord**

As a landlord you:

- must have an inspection carried out at least every five years or earlier if required
- should investigate any concerns raised by your tenant as soon as possible
- must complete any remedial works highlighted in the report within 28 days

- must provide your tenant with a copy of the report within 28 days of the inspection and meet any other requirements for providing the report.

**Failure to comply**

If you fail to have an inspection carried out or fail to do repair work, the local council may be able to prosecute or fine you.

However, you will not breach the new requirements if your tenant does not allow access for the inspection or works to be carried out. You must be able to show that you have taken reasonable steps to get access. You should keep a record of any communication you had with the tenant when trying to gain access.

**Contact Landlord Advice** if you need further information on this.

Electrical Safety First has an electrical safety checklist for landlords for checking electrical systems and appliances between tenancies.

## More advice

- Rental property standards
- Landlord registration