

Property Condition Guidance for Single Household Properties

This guidance note is for landlords, agents, and property licence holders, to help them understand their responsibilities. It sets the legal expectations to be met and maintained. It is general advice to help you operate your property safely and professionally. Any [blue underlined](#) text contains a link to more information.

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As a landlord, agent, or property licence holder, you must:

- Keep your rented properties safe, secure, and free from health hazards.
- Make sure all [gas equipment](#) and [electrical equipment](#) is safely installed and maintained.
- Ensure there are adequate fire safety measures.
- Ensure it is not overcrowded.
- Provide a [Energy Performance Certificate \(EPC\)](#) for the property.
- Protect your [tenant's deposit in a government-approved scheme](#).
- Check your tenant has the [right to rent your property](#) (if it's in England).

- Give your tenant a copy of the '[How to rent checklist](#)' when they start renting from you (you can give this by hand, email, or post it to them).

All Internal Rooms

- ✓ Properties should be free from any form of damp or mould.
- ✓ Properties should be free from any pest infestation.
- ✓ The property should not be overcrowded. **Check your property licence conditions for maximum occupancy in your property.** The living area, kitchen, and bathroom should all be an adequate size for the household. Bedroom room sizes are as follows:
 - Rooms less than 4.6m² cannot be used for sleeping.
 - Rooms between 4.6 - 6.5m² are only suitable for one child under 10 years.
 - Rooms between 6.5 – 8.3m² are suitable for one adult person.
 - Rooms 8.3 – 10.1m² are suitable for two children, or an adult plus an under 10-year-old.
 - Rooms over 10.2m² can be used for 2 adult people.
- ✓ In addition to the bedrooms, there must also be separate living area and recreation space of an adequate size for the household or potential household.
- ✓ There should be adequate lighting, including fittings for electrical artificial light.
- ✓ All habitable rooms (Bedrooms & Living Rooms) shall have an adequate level of natural lighting, provided via a clear glazed window, or a combination of windows and/or external door(s). The glazed area is to be equivalent to at least 1/10th (10%) of the floor area and will extend to a point 1.75m above floor level where ceilings are in the eaves of the roof. The window shall be positioned so that the light from the window is able to illuminate most of the room.
- ✓ All habitable rooms (Bedrooms & Living Rooms) shall be ventilated directly to the external air by an openable window that has an openable area not less than 1/20th (5%) of the floor area of that room.
- ✓ Floor surfaces and coverings throughout the property should be even, well fitted, and in good repair, to prevent trip hazards.
- ✓ Walls and ceilings should be in good repair with no signs of structural cracks, bulging, damp, or mould.
- ✓ Ceilings should ideally be 2.3m. If there is low headroom, for example, to doors or under beams, precautions must be in place to prevent collisions and injury.

Fire Safety

- ✓ There must be a working smoke alarm, fitted according to manufacturers' instructions, on each level of the premises. Ideally placed near stairwells and reception rooms. The

smoke alarms should be mains wired and interlinked, but battery-operated ones are acceptable in most circumstances, subject to the building's fire risk assessment.

- ✓ The entry and exit route at your property shall **NOT** be through a kitchen. Kitchens are rooms with high fire risk due to cooking activities. It is the place house fires are most likely to start.
- ✓ Your tenants should be able escape out of your property without going through a kitchen, out of a window, or needing to find a key to open a door.
- ✓ Visit the London Fire Brigade website for more information- www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/property-management/landlord-s-responsibilities/private-rented-sector-landlords/

Bathroom and Kitchen

- ✓ The bathroom and kitchen should be capable of being maintained in a hygienic condition. Floors should be smooth, impervious, hygienic, and cleanable, and all internal surfaces (walls, ceilings etc.), should be smooth, even, and free from cracks and/or crevices which may allow entry, or give harbourage, to pests.
- ✓ The size and layout of the kitchen and bathroom should allow it to be used without risk of injury. The room should be large enough for the number of occupants in the household to use safely. You should check for and reduce collision or entrapment hazards caused by doors and cupboards.
- ✓ There should be adequate ventilation, which vent to the outside, to the kitchen and bathroom, ideally this shall be mechanical ventilation, and not an air recirculating fan type. Mechanical ventilation must be fitted if there are any signs of damp or mould in a property.
- ✓ All rooms with mechanical ventilation should be compliant with Part F of the Building Regulations. Such an installation shall be fitted with an adequate overrun. In the case of bathrooms, this can be connected to the lighting circuit of the room; however, we recommend humidistat style fans, to reduce the chance of tenants turning extractor fans off due to noise disturbance, thus limiting ventilation.
- ✓ Bathroom and kitchen light fittings should have an IP rating of 44 or higher, depending on what area or "zone" they are fitted in. IP stands for "Ingress Protection." It indicates the protection level against liquids and solids. Speak to your electrician if you are unsure.
- ✓ There should be hot and cold water to each sink, basin, and bath/shower. Water storage tanks should store hot water between 60°C to 65°C to prevent legionella growth in the pipes www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires/legionella-landlords-responsibilities.htm.

- ✓ Hot water delivered to taps should not be so hot it is scalding i.e. above 60°C. Ideally, hot water should be no more than 60°C in kitchens, 41°C for handbasins and 46°C for baths.
- ✓ Water supply pipes and wastewater drains must be in good repair with no leaks.
- ✓ Seals between a sink, a drainer, a worktop, a basin, bath, or shower and the wall should be free from mould, watertight, entire, and in good condition.
- ✓ Kitchen facilities should be laid out so food can be prepared and cooked safely and hygienically. Cooking facilities should be in good repair, and there should be adequate food storage provision and worktops, a sink, and a draining board. Cupboards and shelves should be securely fixed.
- ✓ There should be at least one cold water main tap in the kitchen, for drawing drinking water, and it should have an adequate water pressure.
- ✓ Bathroom facilities should be in good repair and capable of being easily cleaned. Baths and showers should be stable, securely fitted, and strong enough to safely take the weight of the user. Baths should have good slip resistance and have a handle or grab rail. There should be sufficient toilets, wash hand basins, and baths/showers for the number of occupants. A wash hand basin should be in the room, where the toilet is where the WC is separate to the bathroom.
- ✓ The bathroom/WC room should have a door capable of being locked from the inside, and ideally it should be openable from the outside in a health emergency.
- ✓ There should not be any electrical sockets in bathrooms, other than shaver sockets.

Stairs

- ✓ Ideally the stair tread (going) should be no less than 220mm in depth and height (rise) of each step should be no less than 150mm. The stairs should be no less than 780mm wide, and the angle (pitch) of the stairs should be no steeper than 42°.
- ✓ Doors should not open directly onto stairs.
- ✓ Stair coverings should have good friction quality and be installed evenly, securely, and correctly to prevent slips, trips, and falls.
- ✓ There should be guarding, a balustrade, or a handrail between 900mm and 1000mm above the stair treads, which must be securely fixed, and constructed to prevent climbing.
- ✓ Any guarding or balustrade should be designed so a 100mm sphere cannot pass through any opening.

Electrics

- ✓ Since June 2020, Landlords are required by law to have the electrical installation/s in their properties inspected and tested by a person who is qualified and competent, at

an interval of at least every 5 years. The qualified Electrician will usually issue an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR).

- ✓ If a property is newly built, or has been completely rewired, then the Electrician should issue an Electrical Installation Certificate known as an EIC.
- ✓ A copy of the EICR or EIC should be kept, as the Council can request to see this at any time, and which must be produced within 7 days of request.
- ✓ If the EICR shows that remedial work or further investigation is required, this work must be completed within a maximum of 28 days, or a shorter period if specified in the EICR. Landlords must then provide written confirmation that the work has been conducted to both their tenant and the local authority within 28 days.
- ✓ Light switches and plug sockets should be installed in safe positions, so they are not easily damaged and can be operated easily. New installations of sockets or switches cannot be within 300mm of the cooker, hob or sink, and existing sockets or switches cannot be within 100mm of the cooker/hob and 300mm of the sink.
- ✓ Electrical wiring should be secured in a safe position, so it is not easily damaged or become a cause of tripping or an electrocution hazard.
- ✓ No socket outlets shall be installed in bathrooms or W.C.s unless they are positioned and installed in compliance with the latest version of BS 7671 (IET Wiring Regulations). *(Socket-outlets, other than SELV socket-outlets and shaver supply units complying with BS EN 61558-2-5, are prohibited within 3 metres (m) horizontally of the boundary of zone 1. All 230V socket-outlets in a bathroom must be installed a minimum 3m from the edge of the bath or shower. Please refer to BS 7671 (IET Wiring Regulations) and seek a qualified Electrician's advice.)*
- ✓ There should be enough electrical sockets to prevent the need for trailing extension cables and overloaded circuits.
- ✓ Most fires related to e-bikes and e-scooter battery charging have happened in homes. You are recommended to advise your tenants and occupiers how to reduce the risk of fire when they charge an e-bike or e-scooter. Specifically,
 - They should allow lithium, or similar types of battery, to cool down before attempting to re-charge them.
 - Batteries should always be charged on hard, flat, non-flammable surface where heat can dissipate.
 - Do not use or attempt to charge a damaged battery. They should be disposed of as soon as possible. Please visit www.eastlondonwaste.gov.uk for more details on how to do so safely.
 - Batteries should also never be exposed to extremes of temperature.
 - Watch for warning signs that your battery might be failing and becoming a fire risk.
 - Always follow manufacturers' instructions when charging.

- You should always unplug your charger once it has finished charging.
- Always use the correct charger for your batteries and buy replacements from a reputable seller.
- Make sure your battery and charger meet UK safety standards.
- Where it is appropriate to charge batteries
- Never allow escape routes to be blocked with e-bikes or e-scooters.
- Store and charge away from exits and emergency routes.
- Never leave a charging scooter or e-bike unattended on charge whilst you are asleep.
- Make sure you and your family have an escape plan in place in the event of a fire.
- Fit a smoke alarm to any area where batteries are likely to be charged.

Gas

- ✓ Since October 1998, landlords and similar have a legal duty to make sure all gas appliances, fittings, chimneys, and flues are safe and working efficiently. If there are gas appliances installed in the property, there are three main legal responsibilities:
- ✓ **1) Gas safety checks** – To ensure tenants' safety, all gas appliances and flues need to have an annual gas safety check. This must be conducted by a suitably qualified 'Gas Safe' registered engineer (www.gassaferegister.co.uk).
- ✓ You will be given a Landlord Gas Safety Record (LGSR) with details of all the checks conducted.
- ✓ **2) Keep Documentation** – Following the annual gas safety check and receipt of the Landlord Gas Safety Record, tenants must be provided with a copy of this record. By law, a copy of the Landlord Gas Safety Record should be given to current tenants within 28 days of the gas safety check – and for new tenants, this must be provided at the start of the tenancy. The Council can also request to see the record at any time.
- ✓ **3) Maintenance** – Landlords need to ensure all gas pipework, appliances, chimneys, and flues are kept in a safe condition. Check the gas appliances' manufacturer guidelines to find out how often a service is recommended. If you have not got access to these, we recommend an annual service – unless your Gas Safe registered engineer suggests an alternative frequency of inspection.
- ✓ Installation pipework is not covered by the annual gas safety check, but both the Gas Safe Register, and the HSE, recommend that when a safety check is requested, the Gas Safe registered engineer is asked to:
 - Test for tightness on the whole gas system, including the installation pipework.
 - Visually examine the pipework (as far as is reasonably practicable)

- ✓ There is no formal requirement to keep gas maintenance records, however, to show pipework, appliances, and flues have been regularly maintained and required repairs completed It is strongly recommended that maintenance records are kept.
- ✓ [From October 2022, Landlords must ensure a carbon monoxide alarm is equipped in any room used as living accommodation which contains a 'fixed combustion appliance' \(excluding gas cookers\).](#) A fixed combustion appliance is a machine powered by gas, oil, coal, wood, etc., for example, a gas boiler, an oil powered boiler, or a log-burning stove.

Heating

- ✓ Landlords must ensure the property has adequate, fixed heating. Its temperature should be controllable by the occupants, it shall be installed safely, and capable of maintaining an indoor temperature of 21°C.
- ✓ [Central heating systems, such as boilers and heat pumps, should as a minimum include a programmer \(time control\), at least one room thermostat and, if you have radiators, they should have thermostatic radiator valves \(TRVs\). Systems with a hot water cylinder should also include a cylinder thermostat. Electric heaters should have a controllable thermostat and a programmer \(time control\).](#)
- ✓ Radiators of any type must be fixed to an appropriate wall. Freestanding portable heaters/radiators are not acceptable.
- ✓ An electric wall socket/fused spur should be provided for the exclusive use of each electrical heater.
- ✓ The use of portable paraffin, electric fans, or liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) (bottled gas) heaters is unacceptable under any circumstances, whether provided by the landlord, or the tenant. If an additional source of heating is required by a tenant this can be provided by an oil filled radiator where necessary.

Ventilation and Insulation

- ✓ [In April 2020, the Domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard \(MEES\) Regulations required landlords to obtain an Energy Performance Certificate \(EPC\).](#)
- ✓ The MEES Regulations set a minimum energy efficiency level for domestic private rented properties. Landlords cannot let, or continue to rent, properties if they have an EPC rating **below 'E'**, unless they have registered a valid exemption in place (<https://prsregister.beis.gov.uk/>).
- ✓ Landlords must provide the tenant with a copy of EPC at the start of the tenancy. Failure to do so will mean a landlord cannot serve a valid eviction notice (Section 21).
- ✓ Windows and doors should be in good condition, thermally efficient and without blown or cracked panes or draughts (except trickle ventilation).

- ✓ Undertake checks to ensure there is an adequate level of property. The EPC will show what further measures are possible to improve the rating.
- ✓ All bedrooms and habitable rooms should have adequate direct ventilation to the external of the building, through an openable window of a size of 1/20th of the floor area of the room.
- ✓ To prevent dampness and mould growth in your property, kitchens and bathrooms should have mechanical ventilation. Mechanical ventilation must be fitted if there are any signs of damp or mould in a property. The fans should vent the moist air to the external and not be a recirculating fan type.
- ✓ Excessively hot surfaces such as radiators and hot water pipework should be checked for and where possible they should be enclosed to reduce risk of burns or accidents.

Windows, Doors, and Lighting

- ✓ Windows and doors should be maintained in good repair. All glass in doors, low windows, and other vulnerable locations should be safety glass in compliance with BS EN 12600. If not possible, they should be adequately protected and/or boarded over.
- ✓ For all windows above the ground floor, where there is a risk of injury from a fall and the windowsill is less than 1.2 metres, there should be window restrictor devices restrict the distance a window can be opened to 100mm. Any window restrictor should be easy to over-ride by an adult in the event of fire.
- ✓ There should be adequate locks to secure the property against unauthorised entry.
- ✓ Doors should be able to be opened and closed from the inside with ease, and locks should provide a quick and easy exit. Speak to the building insurance company to ensure the locks meet their requirements.
- ✓ There should be adequate direct natural lighting and artificial electrical lighting to the bedrooms.

Exterior

- ✓ The property should be structurally sound, with no risk of falling elements and the exterior should be free of cracks and unprotected holes.
- ✓ Yards and paths should not be too steep, they should be even, have inherent slip resistance and drainage, and should be well maintained.
- ✓ There should be adequate external lighting.
- ✓ Fences should be in good condition.
- ✓ There should be no accumulation of refuse, and the outside space should be tidy and well maintained and not encourage harbourage for pests.
- ✓ There should be sufficient space for separate refuse and recycling provisions to accommodate the number of occupants living in the property.

- ✓ All existing provision for foul, waste and surface water drainage must operate satisfactory and property connected to the appropriate sewer / rainwater sewer system, this includes any drain, soil pipe, rain-water pipe, cesspool, private sewer, spout, sink or other necessary drainage appliance provided for the building.
- ✓ All new drainage shall comply with current Building Regulations.
- ✓ We recommend that gutters are checked each spring and accumulated debris cleared as poorly maintained gutters can lead to damp within the property.

Refuse Storage and Disposal

- ✓ Refuse and recycling bins or containers shall be provided in accordance with the Council's Waste and Recycling Service Policy. [Rubbish & Recycling | London Borough of Barking and Dagenham \(lbld.gov.uk\)](https://www.lbld.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling) provides information on how to order a bin, find out the collection day, book a bulky waste collection, etc.
- ✓ All refuse containers should be located away from habitable rooms and wherever practicable to the side or rear of the property. All bins are to be positioned so that they do not cause obstruction of footways and access and do not obscure natural lighting from windows below bin height.
- ✓ Tenants should be provided with information on how to use their bins correctly. Black/grey bins for general waste are collected weekly, and the brown bins for recycling are collected fortnightly. There is advice on how to reduce waste here: [Reduce your waste | London Borough of Barking and Dagenham \(lbld.gov.uk\)](https://www.lbld.gov.uk/reduce-your-waste)
- ✓ On collection day the correct bins should be left at the front boundary of the property from 6am. Bins will not be emptied if they are not at the front boundary, if they contain waste that should be in a different bin, or if the bin is too heavy to be lifted safely by the collection vehicle, or if it is overfull– the lid must close.

Hazardous Materials

- ✓ Hazardous items such as gas canisters and chemicals should not be stored within the premises.
- ✓ Landlords should risk assess the property for asbestos, and where necessary take appropriate action to ensure tenants and tradespersons are safe.

Planning permission

- ✓ The property must have the correct planning permission. Where applicable, planning permission and/or building control approval must have been sought and approved for any residential extensions and alterations.

Deposits

- ✓ Where deposits are taken, they must be placed in a government backed tenancy deposit scheme within 30 days. The tenants must be provided with information as to where their deposit is held and how to get it back at the end of the tenancy. The specific details will vary dependant on which scheme issued.
- ✓ In the setting of the deposits, and any other fees or charges, the landlord must consider the restrictions in the Tenant Fees Act 2019.

Selective Licence Discount Assessment

Please see below for explanation on how the Selective Licence discount assessment operates depending on the level of defect/non-compliance identified at the property. When deciding what level of defect applies, Officers will consider the extent and totality of the defect/s noted, if safety is a risk factor, or if a legal requirement has been breached.

Minor Defect – Discrepancies from expected standards, small defect such as a broken electrical socket, an issue that if left could worsen over time or a defect that should be addressed to maintain the properties good condition or occupants' safety. We expect the licence holder to remedy these immediately after notification without need for a follow-up inspection. If there 4 or more minor defects, then the property is not compliant and thus, any discount will not apply.

Moderate defect – A defect more significant than a minor but less severe than severe. An issue that more likely than not affect or poses a notable risk to the safety or welfare of the occupants. Not a major structural problem or severe hazard. However, significant enough to require repair or replacement, but doesn't immediately threaten the building's stability or habitability. May also be classed as a high 'Category 2' hazard under the Housing Act 2004's Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). Officers may not have discretion regarding their actions due to legislation/case law, so, if there are 1 or more Moderate defects the discount will not apply, and the case will likely be escalated to enforcement.

Severe defect – A current danger to the occupant/s or their visitor/s, or classed as a 'Category 1' hazard under the Housing Act 2004's Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) or serious safety breach of other legislation. So, if there are 1 or more Severe defects the discount will **NOT** apply, and the case will be escalated for a full HHSRS inspection.

Applicants will be disqualified from receiving compliance awards if any of the following apply:

- The property has unauthorised alterations without planning or building regulation approval.
- Unlicensed properties: Properties unlicensed for over three months before an application is made will be issued a one-year licence.

- Late renewals: Renewals made more than one month after expiry will also result in a one-year licence.
- If the Fit and Proper Assessment shows the applicant, owner, or any manager is a cause for concern or not a Fit and Proper person.
- The provided documents are inaccurate or out of date.