

## Certificates and safety checks

This information is for private landlords. Private tenants can find information and advice [here](#).

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.

## 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

If your property is a HMO, you must:

- test electrical systems and appliances with a qualified electrician every five years
- keep a copy of the [electrical installation condition report \(EICR\)](#)

Currently, there is no legal requirement for landlords of non-HMO properties to carry out regular electrical safety checks. However, you should arrange regular inspections to:

- protect your tenants
- prevent damage to your property
- comply with your insurance policy

Electrical Safety First has [an electrical safety checklist for landlords](#) for checking electrical systems and appliances between tenancies.

## Upcoming changes to laws on safety in the private rented sector

[The Private Tenancies Act \(NI\)](#) became law in April 2022. This legislation aims to improve safety standards for fire and electrical safety, and energy efficiency.

Changes will only come into effect once further regulations are issued.

## More advice

- [Rental property standards](#)
- [Landlord registration](#)