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Guidance

Guide for tenants: electrical safety standards in the private rented sector

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Applies to England

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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/electrical-safety-standards-in-the-private-rented-sector-guidance-for-landlords-tenants-and-local-authorities/guide-for-tenants-electrical-safety-standards-in-the-private-rented-sector>

This guidance is for tenants of private landlords who are renting in England.

This guidance is about the **Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020**.

These Regulations mean that:

- The electrical wiring, sockets, consumer units (fuse boxes) and other fixed electrical parts in rented homes must be inspected and tested every 5 years, or more often than this if the inspector thinks that is necessary.
- Throughout the whole time a tenant is living at the property, national electrical safety standards must be met.
- Your landlord must give you a report that shows the condition of the property's electrical installations. They also have to give this to the local council if they ask for it.

These Regulations do not cover social housing. Council tenants or tenants of housing associations should contact their housing provider if they are worried about the electrics in the property. These Regulations also do not cover tenants who live with their landlord (lodgers).

1. Glossary

EICR: Electrical Installation Condition Report. This is the most common type of report you'll be given by your landlord after an inspection.

Electrical installation: The 'fixed' electrical parts of the property, like the wiring, the plug sockets, the light fittings and the consumer unit (sometimes called a fuse box). This does not include appliances that aren't 'fixed', such as cookers, fridges and televisions.

Local council: In this guide we refer to your local housing authority as your local council. The local housing authority has the power to make landlords comply with the Regulations and can be the borough council, district council, city council or 'unitary authority'.

Regulations: The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020.

Remedial work / remedial action: Work that a landlord must have carried out to make the electrical installation safe.

Tenancy: The contract you sign with a landlord to live in a rented property.

2. Introduction

This government is committed to making sure that rented homes are safe, secure and high-quality places to live, work and raise families.

We really value the contribution made by good landlords. Most landlords provide well-maintained and quality accommodation for their tenants. However, a significant minority fail to do so, and this can put tenants' safety at risk.

Landlords are already legally required to keep the electrical installations – the wiring, the plug sockets, the consumer units, the light fittings - in their property safe and in proper working order. It is best practice for all landlords to organise periodic inspections and testing and to provide a report to the tenant.

The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 build on this and help further reduce deaths and injuries due to electric shocks and fires caused by electrical faults. They will do this whilst not placing excessive burdens on electrical testers and inspectors, landlords, letting agents and local authorities.

The Regulations follow the recommendations of the Electrical Safety Working Group, which was made up of industry stakeholders and experts in public safety. A [public consultation \(https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/electrical-safety-in-the-private-rented-sector\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/electrical-safety-in-the-private-rented-sector) sought views on the working group's recommendations and revealed widespread support for mandatory electrical safety checks.

Read the [Regulations \(http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/312/contents/made\)](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/312/contents/made).

Read the [Explanatory Memorandum to the Regulations \(http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/312/memorandum/contents\)](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/312/memorandum/contents).

We recognise that measures to reduce the risk of infection from COVID-19 may mean it is more difficult to comply with the regulations that affect the private rented sector.

For this reason, we have written [guidance for landlords, tenants and local authorities \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-and-renting-guidance-for-landlords-tenants-and-local-authorities\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-and-renting-guidance-for-landlords-tenants-and-local-authorities) to address the concerns people may have about carrying out work to ensure that properties are kept in good repair and free from hazards.

3. What do these Regulations mean for me?

Landlords already have to keep the electrical installations in their rented properties safe and in working order. Most landlords already do this.

Under these Regulations, landlords must now get the electrical installation checked at least every 5 years by a properly qualified person. The electrical installation must be safe and your landlord must give you proof of this.

This is similar to the way landlords must carry out gas safety checks every year.

4. Is my home covered by these requirements?

If your rented home is your only or main residence and you pay rent, then your home is covered by these requirements

If you are considering renting a property then the landlord must provide you, as a prospective tenant, with a copy of the most recent report within 28 days of your request for this.

There are some exceptions and these are listed in [Schedule 1 of the Regulations](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/312/schedule/1/made) (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/312/schedule/1/made>).

These Regulations do not cover social housing. Council tenants or tenants of housing associations should contact their housing provider if they are worried about the electrics in the property. These Regulations also do not cover tenants who live with their landlord, sometimes known as lodgers.

5. What will be inspected and tested?

The 'fixed' electrical parts of the property, like the wiring, the plug sockets, the light fittings and the consumer unit (fuse box) will be inspected.

6. What will happen in the inspection?

Your landlord will arrange for a qualified inspector to inspect the fixed electrical installations in your property. The time the inspection will take will vary depending on the size of the property and the quality of the electrical installations being inspected.

The inspection will find out if:

- any of your electrical installations are overloaded
- there are any potential electric shock risks and fire hazards
- there is any defective electrical work
- there is a lack of earthing or bonding – these are 2 ways of preventing electrical shocks that are built into electrical installations

7. What about electrical appliances like cookers, fridges, televisions etc?

The Regulations do not cover electrical appliances, only the fixed electrical installations.

We recommend that landlords regularly carry out portable appliance testing (PAT) on any electrical appliance that they provide and then supply you with a record of any electrical inspections carried out as good practice.

You're responsible for making sure that any of your own electrical appliances are safe.

See [guidance on portable appliance testing \(PAT\)](https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/find-an-electrician/pat-testing-explained/) (<https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/find-an-electrician/pat-testing-explained/>).

You may also want to consider registering your own electrical appliances with a product registration scheme.

8. What happens after the inspection?

If no serious hazards are identified?

The inspector will write a report and give this to your landlord. Your landlord should send you a copy of the report (usually an Electrical Installation Condition Report or EICR) within 28 days and no further action will be taken.

If serious hazards are identified?

They will be detailed in the report. The report will say if there is a risk of injury, if the electrical installation is potentially dangerous or if further investigation is required without delay.

The inspector may carry out safety works straight away if this is necessary.

If my landlord does not fix serious hazards?

If your landlord does not carry out the necessary works, your local council has strong legal powers. They can require the landlord to do safety works or even do the works themselves if necessary.

If you are worried that your landlord has not carried out the necessary work, then you should let your local council know. You can find out how to contact your local council at <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council> (<https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>).

Your landlord should give you at least 24 hours' notice to arrange access to your home and if your local council arranges for the work to be done you must be given at least 48 hours' notice.

Local authorities also have the power to fine landlords up to £30,000 if they do not comply with their legal obligations under the Regulations.

9. What should I do if I am worried?

If you are worried about electrical safety in your home, or you do not believe that the correct repairs have been made to make your home safe, you should contact your local council.

You can find out how to contact your local council by going to <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council> (<https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>).

10. Further questions

This section of the guidance gives more detail on the technical parts of the Regulations.

Who will do the inspection?

A person who is competent and qualified will do the inspection. It's your landlord's responsibility to make sure that they are competent and qualified, and they must give you at least 24 hours' notice. You can ask the person to show their ID upon arrival and check this with your landlord.

If you are worried that the person is not qualified and competent, you do not have to let them into your home. You should [contact your local council](https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council) (<https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>) if you are worried.

What if I'm worried about letting people into my home?

If a tenant wishes to avoid people entering their property in order to socially distance, they may be reluctant to allow landlords or their contractors to enter their homes. In these cases, landlords should seek to ensure that tenants understand why the work is necessary, what the risks are of not carrying out the work and to try find a way to carry out the work safely if possible.

We have also advised local councils that we expect them to take a common-sense approach to enforcement of these regulations, and other standards in the private rented sector.

See the latest guidance on [working safely in people's homes](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/homes) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/homes>).

How will my landlord find a 'qualified and competent' person?

The Regulations require landlords to have the electrical installations in their properties inspected and tested by a person who is qualified and competent, at least every 5 years.

Guidance has been produced by the electrical safety industry that covers how landlords can choose a qualified and competent inspector and tester. This includes, but is not limited to:

- [Electrical Safety Roundtable](http://www.electricalsafetyroundtable.co.uk/electrical-safety-guidance.aspx) (<http://www.electricalsafetyroundtable.co.uk/electrical-safety-guidance.aspx>)
- [Registered Competent Person Electrical single mark and register](http://www.electricalcompetentperson.co.uk/) (<http://www.electricalcompetentperson.co.uk/>)

When commissioning an inspection, in order to establish if a person is qualified and competent landlords can:

- check if the inspector is a member of a competent person scheme; or
- require the inspector to sign a checklist certifying their competence, including their experience, whether they have adequate insurance and hold a qualification covering the current version of the Wiring Regulations and the periodic inspection, testing and certification of electrical installations.

What will the electrical inspectors and testers do?

They will undertake a test of the electrical installations in the home, using specific equipment. They may need to disconnect the electrical installations from the mains supply whilst they test them.

They will produce a report, sometimes usually an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR). This report details the condition of the electrical installations and any remedial works or further investigations which may be needed.

What sort of thing will the report say?

Inspectors use the following classification codes to indicate where a landlord must undertake remedial work.

- **Code 1 (C1): Danger present. Risk of injury.** The electrical inspector may make any C1 hazards safe before leaving the property.
- **Code 2 (C2): Potentially dangerous.**
- **Further Investigation (FI): Further investigation required without delay.**
- **Code 3 (C3): Improvement recommended.** Further remedial work is **not** required for the report to be deemed satisfactory.

If the report contains a code C1, C2 or FI, then your landlord must ensure that further investigative or remedial work is carried out by a qualified person within 28 days, or less if specified in the report.

The C3 classification code does not indicate remedial work is required, but only that improvement is recommended. Landlords don't have to make the improvement, but it would improve the safety of the installation if they did.

The charity Electrical Safety First have put together a suite of guidance that explains more about what the report might say:

- [Guidance for tenants \(https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/guidance/advice-for-you/tenants/\)](https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/guidance/advice-for-you/tenants/)
- [Guidance for landlords \(https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/guidance/advice-for-you/landlords/\)](https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/guidance/advice-for-you/landlords/)
- [More information on classification codes \(Best practice guide 4\) \(https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/professional-resources/best-practice-guides/\)](https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/professional-resources/best-practice-guides/)
- [More information on the wiring regulations \(https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/professional-resources/wiring-regulations/\)](https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/professional-resources/wiring-regulations/)

What will happen after the inspection?

A copy of the report will be given to your landlord. They must act on any of the issues raised in the report which have a C1, C2 or F1 classification within 28 days, or sooner if specified in the report.

If they do not, the local council can do the work on their behalf and can take legal action against your landlord.

If you are concerned about the safety of the electrical installations in your home or that your landlord is not carrying out necessary repairs, you should inform the local council so that they can determine if further action should be taken.

Which tenancies do the new Regulations apply to?

If a private tenant has a right to occupy a property as their only or main residence and pays rent, then the Regulations apply. This includes assured shorthold tenancies and licences to occupy.

Who is exempt from these Regulations?

There are some tenancy types that are not covered by these Regulations. These are set out in [Schedule 1 of the Regulations \(http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/312/schedule/1/made\)](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/312/schedule/1/made) and include private registered providers of social housing, shared accommodation with a landlord or landlord's family (e.g. lodgers), those on a long-lease of 7 years or more, student halls of residence, hostels and refuges, care homes, hospitals and hospices, and other accommodation relating to healthcare provisions.

What if a landlord already has a report?

If a landlord has had an inspection carried out before the Regulations come into force and complied with all relevant requirements, the next test is not due until 5 years have passed from the date of the report, or less if the report specifies a shorter period.

What should I do if my landlord does not give me a copy of the report, does not arrange an inspection or fails to do any remedial work as stated on the report?

Local councils have strong enforcement powers. You should contact your local council if your landlord has not complied with any part of the Regulations, such as failing to arrange an inspection or not acting on the work required by the report.

What can my local council do if my landlord doesn't comply with the Regulations?

If a local council believes a landlord is in breach of one or more of their duties set out in the Regulations, they must serve a remedial notice on the landlord requiring them to take action within 28 days. Landlords will have 21 days to make written representations and appeal to the local council against the notice.

The remedial notice is suspended until the local authority considers representations. If the tenant is worried about the safety of the electrics in their home while the notice is suspended, they can still contact their local council, who have other powers to deal with dangerous or hazardous conditions in rented properties.

If the report indicates that urgent remedial action is required, and the landlord has not carried this out within the period specified in the report, the local authority may with the consent of the tenant arrange to carry out remedial work. The local authority must authorise a qualified and competent person in writing to undertake the remedial action and give at least 48 hours' notice to the tenant.

Will this make my rent more expensive?

We estimate that the annual average costs per property are modest – around £31 a year – which works out at £2.58 a month for landlords.

For information on paying rent and when landlords can change the rent you pay, please see our [How to rent guide](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-rent) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-rent>).

How long will my landlord have to do any remedial work identified on the report?

Landlords will have 28 days (or less if the inspector thinks the work should be done sooner) to carry out necessary works.

Your landlord must write to you and your local council confirming these works have been carried out.

Can I get compensation if I have been living in a property with faulty electrics?

Some tenants can use the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 to take their landlords to court if their property is unfit, which could include being unsafe due to faulty electrical installations. The courts can then order that landlord to pay their tenants compensation for the period of time the property wasn't safe.

We have written guidance for tenants on using the [Homes \(Fitness for Human Habitation\) Act 2018](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homes-fitness-for-human-habitation-act-2018/guide-for-tenants-homes-fitness-for-human-habitation-act-2018) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homes-fitness-for-human-habitation-act-2018/guide-for-tenants-homes-fitness-for-human-habitation-act-2018>).

What if I'm worried about other problems in my rented property?

If you are worried that your home is not being kept in a suitable condition you should speak to your landlord. If you are not comfortable contacting your landlord or your landlord fails to get the necessary repairs done after being told about them, you can always [contact your local council](https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council) (<https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>).

For more general help we have produced our [How to rent guide](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-rent) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-rent>). This helps tenants to understand their rights and responsibilities. It provides a checklist and more detailed information on each stage of the process, including:

- what to look out for before renting
- living in a rented home
- what happens at the end of a tenancy
- what to do if things go wrong

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