

Important Safety Regulations

Energy Performance certificates

New regulations from 1 October 2008 state that all buildings that are rented will have to have an energy performance certificate (EPC) that is no more than ten years old. From this date all properties that are advertised to rent will have an EPC before they can be marketed. A certificate detailing energy performance must be made available. If you do not comply with this you can be fined up to £200.00.

The Energy Performance Certificate is broadly similar to the certificate found on many household appliances with an energy rating from A to G (A signifying the highest rating). The EPC includes two charts; the first shows the calculated energy efficiency of the building which is a relative measure of the efficiency of the building compared with predefined standards. The second chart, the so-called "Environmental Impact (CO₂) Rating" measures the overall energy output of the building.

As soon as the building is in the process of being offered to let, it is the responsibility of the prospective landlord to make available an EPC to prospective tenants. As we are marketing the property will be happy to have a domestic energy assessor visit your property and compile a report. This will be valid for ten years and costs £95.00.

In addition to information on the energy efficiency of the dwelling, the certificate will contain information to the tenant about the typical running costs for a standard occupancy. Should you choose to act on the results or the report you may be able to make your home more energy efficient and therefore more marketable to prospective tenants. You are however under no obligation to make any changes to your property.

The following safety requirements are the responsibility of the owner (the landlord), and where we are to manage the property, they are also ours as agents. Therefore to protect all interests we have a duty to ensure full compliance with the appropriate regulations, at the owner's expense.

Gas Appliances & Equipment

Under the Gas Safety (installation and use) Regulations 1994 (amended 1996), all gas appliances in tenanted properties must be checked for safety at intervals of not more than 12 months, by a CORGI registered gas engineer, and a safety certificate issued. Record must be kept of the dates of inspections, of defects identified, and of any remedial action taken.

Electrical Appliances & Equipment

Under the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994, the Plugs and Sockets etc. (Safety) Regulations 1994, electrical installations and equipment in tenanted premises must be safe. Although (unlike gas) no safety certificate is legally required, and therefore it may be adequate to perform a visual check of electrical equipment, fittings and leads, it is recommended that a qualified electrician be engaged for this purpose. In January 2005, new regulations were introduced –“Part P”- making it a legal requirement for landlords to be able to prove that all fixed electrical installations and alteration work has been carried out and certified by a competent electrician.

(A fixed installation comprises the wiring and appliances that are fixed to the building fabric such as sockets, switches, consumer units and ceiling firings.) this is in addition to existing legislation, and also the common law duty of care, which require that electrical appliances in tenanted property are safe.

Furniture and Furnishings

The Furniture and Furnishing (Fire) (Safety) regulations 1988 (amended 1989,1993 & 1996) provide that specified items supplied in the course of letting property must meet minimum fire resistant standards. The regulations apply to all upholstered furniture and beds, headboards and mattresses, sofa-beds, futons, and other convertibles, nursery furniture, garden furniture suitable for use in a dwelling, scatter cushions, pillows, and non original covers for furniture. They do not apply to antique furniture or furniture made before 1950, bed clothes including duvets, loose covers for mattresses, pillowcases, curtains, carpets or sleeping bags. Therefore all relevant items as above must be checked for compliance, and non-compliant items removed from the premises. In practice, most (but not all) items which comply must have a suitable permanent label attached. Items purchased since 1 March 1990 from a reputable supplier are also likely to comply.

Smoke Alarms

Although there is no legislation requiring smoke alarms to be fitted in other ordinary tenanted properties, it is generally considered that the common law ‘duty of care’ means that landlords and their Agents could be liable should a fire cause injury or damage in a tenanted property where smoke alarms are not fitted. We therefore strongly recommend that the landlord fit at least one smoke alarm on each floor of the property (for example, in the hall and landing areas).