

Is the property in a good state of repair?



Gas safety

If there is a gas supply to your property, the landlord must give you a copy of the gas safety certificate before you move into a property. The certificate (also known as a CP12) must be issued by a Gas Safe registered engineer within the last 12 months. You can check whether an engineer is on the Gas Safe register by visiting the Gas Safe Register website www.gassaferegister.co.uk. The register is an official list of gas engineers who are registered to work safely and legally on boilers, cookers, fires and all other gas appliances. All gas engineers should carry identification cards with them at all times.

It is against the law to let a property without an up to date gas safety certificate. The landlord must also complete a check every 12 months and supply you for a copy of the latest safety check for your records within 28 days of doing the safety check.

The landlord is always responsible for the safety of the gas appliances in the property you rent unless you have brought a gas appliance of your own into the property. If the appliance doesn't belong to the landlord you are responsible for the safety of that appliance. The landlord remains responsible for the safety of the gas supply to that appliance but not the appliance itself.

From 1 October 2015 your landlord will not be allowed to evict you from your property if they have failed to provide you with an up to date gas safety certificate (or Energy Performance Certificate).

Indications that an appliance is faulty or dangerous

The danger signs to look for are:

- * Stains, soot or discolouring around a gas appliance which may mean that the flue or chimney is blocked.
- * A yellow or orange flame instead of blue on a gas fire or water heater.
- * A pilot light that keeps going out

The Gas Safety Advice Line can be contacted on 0800 300 363 between 9am and 5.30pm Monday to Friday.

If there is a gas leak or signs of carbon monoxide poisoning call the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999. This service operates 24 hours a day.

The tenants' duties

Tenants also have responsibilities when it comes to gas safety. You must report to your landlord any defect as soon as you are aware of it and you must not use an appliance that is not safe.

You must allow the gas engineer access to your property so that the safety check can be carried out. If any repair work is required you must allow the engineer access to complete this. The landlord should give you reasonable notice that the safety check is going to take place.

Never attempt to fix gas appliances yourself as this is illegal and potentially very dangerous.

Carbon monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colourless, odourless, invisible and poisonous gas which can kill quickly or cause serious harm. CO can be produced when chimneys and flues are blocked or gas appliances are not maintained properly. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include nausea, headaches and dizziness. More information can be found on [Gas Safe Register website](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk) about carbon monoxide poisoning.



From 1 October 2016 there is a legal requirement for your landlord to install carbon monoxide detectors in any room containing a solid fuel burning appliance (e.g. a coal fire, wood burning stove).

Electrical safety – the landlord’s responsibilities

There is currently no legal requirement for your landlord to have annual safety checks on the electrical installations and appliances as there is with gas. However, by law, your landlord must ensure that electrical wiring and appliances are safe. This includes all household electric goods supplied such as cookers, kettles, toasters, electric blankets, washing machines etc. It is recommended that landlords carry out an electrical safety certificate from a registered electrician carried out at least once every 5 years or on a change of tenancy. The report called an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) (or previously a Periodic Inspection Report) is the simplest way for a landlord to show they are taking electrical safety in their property seriously.



PAT testing (Portable Appliance Test)

PAT testing of electrical appliances is a visual inspection and safety check. A sticker is attached to the equipment, usually the plug, showing either a pass or fail and the next test date, which is normally every 12 months. PAT testing is not a legal requirement unless you are living in a HMO (House in Multiple Occupation).

Check that there are enough electrical sockets for your appliances so that you will not need to use multiple adaptors, which can be dangerous.

Electrical safety – the tenant’s responsibilities

Always allow access to the registered electrician to your property to inspect the electrics and make any repairs required. Your landlord should give you reasonable notice of the electrician’s visit (at least 24 hours).

You should never attempt to repair, replace or amend the electrical wiring yourself. You should report any issues with the electrics or electrical appliances to the landlord as soon as you notice them. However, any appliances that you have brought into the property are your responsibility and not the landlord’s if they were not supplied with the property.

Signs that your appliances maybe dangerous

Some of the danger signs to be aware of include cracked or damaged plug cases, smell of burning, frayed or damaged leads, burn marks and/or frequent blown fuses. You must tell your landlord if you notice any of the above on the electrical appliances supplied with your property. It is your responsibility to check if your own appliances are unsafe.

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

An EPC should be provided to every PROSPECTIVE tenant free of charge at the point of enquiry as it is part of their decision making process. An EPC should not only be given once a tenancy has begun. Landlords and Letting Agents can face a penalty charge of £200 if they do not comply with the legislation.

An EPC tells you how energy efficient the property you are renting is and gives it a rating from A (very efficient) to G (inefficient). It also provides details on how much it will cost you to heat and light the property and what the carbon dioxide emissions are likely to be.

It is worth remembering that from 1 October 2015 the landlord cannot serve a valid section 21 notice to evict you from a property if they cannot prove that they gave you an EPC at the start of the tenancy.

Energy Efficiency Rating		Current	Potential
Very energy efficient - lower running costs			
(92 plus) A			
(81-91) B			
(69-80) C		79	79
(55-68) D			
(39-54) E			
(21-38) F			
(1-20) G			
Not energy efficient - higher running costs			
England & Wales		EU Directive 2002/91/EC	

From April 2018 there will be a minimum EPC rating and it will be illegal for a landlord to let a property which has an EPC rating below E. However, this requirement will only apply if there is no upfront financial cost to the landlords. Therefore, as long as the property has reached “E” or the landlord has carried out all the measures funded under the Green Deal and/or ECO (even if this does not take them up to an ‘E’ rating).

Fire Safety

Those living in rented accommodation are seven times more likely to have a fire. There are a number of things to be aware of:

- Avoid overloading sockets – ideally keep to one plug per socket
- Avoid overloading extension leads – they will have a limit on how many amps they can take
- Don't dry your clothes on electrical heaters
- Use proper adaptors for non UK electrical appliances
- Never put a two prong plug into a three prong socket
- Be careful with cigarettes and candles especially near material and furnishings

Furniture & Fixtures

Since 1 January 1997, all upholstered furniture in rental properties has to have a label showing that it is fire resistant. It may look like this or be a simple text label.

Most furniture made after 1988 will be manufactured to a fire safety standard.

The landlord doesn't have a duty to supply firefighting equipment e.g. fire blankets and extinguishers (unless you are in a House of Multiple Occupation).

There is a fire safety tips leaflet available from the gov.uk website for further information.



Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors

From 1 October 2015 landlords are required to:

- install a working smoke detector on each floor of the property
- install a carbon monoxide detector in any room with a solid fuel burning appliance (e.g. coal or wood)

At the start of each tenancy smoke and carbon monoxide detectors need to be tested and let in a working condition.

If your landlord does not supply you with working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors please contact the Private Sector Housing Team on 01392 265147 or email privatesectorhousing@exeter.gov.uk.

The landlord may be fined up to £5,000 if they don't comply with the legislation.

It is important for you and your family's safety that you:

- Test the batteries every week
- Never remove smoke alarm batteries
- Replace batteries when they are required



Standards and Enforcement

All landlords have a duty to ensure that property they rent out meets a decent standard.

If the standards of your private rental property are poor and you believe them to be a danger to your health & safety (or to anyone else living in the property) you should first contact your landlord or agent. It is important that you put your concerns in writing. If the landlord or agents fails to resolve any issues within a reasonable time you can contact ask the Private Sector Housing Team for advice and if necessary to intervene.



An Environmental Health Officer can carry out an assessment using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), a tool to help local authorities identify and protect against potential risks and hazards.

A hazard is identified as something in your home which could harm the health or safety of someone living in or visiting your property.

A hazard that is judged to be 'serious' is referred to as a category 1 hazard. If the local authority discovers a category 1 hazard in your rented property, it has a duty to take action. All other hazards are called category 2 hazards

The HHSRS identifies 29 hazards that relate to:

Accidents – falls, fires, electric shocks, burns and scalds

Collisions, explosions, structural collapse

Dampness, excess cold and heat

Lack of space, security or lighting, or excessive noise

Pollutants e.g. asbestos, carbon monoxide, lead

Poor hygiene, sanitation, water supply

If you believe that your rented property is unsafe please contact the Private Sector Housing Team on 01392 265147 or email privatesectorhousing@exeter.gov.uk. An officer will visit and assess the property for each hazard. This risk assessment looks at the likelihood of an incident happening due to the condition of the property and the likelihood of a harmful outcome.