

The Essential Landlord's Guide

Lettings and the Law (2025 Edition)



Introduction

Being a landlord comes with great opportunities—but also important responsibilities. Whether you're renting out a single property or managing a growing portfolio, understanding the legal landscape is key to protecting yourself, your property, and your tenants.

This guide has been designed to cut through the jargon and provide a clear, easy-to-understand summary of the most important legal requirements every landlord needs to know to do with your property itself.

Laws can and do change, and staying informed isn't just a good idea—it's essential. The right knowledge helps you stay compliant, avoid costly mistakes, and build stronger, more professional relationships with your tenants.

Let this guide be your go-to reference. Whether you're just starting out or have years of experience, we're here to help you stay on the right side of the law



1 Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES)

The Regulations: The Domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) Regulations came into effect in April 2018 for new tenancies. It set a minimum energy efficiency level for private rented properties in England and Wales

From 1st October 2008 all Landlords letting a property need to provide a valid EPC certificate to any prospective tenant. There must be an EPC from the point that the property starts to be marketed. There is no need to obtain a new certificate for each tenancy and once obtained, a certificate remains valid for up to 10 years regardless of the number of tenancies in that period.

MEES regulations (The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015) state that from 1st April 2020 all landlords of privately rented domestic and non-domestic properties in England or Wales must ensure that their properties reach at least an Energy Performance Certificate rating of E. In certain circumstances, exceptions can be granted (listed buildings etc).

There is going to be a consultation on how EPCs work in the future with a likely outcome that landlords we need to bring there properties up to a 'C' grade. Whilst this isn't law yet, Landlords should familiarise themselves with the EPC report on their properties to see what improvements may need to be made and budget accordingly.





Gas Safety Certification

The Regulations: Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 & Subsequent Amendments requiring landlords to ensure all gas appliances, fittings and flues provided in a rental property are safe.

One of the most important legal responsibilities a landlord has is ensuring the gas safety of their rental property. This is governed by the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. As part of these regulations, landlords must make sure that all gas appliances, fittings, and flues provided in the property are maintained in a safe condition. An annual gas safety check must be carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer, and this check is a legal requirement—not a recommendation.

Once the check is completed, landlords are required to provide tenants with a copy of the Gas Safety Certificate (also known as a CP12) within 28 days of the inspection. For new tenants, the certificate must be given before they move in. It's also essential to keep a record of each certificate for at least two years. Non-compliance can have serious consequences, including hefty fines and even imprisonment, so this is an area where landlords must not cut corners. Keeping up with your gas safety obligations not only ensures compliance but also protects your tenants and your property.



3 Electrical Safety Certification

The Regulations: The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 requiring landlords to have an in date electrical installation condition report for all tenancies

Landlords are legally required to ensure that the electrical installation in their rental property is safe throughout a tenancy. This duty is enforced under the Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020. These regulations require landlords to have a qualified electrician carry out an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) at least every five years. This inspection assesses the fixed wiring, sockets, light fittings, and consumer unit to ensure everything is safe and compliant.

Top Tip



Whilst it isn't strictly a legal requirement, PAT testing of your 'plug-in' appliances that you leave in the property is recommended as best practice to ensure you have checked everything is completely safe for your tenants moving in.

The EICR will classify any faults or issues found using a coding system:

- C1 (Danger Present) - Immediate risk of injury; remedial work must be carried out without delay.
- C2 (Potentially Dangerous) - Urgent remedial work is required.
- C3 (Improvement Recommended) - Not dangerous, but action should be considered to improve safety.

If the report returns a C1 or C2 code, the landlord must arrange for repairs to be completed within 28 days, or sooner if specified by the electrician. A written confirmation that the work has been completed must also be obtained and given to the tenant. Staying on top of your electrical safety responsibilities not only keeps your property legally compliant—it also ensures the wellbeing of your tenants.



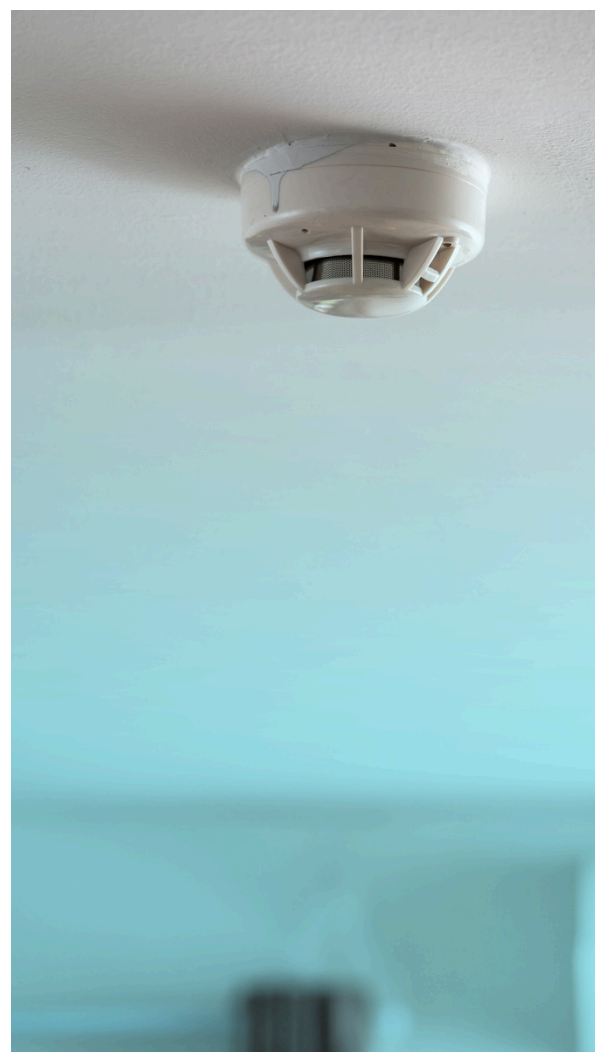


Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms

The Regulations: Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022 requiring landlords to ensure there are sufficient alarms in the property for the purposes of safety

Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are essential for tenant safety, and the legal requirements around them were strengthened under the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022. These regulations apply to all rented properties in England and place a clear duty on landlords to install at least one smoke alarm on each storey of a property where there is a room used wholly or partly as living accommodation. In addition, a carbon monoxide alarm must be fitted in any room that contains a fixed combustion appliance, such as a gas boiler, wood-burning stove, or open fire (excluding gas cookers).

It doesn't stop at installation—landlords must also ensure that all alarms are in working order at the start of each new tenancy - after that, tenants must test them on a regular basis. If a tenant reports that an alarm is not working during the tenancy and changing the battery does not fix it, the landlord is legally responsible for repairing or replacing it as soon as reasonably practicable. Failure to comply with these regulations can result in enforcement action and a civil penalty of up to £5,000.



5 Furniture and Fire Safety.

The Regulations: The Fire and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) (Amendment) Regulations 1988 & Subsequent Amendments require that any soft furnishings hit the safe legal fire standards.

Fire safety in rental properties is about more than just smoke alarms—it also includes the condition and compliance of furnishings provided. Under the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended), any upholstered furniture supplied in a rental property must meet fire resistance standards. This includes sofas, armchairs, cushions, padded headboards, and even certain types of beds and mattresses. All items must carry the manufacturer’s fire safety label, which shows that they meet the required standards for ignition resistance.



It’s the landlord’s legal responsibility to ensure that all furniture and furnishings supplied with the property are compliant. If they are not, the items must be removed before a tenancy begins. Providing non-compliant furniture is a criminal offence and could result in fines, prosecution, or—in the event of a fire—severe legal consequences. To stay on the right side of the law, always check for labels, keep receipts if buying new, and never assume older items are automatically compliant. When it comes to fire safety, prevention is everything.



6 Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

The Regulations: The Housing Act 2004 sets out rules surrounding houses of multiple occupation and requirements of such properties

If you rent out a property to multiple tenants who aren't from the same household and who share facilities like a kitchen or bathroom, you may be managing what's legally defined as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO). The rules surrounding HMOs are set out in the Housing Act 2004, which introduced mandatory licensing for certain types of shared housing. If your property is let to five or more people from two or more households, and they share basic amenities, it will likely require an HMO licence. Licences are issued by the local council and come with specific conditions that landlords must meet, including standards for room sizes, fire safety, and the number of bathrooms or kitchens. Some councils also restrict these types of properties in certain areas

In addition to mandatory licensing, local authorities can introduce additional or selective licensing schemes, meaning smaller HMOs—or even all privately rented homes in certain areas—may also require a licence. It's essential for landlords to check with their local council to see what licensing applies. Managing an HMO carries extra responsibilities, and failing to comply with the regulations can result in fines, licence revocation, or even prosecution. If you're thinking of letting a shared property, make sure you understand the legal framework—because getting it right from the start protects both you and your tenants.





Fitness for Human Habitation

The Regulations: Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 amends provisions in the Landlord and Tenant act of 1985 and also has links to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

Landlords have a legal duty to ensure that the homes they rent out are safe, healthy, and suitable to live in. The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 makes this a clear requirement by amending the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985. It applies to most tenancies in England and requires that a property is fit for human habitation at the start of the tenancy—and remains so throughout. If a property is found to be unfit, tenants now have the right to take their landlord to court directly, where the court can order repairs to be carried out and award compensation. Common issues that could make a home unfit include damp and mould, poor ventilation, unsafe electrics, inadequate heating, pest infestations, and structural problems.



Alongside this, local authorities use the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)—introduced under the Housing Act 2004—to assess housing conditions and identify hazards. There are 29 potential hazards, ranging from fire safety and electrical faults to cold, overcrowding, and trip hazards. If a serious risk to health or safety is found (known as a Category 1 hazard), the council can issue an enforcement notice requiring the landlord to carry out remedial work. Failing to comply can lead to prosecution or fines. Together, the Homes Act and HHSRS form the backbone of housing condition standards in England—and every landlord should be aware of what's expected.

The seven areas we've covered in this guide—gas safety, electrical checks, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, fire-safe furnishings, HMO licensing, fitness for human habitation, and the HHSRS—represent just a handful of the legal responsibilities landlords must meet when it comes to the property itself. Each one is essential, not only for compliance but also for ensuring your tenants live in a safe, secure, and healthy home.

However, these are just the tip of the iceberg. There are hundreds of laws and regulations that apply to landlords, covering everything from property condition to tenant rights, deposit handling, energy efficiency, and more - take a look below to get an idea!!

Staying informed and up to date is crucial in protecting your investment and running a successful rental business. If you're ever unsure, always seek professional advice—because when it comes to property law, what you don't know really can hurt you.

Accommodation Agencies Act 1953	(Amendment) Regulations 1989	(Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006	(England) Regulations 2007
Assured Tenancies and Agricultural Occupancies (Forms) Regulations 1997	Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) (Amendment) Regulations 1993	Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Prescribed Descriptions) (England) Order 2006	Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015
Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003	Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) (Amendment) Regulations 2010	Limitation Act 1980	Smoke Detector Act 1991
Building Act 1984	Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976	Tenancy Deposit Protection
Building Regulations 1991	Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1996	Tenancy Notices and Prescribed Requirements Regulations 2015
Building Regulations 2000	General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679	Localism Act 2011	The Assured Tenancies and Agricultural Occupancies (Forms) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2003
Business Protection from Misleading Marketing Regulations 2008	Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974	Low Voltage Electrical Equipment Regulations 1989	The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007
Construction (Design and Management) Regulation 2012	Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018	Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999	The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Mandatory Conditions of Licences) (England) Regulations 2018
Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellations and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013	Housing (Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation) Regulations 1990	Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006	The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Prescribed Description) (England) Order 2018
Consumer Protection (Distance Selling) Regulations 2006	Housing (Tenancy Deposits)(Prescribed Information) Order 2007	MHCLG How to Rent Guide	The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
Consumer Protection Act 1987	Housing Act 1980	Misleading Marketing Regulations 2008	The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002
Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008	Housing Act 1985	Money Laundering Regulations 2007	The Redress Scheme for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc) (England) Order 2014
Consumer Rights Act 2015	Housing Act 1988	Money Laundering Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds (Information on the Payer) Regulations 2017	The Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (Approval and Designation of Schemes) (England) Order 2013
Consumer Rights Act 2015 Part 2	Housing Act 1996	Noise and Statutory Nuisance Act 1993	The Regulated Tenancies (Procedure) Regulations 1980
Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012	Housing Act 2004	Noise Act 1996	The Terrorism Act 2000
Control of substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002	Housing and Planning Act 2016	Notices to Quit (Prescribed Information) Regulations 1980	TORTS (Interference with Goods) Act 1977
Cost of Leases Act 1958	Housing and Planning Act 2016 (Banning Order Offences) Regulations 2018	Occupiers Liability Act 1957	Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Council Tax (Chargeable Dwellings Order) 1992	Housing and Planning Act 2016 (Database of Rogue Landlords and Property Agents) Regulations 2018	Occupiers Liability Act 1984	Town and Country Planning (Control of
Council Tax (Additional Provisions for Discounts) Order 1992	Housing Health and Safety Rating System Regulations 2005	Part P Building Regulations (Electrical Safety in Dwellings)	
Data Protection Act 1998	HSE Approved Code of Practice L8 Legionnaires 2013	Party Wall Etc Act 1996	
Defective Premises Act 1972	Immigration Act 2014	Plugs and Sockets (Safety) Regulations 1994	
Deregulation Act 2015	Immigration Act 2016	Property Misdescriptions Act 1991	
Distress for Rent Act 1737	Landlord & Tenant Act 1730	Protection from Eviction Act 1977	
Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994	Landlord and Tenant (Covenants) Act 1995	Protection from Harassment Act 1997	
Electricity Act 1989	Landlord and Tenant Act 1927	Rent Act 1977	
Energy Act 2011	Landlord and Tenant Act 1985	Rent Acts (Maximum Fair Rent) Order 1999	
Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015	Landlord and Tenant Act 1987	Rent Books (Form of Notices) Regulations 1982	
Energy Performance of Buildings (Certificates and Inspections)(England and Wales) Regulations 2007	Landlord and Tenant Act 1988	Rent Regulation (Cancellation of Registration of Rent) Regulations 1980	
Energy Performance of Buildings (England and Wales) Regulations 2012	Law of Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1989	Section 8	
Environmental Protections Act 1990	Law of Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1994	Section 21	
Equalities Act 2011	Law of Property Act 1925	Selective Licensing of Houses (Additional Conditions) (England) Order 2015	
Equality Act 2010	Leasehold Property (Repairs) Act 1938	Selective Licensing of Houses (Specific Exemptions) (England) Order 2006	
Finance Act 1995	Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and other houses	Service Charges (Summary of Rights and Obligations and Transitional Provisions)	





If you would like to discuss renting out your home, or buying a property to let, simply give our Lettings Manager, Josh, a call on 01524 843322. We're here to answer any questions you may have about the lettings process.



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