

Minimum Standards for Rented Accommodation

From 1 February 2009, properties for rent must meet minimum physical standards as outlined in the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2008.

A further set of regulations, the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) (Amendment) Regulations 2009 came into effect on 1 December 2009. The 2009 amendment strengthened and made more comprehensive the definition of a proper state of structural repair.

Complying with the Minimum Standards Regulations

In order for a rented property to comply with the Minimum Standards Regulations 2008 and 2009 a landlord must meet the conditions laid out below:

- Ensure that the house is in a proper state of structural repair. This is defined as:

‘to maintain the house in a sound state, inside and out. The Regulations specify that roofs, roofing tiles, slates, windows, floors, ceilings, walls, stairs, doors, skirting boards, fascias, tiles on any floor, ceiling and wall, gutters, down pipes, fittings, furnishings, gardens and common areas must be maintained in good condition and repair. They must not be defective due to dampness or otherwise.’

- Provide a sink with hot and cold water
- Provide a separate ventilated room with a bath or shower and toilet
- Provide heating appliances for every room lived in
- Provide facilities for cooking and for the hygienic storage of food, for example, a 4 ring hob with oven and grill, fridge-freezer and microwave oven
- Provide clothes washing facilities
- Provide clothes drying facilities if there isn't a garden or a yard
- Ensure that electricity or gas supplies are in good repair and safe
- Ensure that every room has adequate ventilation and both natural and artificial lighting
- Provide a fire blanket and fire alarms
- Provide access to vermin-proof and pest-proof refuse storage facilities.
- A toilet and bath/shower for every two flats, unless four single people are living in four single bedsits in which case all four may share a toilet and bath/shower
- Provide appliances for heating, which may include an open fire.

What to do if rented property does not meet Minimum Standards

If your property does not meet the minimum standards, you should make a complaint in writing to your Local Authority, whose responsibility it is to enforce the standards.

Note: When the regulations were first introduced in 2008 there was an exemption for a four year period for 'existing tenancies' * (defined below) from the requirement meet the three conditions below:

- A toilet and bath/shower for every two flats, unless four single people are living in four single bedsits in which case all four may share a toilet and bath/shower
- Provide appliances for heating, which may include an open fire.
- Provide facilities for cooking and for the hygienic storage of food, for example, a 4 ring hob with oven and grill, fridge-freezer and microwave oven

*'Existing tenancy' If a property has been let for rent at any time between 1 September 2004 and 31 January 2009 it doesn't have to meet the new standards for sanitary, heating, laundry, food preparation and storage facilities until 1 February 2013. However, it must meet all other standards set out in the Regulations.

However, from 1st February 2013, the Minimum Standards Regulations apply in their totality to all private rented properties.