

RESIDENTIAL LANDLORDS – FIRE SAFETY

As a residential landlord, **you** have a general duty to keep your tenant's home fit for them to live in and ensure that it doesn't endanger their health. This includes ensuring there are no fire hazards in the property and if it is a house in multiple occupation (HMO), you have additional responsibilities.

What is a HMO?

Tenants may be protected by fire safety laws if they live in a house in multiple occupation (HMO). It can sometimes be difficult to establish whether the property is classed as an HMO so you should contact a housing adviser in your area if you're not certain.

An HMO could be:

- a hostel;

- house split into separate bed sits

- a house or flat share, where people have separate tenancy agreements;

- a bed and breakfast or hotel which is not just for holidays.

Fire safety in HMOs

Safety equipment

HMO landlords have to ensure there are adequate fire precautions (including alarms, extinguishers and fire blankets) and fire escape routes. These must be well maintained and adequate for the number of residents and the size of the property.

HMOs should be fitted with fire warning systems such as fire alarms and heat or smoke detectors. These should be placed throughout the building but particularly in escape routes and areas of high risk, such as kitchens. The fire warning system should be serviced and checked regularly.

Fire equipment such as extinguishers and fire blankets should be provided. There should be at least one fire extinguisher on each floor and a fire blanket in every shared kitchen. These have to be checked periodically and the correct sort of extinguisher must be provided. It's up to you to make sure you know how to use the fire blanket and fire extinguisher in an emergency



Means of escape

HMOs should have an escape route that can resist fire, smoke and fumes long enough for everyone to leave (usually at least 30 minutes). This could be an external fire escape, or internal stairs, corridors or walkways that are specially constructed or treated to resist fire. All the walls, ceilings, floors and partitions along the escape route must be fire resistant. All the doors leading to the escape route must be fire resistant and must close automatically.

Non-compliance

If you fail to comply with your fire safety responsibilities, your local council or Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service may get involved and can inspect the property to see if you are complying with the law. They may write to you or the managing agent, setting out what needs to be done including any necessary repairs. They may serve a legal notice and could even prosecute.

Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS)

Lacors – New guidance on fire safety in residential accommodation

LACORS (Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services), advises on the joint working arrangements between local housing authorities and fire and rescue services to deliver improved fire safety.

Fire safety for other residential properties

If the property is not an HMO, there are no specific laws to comply with but you do have a general duty to keep the property habitable.

If you don't believe the property is fire safe, you should seriously consider installing smoke alarms, a fire extinguisher and a carbon monoxide detector.

If the problem is caused by disrepair (for example, loose wiring or a faulty electrical heater) you have an obligation to arrange for the necessary repairs to be carried out.

If the council deem that the fire hazards in the property could endanger the tenants health or cause a serious nuisance to neighbours or the general public, the council's environmental health department may get involved who may inspect the property and can order you to put the problems right.



LACORS
promoting quality regulation

HOUSING – FIRE SAFETY

Guidance on fire safety provisions
for certain types of existing housing

FIRE SAFETY & FURNISHINGS

Any upholstery furnishings you provide in the property should be fire resistant – this applies to all landlords.
Upholstered furniture includes:

- Sofas and armchairs
- Beds, headboards and mattresses
- Sofa beds and futons
- Nursery and children's furniture
- Loose and stretch covers for furniture
- Cushions and seat pads
- Furniture in new caravan
- Garden furniture that is used indoors

There should be a symbol on your furniture to state that it is fire resistant. If the furnishings in the property are not fire resistant, they must be replaced otherwise trading standards could get involved.