

# Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019, came into operation 01 May 2019

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These regulations specify requirements in relation to:

- Structural Condition
- Sanitary Facilities
- Heating Facilities
- Food Preparation and Storage and Laundry
- Ventilation
- Lighting
- Fire Safety
- Refuse Facilities
- Gas, Oil and Electricity Installations
- Information

## Structural Condition

- (1) **"Proper state of structural repair"** – This requirement requires a private rented house to be "sound, internally and externally, with roof, roofing tiles and slates, windows, floors, ceiling, walls, stairs, doors, skirting boards, fascia, tiles on any floor, ceiling and wall, gutters, downpipes, fittings, furnishings, gardens and common areas maintained in good condition and repair and not defective due to dampness or otherwise.
- (2) **Window safety restrictors** – "Where a window has an opening section through which a person may fall, and the bottom of the opening section is more than 1400mm above external ground level, suitable safety restrictors shall be fitted. Safety restrictors shall restrain the window sufficiently to prevent such falls."

Safety Restrictors should operate so that they:

- (a) Limit the initial movement of an opening section so that a clear opening of not more than 100mm is achieved at any point;
- (b) Are releasable only by manipulation, not normally possible by a child under 5 years;
- (c) Are readily identifiable and capable of being released by an adult (without prior instruction) on windows suitable as means of escape in case of fire:

- (d) Re-engage automatically when an opening section is returned to the initial restricted opening position, or to a closed position (whether latched or not);
  - (e) Are not lockable by a removable key or other device on windows suitable as a means of escape or rescue in case of fire.
  - (f) Are required whether or not children reside in a house.
- (3) The Regulations ensure that in the rented property, adequate provision shall be made to prevent harbourage or ingress of pests or vermin.

## Sanitary Facilities

Each house must have exclusive access to its own sanitary facilities. Those facilities must be contained within the same habitable area of the house.

The sanitary facilities must be provided in a room separate from other rooms and contain separate ventilation.

The sanitary accommodation must consist of:

- A toilet with a dedicated wash hand basin supplied with hot and cold water.
- A fixed bath or shower, supplied with hot and cold water.

All facilities provided shall be maintained in a safe condition and in good working order and good repair.

## Heating Facilities

Every room used, or intended for use by the tenant of the house, as a habitable room (room used for living or sleeping purposes but does not include a kitchen having a floor area of less than 6.5 square meters), and any bathroom, or shower-room shall contain a permanently fixed heat emitter, heat distribution system or heat producing appliance that are properly installed and are maintained in good working condition. The tenant must be able to independently control the operation of the heating appliance.

Every room that contains a heat emitter or heat producing appliance shall be so installed that there is an adequate supply of air to it for combustion, to prevent overheating and for the efficient

working of any flue pipe or chimney serving the appliance. There shall also be suitable and adequate facilities for the safe and effective removal of fumes and other products of combustion to the external air.

Each house shall contain, where necessary, suitably located devices for the detection and alarm of carbon monoxide. A carbon monoxide alarm is to be provided in the room where an open flued or flueless appliance (ie. where combustion air is taken from the room, for example an open fire, gas fire, wood burning stove, Gas or Oil boilers that are not balanced flued (*this list is not exhaustive*)) and either inside each bedroom or within 5m (16ft) of the bedroom door.

The carbon monoxide alarm must carry the CE mark and must comply with Technical Guidance Document J and I.S. EN50291-1:A1:2012 standard. The carbon monoxide alarm should be fitted in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and each alarm should be in working order and be within its 'end of life' indicator. It is recommended that carbon monoxide alarms 10 year sealed long life battery type are fitted.

Please refer to [The Facts about Carbon Monoxide](https://www.carbonmonoxide.ie/) (<https://www.carbonmonoxide.ie/>) for information.

All facilities provided shall be maintained in a safe condition and in good working order and good repair.

## Food Preparation and Storage and Laundry

### Food Preparation

Each house must contain a sink with hot and cold water and a draining board. The cold water supply to the kitchen sink must be taken directly from the rising main. There shall be a four ring hob, an oven and a grill. There shall be a suitable facility for the removal of fumes to the external air by means of a cooker hood or extractor fan. There shall be a microwave oven present.

### Storage

Each house must have an adequate number of Kitchen presses for food storage purposes. It must also contain a fridge and freezer or a fridge-freezer.

## Laundry

Each house must have a washing machine or access to a communal washing machine facility within the cartilage of the building. Where the house does not contain a garden or yard for the exclusive use of that house, a clothes dryer (vented or circulation type) or access to a communal dryer facility must be provided.

All facilities provided shall be maintained in a safe condition and in good working order and good repair.

## Ventilation

Every room used, or intended for use by the tenant of the house as a habitable room, shall have adequate ventilation.

### Habitable Rooms

In each habitable room, there must be an openable external window / door. There must also be a wall or window ventilation opening in each habitable room.

### Bathrooms

In each bathroom, there must be an openable window or door to the external air. Where there is no openable window, there must be a mechanical extraction vent unobstructed or passive vent.

### Kitchens

In rooms containing a kitchen (of more than 6.5m<sup>2</sup> in floor area), there must be a window that can open to the external air or alternatively a door to the external air and also a wall or window ventilation opening to the external air. In a kitchen of less than 6.5m<sup>2</sup> in area, which does not contain an openable window to the external air, the mechanical extract ventilation should include an automatic 15 minutes over-run and provision should be made via a 10mm gap under the door or equivalent.

The provision of adequate ventilation and its use by the tenant is essential to:

- Replace moist and stale air with fresh clean air.
- Help prevent condensation and mould growth.
- Remove cooking odours, fumes and water vapour.

All facilities provided shall be maintained in a safe condition and in good working order and good repair.

Please refer to [Controlling Condensation and Mould](#) for information.

## Lighting

Every room used, or intended for use, by the tenant of the house as a habitable room, shall have adequate natural lighting.

All rooms, including circulation areas such as the Hall, Stairs and Landing must have adequate means of artificial lighting.

Any window in a room containing a bath and/ or shower and a toilet, must be adequately screened e.g. by a blind or by means of frosted glass to ensure privacy.

## Fire Safety

The 2019 Regulations make a distinction between a “house” and a house in a “multi-unit building”. A house in a “multi-unit building” means a building that contains 2 or more houses that share a common access.

### Single Houses

In a single house, the following provisions for fire safety are required:

- There must be a suitably located fire blanket provided in the kitchen. The fire blanket must be securely wall mounted in a prominent location and provided with clear instructions on its use. The fire blanket should be a light duty blanket, complying with IS 415:1988. Preferably, the fire blanket should be 1.20m x 1.80m in size.
- There must be a suitably located smoke alarm in the ground floor hallway (or room in open plan design) and each upper floor landing of the stairway and installed as per the manufacturers’ instructions. Smoke alarms are either mains-wired with battery back-up or 10 year self-contained battery operated. Each smoke alarm must carry the CE mark and comply with I.S. EN 14604:2005. Each smoke alarm must be in working order and be within its ‘end of life’ indicator.

## Multi-Unit Buildings

In a house in a multi-unit building, the following provisions for fire safety are required:

- Each house in a multi-unit building shall contain smoke alarms as per the guidance for single houses above.
- An Emergency Evacuation Plan displayed in each house.
- A notice containing the following information, shall be displayed in each house:
  - The action to be taken in the event of fire, discovering a fire or hearing the fire alarm.
  - The procedure for calling the fire brigade.
  - A floor plan of the building providing the following information:
    - The location of all relevant escape routes from the building.
    - The location of all fire alarm call points (break glass units) and fire alarm control panel.
    - The location of fire fighting equipment in the building.
  - Each house in a multi-unit building should contain a fire blanket as per the guidance for single houses above.
- Each multi-unit building should have a suitable common fire detection and alarm system in the building. The common fire detection and alarm system in the building should consist of a control panel with suitably located smoke detectors and sounders at each level of the stairway and in each circulation space and a heat detector and sounder inside each unit within the building, located in the entrance hallway, where provided. A manual fire alarm call point (break glass unit) at each floor level and at each final exit from the building is required.

The fire detection and alarm system should be installed and meet the requirements of Technical Guidance Document B – Fire Safety.

- The common areas in a multi-unit building should be provided with an emergency lighting system installed and maintained in accordance with I.S. 3217:2013. Emergency lighting should be provided throughout all common escape routes, i.e. corridors, lobbies and stairways.

All facilities provided shall be maintained in a safe condition and in good working order and good repair.

Fire detection and alarm systems and emergency lighting systems required shall be maintained in accordance with current standards. "Current standards' means standards produced by the National Standards Authority of Ireland for Fire Detection and Fire Alarm Systems in Buildings and for Emergency Lighting. Any requirement, in this correspondence, under Regulation 10 of the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations, 2019 does not relieve landlords of their responsibilities to comply with the Fire Services Acts, 1981 and 2003, and the guidance document: "Guide to Fire Safety in Flats, Bedsitters and Apartments"

## Refuse

The house must have access to suitable and adequate refuse storage facilities that are pest and vermin proof. Where there is more than one house in the building, these facilities can be provided individually for each house or a communal facility can be provided for the building, provided it is suitable and adequate to collect and store the refuse in an appropriate manner.

## Gas, Oil and Electricity Installations

All houses that are let or available for letting must ensure that the installations for the supply of gas, oil and electricity including pipework, storage facilities and electrical distribution boxes shall be maintained in good repair and safe working order.

The presence of one or more of the following will assist In assessing compliance with these Regulations:

- A current Periodic Inspection Report by a Safe Electric registered electrical contractor for the electrical installation in the house, which shows that "no remedial work is required".
- A current Declaration of Conformity for an IS813 Annex E Safety Check inspection by a Registered Gas Installer for the gas installation in the house.
- A current Periodic Inspection Report from a suitably competent person (e.g. OFTEC registered technician) that the oil installation in the house is safe and in proper working order.

## Information

Sufficient information shall be provided to the tenant about the rented property, the fixed building services, appliances and their routine maintenance requirements so that the tenant can operate them correctly.

*Disclaimer: The information, which is provided in this leaflet, is for advisory purposes only and does not purport to be a definitive and/or legal interpretation of housing standards and cannot be read as such.*