

Guidance for Landlords

Gas Safety

Instrument 1996, and The Regulations Re-enact 1998 all gas appliances must be checked for safety at intervals of not more than 12 months. The certificate issued must note the date of inspection, defects identified and all remedial work action taken. The main amendment provisions are as follow:

- Flues must be specifically included in any Gas Check as well as the appliance itself
- The gas safety check is only validated if carried out by a registered CORGI gas engineer
- A safety certificate must be issued and records of inspection must be retained for 2 years
- This certificate must be available to a current tenant no more than 28 days from the date of inspection
- New tenants must be in possession of this certificate before the due date of occupancy.

Since January 1996, gas fires, which are installed in bedrooms, must have an Oxygen Depletion Sensor. Ideally these sensors should be fitted in all rooms.

Electrical Safety

Under the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994 and The Plugs & Sockets etc (Safety) Regulations 1994 all electrical installations in tenanted properties must be safe. The regulations apply to portable domestic electrical equipment such as: electric heaters, lamps, televisions, radios, vacuum cleaners, irons, toasters, microwaves, refrigerators, kitchen appliances. Built-in electrical goods are not covered by the regulations. As with the Gas certificate a qualified electrician should carry out an inspection of the tenanted property prior to the due date of occupancy. The same regulations applied to the availability and distribution of the gas certificate should also be applied to the electrical certificate.

Smoke Alarms

The building Regulations 1991 require that all properties built since 1992 must have mains operated and inter linked smoke alarms fitted on every floor, but it does not cover most Tenanted properties. However, it is generally agreed the common law 'duty of care' means that Landlords and their agents could be liable should a fire cause injury or damage in a tenanted property that is not suitably fitted with smoke alarms. It is recommended that a smoke alarm be fitted to each floor (hallway and landing areas).

Penalties & Enforcement

The maximum penalty imposed in a Magistrates Court (or Sheriff Court in Scotland) for noncompliance of the above regulations is a fine of £5,000. If a case is then referred to a Crown Court (e.g. where contravention has led to a serious injury or death) an unlimited fine or custodial sentence may be imposed. If found to be non-compliant of the above regulations any insurance regarding the tenanted property maybe null and void.

GUIDANCE FOR TENANTS

Check-in

A Check-in report provides a schedule of the condition of the property and its contents at the time a tenancy begins with any comments on variances being added to the original Inventory report. All items that have been updated, as part of the check-in will be indicated within the report by an astrix. It is the responsibility of the tenant to point out and list any discrepancies at the start of a tenancy. If no comments are made then it will be assumed that the items are all in a good, clean, working condition. At the end of a tenancy no disputes regarding the inventory will be taken into account unless noted at the commented on at the start of a tenancy.

Check Out

A Checkout report provides a summary of differences in the condition of the property and its contents between the condition at Check-in and the condition at the end of the tenancy. Photographs will be taken at the Assessors discretion to support items that have changed in condition and will be listed at the end of the report. Tenants must be prepared to hand over all keys listed on the original inventory and vacate the property once the checkout has been completed. Charges may be incurred for the cost of replacing locks.

The following guidelines are intended to assist the tenant in preparing the property for Checkout.

All personal effects must be removed before the checkout commences and it is essential that all furniture and other items are returned to their original locations as indicated in the original inventory, including any items that have been stored away. Failure to do so may incur further charges if items are not located or require repositioning.

Cleaning

If the property was professionally cleaned for the tenancy it is strongly advised that professional cleaners be used to carry out an end of tenancy clean. It is expected that the property and its contents will be in a similar condition of cleanliness as noted in the original inventory. If the standard of cleaning is not satisfactory, most managing agents or Landlords will employ a contract cleaner, the cost of which will be deducted from the tenant's deposit. Where professional cleaners are used, receipts should be retained and produced if required.

All cleaning must be thorough and the property left tidy at the end of the tenancy. This is a list of the most common areas that are inspected in the assessment of cleanliness, which should be used as a guide only:

All paintwork	Architrave & Picture Rails	Ceramic Tiles
Windows	Blinds	Skirting & Sills
Hob & Oven	Extractor	Grill
Oven Door	Rubber Seals	Kitchen Appliances
Kitchen Units	Kitchen Whites	Soap Dispensers
Lamp Shades	Light Fittings	Electric Cords
Drawers	Shelves	Wardrobes
All Flooring	Carpet Edges	Sanitary Ware

The main areas for concern are set out below:

- Carpets should be professionally cleaned before the end of a tenancy in accordance with the inventory or tenancy agreement and vinyl/tiled flooring should be left clean and free from cracks or tears.
- Curtains should be professionally cleaned before the end of a tenancy in accordance with the inventory or tenancy agreement.
- The décor throughout the property should be in the same state and condition as at the start of the tenancy as detailed within the original inventory. Charges may be incurred if picture hooks, nails, screws or screw holes etc have been added and not removed and the area made good. Charges may also be incurred where excessive wear is noted.
- Refrigerators/Freezers should be defrosted and left switched off and open to avoid smelling
- Ovens, Hobs, Extractor Hoods, and Microwaves should be cleaned of burnt on deposits and grease and doors/seals cleaned.
- Tumbles Dryers, Washing Machines and Dishwashers should have filters emptied, soap drawers cleaned of deposits and doors/seals cleaned.
- Gardens where applicable should be left in a neat and tidy order, the lawns having been cut, borders and planters weeded, hedges trimmed and pathways/patios weeded and swept.
- Allowances are made for fair wear and tear but it should be noted that areas that are not clean will not be considered as fair wear and tear.