

Electrical Safety Advice for Landlords

Every year around 20,000 electrical fires break out in homes across the UK - a shockingly high number when you think that most of these could be avoided by regular checking of appliances and electrical installations.

The majority of these fires are caused by electrical products, such as cookers, washing machines or portable heaters, and a smaller percentage are caused by issues with the wiring of a home. Excessive current, poor connections, and insulation breakdown are some of the most common causes.

As a landlord, it's your ethical and legal responsibility to ensure that your tenants are protected as much as possible from electrical injuries that can occur through fires or electric shocks.

What are a landlord's responsibilities when it comes to electrical safety?

- Before a property is rented out, the landlord must ensure that all electrical installations are safe, such as sockets, and light fittings, as well as making sure that all wiring is in good condition. The landlord then has a duty to their tenants to check and maintain them regularly, which means arranging for regular safety checks to be carried out by a qualified and registered electrician.
- Electrical installations naturally deteriorate with age and use, so in multiple occupancy houses a periodic inspection must be carried out every 5 years. If the house you're renting out isn't multiple occupancy, then this isn't legally required – but is still recommended for optimal safety.
- Any appliances provided by the landlord, such as ovens or microwaves, should also be safe for use and have the CE marking to show it meets the standards set out in European law.

What can tenants do to help protect themselves and the property?

Tenants should also do their part by making their landlord aware of any electrical faults as soon as they appear. Tenants can conduct a visual check themselves to make sure that everything looks in order, which means looking out for:

- Damage to sockets or light switches
- Overheating of electrical equipment
- Damaged cables