

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

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

- “proper state of structural repair”, This requirement has been expanded and requires a private rented house to be “sound, internally and externally, with roof, roofing tiles and slates, windows, floors, ceilings, walls, stairs, doors, skirting boards, fascia, tiles on any floor, ceiling and wall, gutters, down pipes, fittings, furnishings, gardens and common areas maintained in good condition and repair and not defective due to dampness or otherwise”.
- The Regulations have strengthened the Structural Condition requirement with the addition of restriction on the opening of a window “where a window has an opening section through which a person may fall, and the bottom of the opening section is more than 1400 mm 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:

1. Limit the initial movement of an opening section so that a clear opening of not more
 2. than 100mm is achieved at any point;
 3. Are releasable only by manipulation not normally possible by a child under 5 years;
 4. Are readily identifiable and capable of being released by an adult (without prior instruction) on windows suitable as a means of escape in case of fire;
 5. Re-engage automatically when an opening section is returned to the initial restricted opening position, or to a closed position (whether latched or not);
- Are not lockable by a removable key or other device on windows suitable as a means of escape in case of fire.
 - The Regulations ensure that in the rented property that adequate provision shall be made to prevent harbourage or ingress of pests or vermin.

Sanitary Facilities

- Each house must have access to its own sanitary accommodation. This means that sanitary facilities cannot be shared between different rented lettings. In effect, this will result in the phasing-out of the traditional “bedsit” by requiring every letting or rental unit to have their own sanitary facilities
- 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

Heating Facilities

Every room used or intended for use by the tenant as the habitable room and any bathroom, or shower-room shall contain a heat emitter, heat distribution system, or heat producing appliance, capable of providing adequate heating and be shall a permanently fixed, that are properly installed and are maintained in good working condition. Each habitable room any bathroom, or shower-room must have:

- A permanently fixed heat emitter, heat distribution system, or heat producing appliance, capable of providing adequate heating
- 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.
- The tenant must be able to independently control the operation of the heating appliance.
- Each house shall contain, where necessary, suitably located devices for the detection and alarm of carbon monoxide

A habitable room means a room “habitable room” means a room used for living or sleeping purposes but does not include a kitchen having a floor area of less than 6.5 square metres

The house must contain suitably located device(s) for the detection and alarm of carbon monoxide. A carbon monoxide alarm is to be provided in the room where the appliance(s) are located 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 or BS EN50291-1:A1. The carbon monoxide alarm should be fitted in accordance with manufactures’ instructions

- It is recommended that carbon monoxide monitors fitted with a 10 year sealed in long life battery are fitted.

Please refer to this link for further information

<http://www.carbonmonoxide.ie/>

Food Preparation and Storage and Laundry

- 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

Cooking

- a 4-ring hob with oven and grill
- a microwave oven

Storage

- adequate number of kitchen presses
- a fridge and freezer or a fridge-freezer

Ventilation

- Suitable facilities for the effective and safe removal of fumes to the external air by means of a cooker hood or extractor fan

Washing Clothes

- a clothes washing machine must be provided within each letting or there must be access to a communal clothes washing machine facility within the curtilage of the building

Drying Clothes

- 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

Ventilation

All houses that are let or available for letting need adequate ventilation in order:

- To replace moist, stale air with fresh clean air.
- To help prevent condensation, dampness and mould growth.
- To remove cooking odours and fumes
- All habitable rooms must have adequate ventilation with all windows and extract systems maintained in good repair and working order.
- Kitchens and bathrooms must have adequate ventilation that is capable of removing water vapour

Lighting

- All habitable rooms must have adequate natural lighting
- All rooms (including common areas such as the hall, stairs and landing) must have adequate means of artificial lighting
- The windows of every room containing a bath and/or shower and a toilet must be suitably screened 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. An apartment complex or pre 63 building converted into Flats are an example of such

Single House

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

There must be a suitably located fire blanket provided.

There must be a suitable self-contained fire detection and alarm system

Multi-Unit Building

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

1. Each house in a multi-unit building should contain, but not limited to, the following:
 - A suitably located smoke alarm in the ground floor hallway (or room in open plan design) and each upper floor landing of the stairway, where applicable
 - Smoke alarms are either mains wired with battery back-up or 10-year self-contained battery operated
 - Each smoke alarm must carry the CE marks comply with I.S. EN 14604:2005 Smoke Alarm Devices and should be installed as per the manufacturer's instructions
 - Each Smoke alarm should be in working order and be within its 'end of life' indicator.
2. There is an emergency evacuation plan displayed in each house
3. A notice containing the following information, should 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 fire alarm call points (break glass units) and fire alarm control panel

- The location of firefighting equipment in the building
4. 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.
 - A heat detector and sounder inside each unit within the building, located in the entrance hallway, where provided.
 5. A manual fire alarm call point (break glass unit) at each floor level and at each final exit from the building is required.
 6. The fire detection and alarm system should meet the requirements of a Type L3X system installed and maintained in accordance with I.S. 3218.
 7. The common areas in a multi-unit building are to 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.
 8. There is a fire blanket located in the kitchen in each house in a multi-unit building. 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 1.2m by 1.8m in size.

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

Suitable and sufficient refuse facilities that are pest and vermin proof and are adequate for the needs of the occupants, must be provided and maintained

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

Where there are concerns, landlords will be required to provide:

- An Electro-Technical Council of Ireland Periodic Inspection Report by a registered electrical contractor for the electrical installations, which shows that no remedial works are required.
- A current Declaration of Conformity for an IS813 annex E inspection by a registered gas installer for the gas installations

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 occupant can operate them correctly