

# Improving Fire Safety in Privately Rented Homes

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# **Housing Act 2004**

## **Housing Health and Safety Rating System**

**Underlying principle of HHSRS: Any premises should provide a safe and healthy environment for any potential occupier or visitor**

- **A system for rating the risks presented by hazards in the property based on**
  - **Likelihood of harm occurring**
  - **Severity of the harm**
- **29 hazards specified including**
  - **Fire**
  - **Carbon Monoxide**

# Fire

**Risk arises from exposure to uncontrolled fire and associated smoke**

**Deaths from fire**

**38% overcome by gas or smoke**

**26% burns + gas or smoke inhalation**

**25% burns**

**11% unspecified**

**Over 60s are most at risk**

**Older properties present a slightly higher risk than newer properties**

**Houses in multiple occupation present a higher risk than single family dwellings**

# **Matters affecting likelihood of harm from a fire**

- **Cookers poorly sited**
- **Space heating**
  - **Inadequate (leading to use of supplementary heaters)**
  - **Defective**
- **Electrical installations**
  - **Adequate (leading to overloading)**
  - **Defective**
- **Absence of smoke/heat detectors and fire fighting equipment**

# **Matters affecting severity of harm from a fire**

**Severity of harm depends on**

- **How quickly the fire can spread**
  - **Combustible furnishings**
- **How soon it is detected**
  - **Smoke/heat detectors or fire detection and alarm system**
- **How quick and easy it is to put out the fire**
  - **Absence of fire fighting equipment**
- **How quick and easy it is to escape**
  - **Adequacy of means of escape**

# Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide forms due to the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels such as gas, oil, solid fuel.

Risk arises from exposure to excessive levels of carbon monoxide because carbon monoxide reduces the ability of the blood to carry oxygen round the body

- Deaths from carbon monoxide poisoning are thankfully rare but
  - High concentrations lead to unconsciousness and death
  - Lower concentration lead to headaches, dizziness, nausea, confusion
  - Health effects more serious in people with heart or lung disease
  - CO may affect development of unborn babies
- Over 65s are most at risk

# **Matters affecting likelihood and severity of harm from carbon monoxide**

- **Gas or oil burning appliances**
  - **Disrepair**
  - **Blockages to flue**
  
- **Ventilation**
  - **Adequacy**
  - **Repair**
  
- **Detection**

# **Landlords' responsibilities**

- **Annual gas safety checks**
  - **legal requirement**
- **Regular checks on electrical installations**
  - **recommended**
- **New responsibilities under the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Regulations 2015**
- **Housing Act 2004**
  - **HMO licensing requirements**



# **The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015**

- **Came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015**
- **Regulations apply to privately rented houses and flats**
- **Regulations apply to non-licensable HMOs**
- **Do not apply to licensable HMOs**

# **The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015**

## **Requirements:**

- **Smoke alarms must be fitted on every storey used as living accommodation**
  - **Living accommodation includes bathrooms and toilets**
- **A carbon monoxide alarm must be fitted in any room used as living accommodation where there is a solid fuel burner**
- **A check must be made to ensure the alarms are in proper working order on the first day of any new tenancy.**

# **The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015**

## **Enforcement**

**If no alarms are fitted or alarms are not working**

- Local authority must serve Remedial Notice within 21 days**
- Remedial Notice allows landlord 28 days to comply (install and test alarms).**
- Local authority must go in and install the alarms if the Remedial Notice is not complied with.**
- Penalty Charge notice of £5,000.**
- Right of appeal to first tier tribunal.**

# The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015

What type of alarm must be fitted?

Regulations state that *Landlords should make an informed decision and choose the best alarms for their properties and tenants*

- Preferred solution is mains-wired & battery back-up type
- Minimum provision 10-year sealed lithium battery type (interlinked)
- Higher standards apply in HMOs/shared houses

# **Fire Safety Requirements in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)**

Commonly asked questions:

- **What fire precautions does my property need?**
- **What do I need to do?**

- **Dual enforcement for fire safety in HMO's**
- **Two regulatory authorities**
- **Fire safety protocol agreed between fire authority and local authority has identified who will be the enforcing authority for certain types of property so you will only have to deal with one.**

# Fire Safety Legislation

- Housing Act 2004

- Introduced the Housing Health and Safety Rating System
- Enforced by the local authority
- Based on a risk assessment of the property in relation to fire.

- Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005

- Introduced a duty on landlords to assess fire safety in their properties.
- Enforced by the fire authority
- Requires the landlord or responsible person to carry out a fire risk assessment

- **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.**
- **Enforced by the LFEPA(Fire Brigade)**
- **Places a duty on the landlord or responsible person to carry out a fire risk assessment.**



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- **Enforced by the LFEPA (Fire Brigade)**
- **Places a duty on the landlord or responsible person to carry out a fire risk assessment.**
- **Applies to the common parts of HMOs**

## Key elements of Fire Risk Assessment

- How could a fire start?
- What could burn?
- Who is at risk if there is a fire?
- How can the risk be reduced?
  
- Keep a record of the assessment
- Review at regular intervals

## **Housing Act 2004**

- **Fire risks assessed using Housing Health and Safety Rating System to evaluate potential risks to health and safety to occupiers from deficiencies identified in the dwelling.**
- **Reduce hazards by installing fire precautions.**

What fire precautions  
will your property need?

- **LACORS- HOUSING-FIRE SAFETY**

**GUIDANCE ON FIRE SAFETY  
PROVISIONS FOR CERTAIN TYPES OF  
EXISTING HOUSING**

- **Provides guidance on fire safety  
measures for different types of  
dwellings**

- **LACORS - Guidance not prescriptive.**
- **Risk assessment may indicate that measures over and above the recommended may need to be taken.**

More information can be found at :

[www.lacors.gov.uk](http://www.lacors.gov.uk)

For guidance on Fire Safety risk assessment

[www.communities.gov.uk/fire-safety](http://www.communities.gov.uk/fire-safety)

# Help from Hackney Council

**No grants for the installation of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in single family dwellings**

**Grants are available for**

- **Provision of automatic fire detection systems in HMOs**
  - **Landlords Grant**
- **Provision (not repair of) heating system and thermal insulation**
  - **Landlords Warmth and Security Grant**

# Landlords Grant

To help with the cost of

- Installing additional amenities (baths, showers, WCs, kitchen facilities) in HMOs
- Installing automatic fire detection system in HMOs

Amount available

- Up to 50% of the reasonable cost of the works

Conditions

- Premises must be available for letting for five years after work is completed

# Warmth and Security Grant

To help with the cost of

- Installing central heating, including heating controls
- Installing thermal insulation

Amount available

- Up to £6,000

Conditions

- Premises must be available for letting for five years after work is completed



# Further information

## Grants and Non-HMOs

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## HMOs

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