

Tenancy Services

Landlord guide to the healthy homes standards



**MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT**
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

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Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) Hīkina Whakatutuki – Lifting to make successful

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More information

Information, examples and answers to your questions about the topics covered here can be found on our website:
www.tenancy.govt.nz.

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Introduction

All rental properties must comply with the healthy home standards.

This guide can help you understand what you need to do to make sure your rental property complies with the standards and stays that way.

This guide is part of a toolkit available to landlords on our website.

Here you can find lots of useful resources to help you. Find the toolkit at **tenancy.govt.nz/hhs-landlord-toolkit**.

About the healthy homes standards

The healthy homes standards, which became law on 1 July 2019, introduced minimum requirements for heating, insulation, ventilation, moisture ingress and drainage, and draught stopping in rental properties.

The standards will help tenants to keep their homes warm and dry, and help you achieve cost savings in the long-term maintenance of your property.

Landlords are responsible for meeting the standards and continuing to meet them over time.

Here is a summary of the five healthy homes standards. You can read about them in greater detail on our website.

Heating

There must be one or more fixed heaters that can directly heat the main living room. The heater(s) must be acceptable types and must meet the minimum heating capacity required for your main living room.



You can use our online heating assessment tool to calculate the heating requirements for the living room in your rental home. Find the tool at **tenancy.govt.nz/heating-tool**

Insulation

Some existing insulation in rental properties will need to be topped up or replaced to meet the healthy homes standards.

Depending on your rental's location, ceiling insulation needs to meet minimum R-values* or existing ceiling insulation needs to be at least 120mm thick. Underfloor insulation needs a minimum R-value of 1.3.



You can check if you need to upgrade the insulation by using the online insulation tool at **tenancy.govt.nz/insulation-tool**

*'R' stands for resistance – an R-value is a measure of how well insulation resists heat flow.

Ventilation

The living room, dining room, kitchen and bedrooms, must each have at least one window, skylight or door that opens to the outside. These must be fixable in the open position, and their total area must be at least 5 per cent of the room's floor area.

All kitchens and bathrooms must have mechanical ventilation that ventilates externally (to the outside).



You can check if you need to install new extractor fans in your rental property's kitchen or bathroom by using our online ventilation tool at **tenancy.govt.nz/ventilation-tool**

Moisture ingress and drainage

There must be efficient drainage for the removal of storm water, surface water and ground water, including an appropriate outfall (exit point). The drainage system must include gutters, downpipes and drains for the removal of water.

Where there is an enclosed subfloor, a ground moisture barrier is required (if it is reasonably practicable to install one).

Draught stopping

Any unreasonable gaps or holes in walls, ceilings, windows, floors and doors that cause noticeable draughts must be blocked.

Open fireplaces must be blocked unless the tenant and landlord agree otherwise.

Exemptions to the standards

There are some exemptions that apply to each of these standards (when the rules do not apply). There are also general exemptions that may apply to some rental homes.

More information can be found on the Tenancy Services website at tenancy.govt.nz/hhs-exemptions.

When your property needed to meet the standards

All rentals must comply with the healthy homes standards.

Boarding houses: From 1 July 2021

Kainga Ora and registered Community Housing

Provider homes: From 1 July 2024

Private rentals: From 1 July 2021, if you have signed a new or renewed tenancy agreement your property must have complied within certain timeframes.

New or renewed tenancies between 1 July 2021 and 27 August 2022 had to comply within 90 days.

New or renewed tenancies between 28 August 2022 and 2 March 2025 had to comply within 120 days.

All other private rentals had to meet the standards by 1 July 2025.

If you are a new landlord, you will need to make sure your rental meets the healthy homes standards before your tenants sign the tenancy agreement.

As a landlord, meeting the standards is in your best interests. Not only will you build a better relationship with your tenants, you'll also protect your valuable investment.

Landlords who don't meet their obligations under the standards are in breach of the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 and may face consequences, like financial penalties.



THE HEALTHY HOMES STANDARDS CHECKLISTS

Use our checklists as a simple guide to see if you need to do some work to meet the standards. Find them at tenancy.govt.nz/hhs-landlord-toolkit

Your ongoing responsibility

Once your rental property is up to standard, you'll need to make sure it stays that way.

If something is installed or provided to meet any of the healthy homes standards, it must be maintained in good working order. If it cannot be kept in good working order, it must be replaced in a reasonable timeframe.



Get tips on keeping up to standard on our website tenancy.govt.nz/hhs-landlord



When the standards don't apply

For each standard there are specific exemptions (exceptions to the rules) that apply.

These are described alongside the detailed information about each standard on our website.

There are also some exemptions that apply to rental properties generally. These are:

1. Demolishing or substantially rebuilding a rental property.

This exemption applies if you intend to demolish the property or substantially rebuild it. You must have applied for the relevant resource or building consent before the tenancy commences, with the work to begin during the grace period. The exemption will last for up to 12 months from this date. It may end earlier in certain circumstances, for example, if the consent lapses or is terminated, or the application is refused.

If requested, you will need to provide evidence that you have applied for the relevant resource consent or building consent for redevelopment work.

2. If the tenant is the immediate former owner of your rental property.

This exemption applies if the tenant is the immediate former owner of the rental property and the tenancy started immediately after you acquired the property from the tenant. In this situation, an exemption will apply for 12 months from the date the tenancy commences.

3. If a rental property is part of a building and the landlord does not own the entire building.

An example of this exemption might be where the landlord owns an apartment, but doesn't own the whole apartment building. In this situation, you may be exempt from complying with parts of the standards if your ability to comply with the healthy homes standards is impeded because:

- you need to install or provide something in a part of the building where you are not the sole owner, or
- you need access to a part of the building that you are not the sole owner.

You must still take all possible steps to ensure the rental property or building complies with the standards wherever reasonably practicable.

For the heating standard, this means if the required heating capacity is over 2.4 kW, you must install at least one qualifying heater that has a heating capacity of at least 2 kW. A fixed electric heater with thermostat is an acceptable heater for this situation.

What does 'reasonably practicable' mean?

It is not 'reasonably practicable' to install something if a professional installer can't access the area without:

- › carrying out substantial building work, or
- › causing substantial damage to the property, or
- › creating greater risks to a person's health and safety than is normally acceptable, or
- › it is otherwise not reasonably practicable for a professional installer to carry out the work.

Getting up to standard

Carrying out the work

Landlords have the lawful right to access their rental properties to do the work to comply with the healthy homes standards.

You must give a minimum of 24 hours' written notice to tenants before entering a property. Hours of entry are between 8am and 7pm (or 8am and 6pm for boarding houses).

Remember that all tenants have the right to the quiet enjoyment of the property, so it's best to keep in touch and clearly set expectations with each other.

Healthy homes standards and the building code

All building work must comply with the Building Code – this is a requirement under Section 17 of the Building Act 2004. There may be instances where building consents are required under the Building Act 2004. It is best to discuss this with your local council or tradesperson.

If you are unsure about any work that needs doing, or whether an exemption may apply, you should contact an appropriate professional.

For the purposes of any exemptions, a 'professional installer' must be someone experienced in performing the installation work in question.



See the guidance document for each standard to learn more about finding qualified professionals. These are available at tenancy.govt.nz/healthy-homes

Working with professionals

The Tenancy Services website (tenancy.govt.nz/healthy-homes) has more information on meeting the healthy homes standards, including a technical guide for each standard.

You can hire a professional to provide advice or an assessment of your rental property to ensure it meets the standards. Getting this advice is voluntary but is an effective way to make sure your rental property complies.

Depending on what's required, you may choose to carry out some work yourself.

For example, you may be able to install draught stopping, insulation, a ground moisture barrier or ducting for extractor fans yourself, but it is important to take appropriate safety precautions. Use safety equipment when necessary, and don't go into spaces where there are known health and safety hazards, such as asbestos dust or poorly installed electrical wires.

Some work, however, does require a qualified professional.



Any gasfitting, drainlaying, plumbing, electrical or restricted building work needs to be done by an appropriately qualified and licensed professional. Depending on the work, this could be a licensed building practitioner, licensed electrical worker or licensed gas worker.

All work must be done to a standard that meets the healthy homes standards and other relevant regulations.

Keeping your property up to standard

Once your property meets the healthy homes standards, you'll need to make sure that it stays that way.

If something is installed, or provided, to meet any of the healthy homes standards, it must be maintained in good working order. If it cannot be kept in good working order, it must be replaced.

As soon as you are made aware that something needs maintenance or repair (through no fault of the tenant), you must remedy it or arrange for it to be remedied within a reasonable timeframe. A 'reasonable timeframe' will differ from situation to situation, depending on the availability of appropriate industry professionals, replacement parts and components.

You should also keep your tenants updated on the progress of any maintenance or repairs and keep records of the process, for example, dates professionals were contacted.

Here are some tips to help you keep your property up to scratch:

At the start of a tenancy

- › Make sure you include the healthy homes standards compliance statement in the tenancy agreement, and that it has been updated with any new information.
- › Show your tenants how to keep the heater and the ventilation system reasonably clean and tidy. This could include how to clean the device and its filters, and information about keeping gardens or lawns clear of any external units.
- › Give information to your tenants about how to use the heater and ventilation system and remind them to contact you as soon as possible with any maintenance or repair issues.

During and at the end of a tenancy

During regular inspections and at the end of the tenancy:

- › Check that the heater and ventilation system are in good working order.
- › This could include checking its fixtures and fittings and replacing any filters.
- › Check the insulation is still in good condition (for example, there are no holes or gaps) and continues to meet the standard.
- › Check the gutters, downpipes and drains are still doing the job.
- › If the property has an enclosed subfloor, check the ground moisture barrier is still in good condition.
- › Ask the tenants if they've noticed any new draughts in the rental.
- › Check any seals, sealant or blockages that need to be maintained to ensure they prevent any draughts coming in or out of the property.
- › Plan any work that needs to be done to maintain the standards as soon as you can. Keep your tenant updated on the plan.

Keeping records

You must keep all records and documents that show how you are complying with the healthy homes standards. This includes information about work you do to keep it up to standard.

These records must be provided on request – for example, by the Tenancy Tribunal, or the Tenancy Compliance and Investigations team. You are committing an unlawful act if you don't supply them, and don't have a reasonable excuse, within 10 working days of the request.

Tenants can also request information about compliance with the healthy homes standards. The landlord must provide that information within 21 days after the date of receiving the request.

These records could include:

- ✓ code compliance certificate
- ✓ records of calculations of a living room's required heating capacity, including a printout from the heating assessment tool
- ✓ certificate of acceptance
- ✓ receipts and invoices from builders or tradespeople
- ✓ receipts for any building materials and/or elements
- ✓ photographic evidence of compliance
- ✓ records of work from building practitioners or independently qualified person
- ✓ a professional evaluation performed by a licenced building practitioner, independently qualified person or any other relevant professional
- ✓ a building warrant of fitness or compliance schedule, where the extractor fans are part of a larger ventilation system and the ventilation system is a specified system
- ✓ Land information memorandum (LIM) or building information reports or parts of these reports that reasonably shows compliance
- ✓ product manuals/schedules for devices installed for the purpose of compliance with the standards
- ✓ any other documents/records that will reasonably show compliance.

If you are using a qualified heating specialist to comply with the heating standard, records will need to include details of the minimum required heating capacity for the main living room, as set out in regulation 10A of the Residential Tenancies (Healthy Homes Standards) Regulations 2019.

You'll also need to describe why the specific regulation applies, the name and qualifications of the specialist, and details of how the required heating capacity was calculated. You must also keep documentation to show when the required heating was installed.



What to include in the tenancy agreement

The healthy homes standards require you to include additional information in tenancy agreements. This applies to all tenancies covered by tenancy law.

All new or renewed tenancy agreements must include specific information about the rental property's current level of compliance with the healthy homes standards.

If you don't include this information or, if you include information that is misleading or false, it is an unlawful act. Landlords who don't comply could face consequences, such as financial penalties.



We have a template you can use to help make sure you meet your obligations. Search 'compliance statement' at **tenancy.govt.nz**





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