

Tenancy Services

Landlord guide to the healthy homes standards

Use this guide to make help sure your rental is healthy – and stays that way



tenancy.govt.nz



MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
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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.

Disclaimer

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Calling all landlords...

All private rental properties must comply with the healthy home standards by 1 July 2025.

If you have a rental property that has not had to meet the standards yet, you should be planning the work that needs to be done.

This guide can help you understand your responsibilities, and what you need to do to make sure your rental property is healthy and safe – 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 www.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, including an appropriate outfall (exit point). The drainage system must include gutters, downpipes and drains for the removal of water from the roof.

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

When your property needs to meet the standards

All rental properties will need to comply with the healthy homes standards by 1 July 2025.

Until then, you must make sure that your rental meets the standards within certain timeframes. When depends on what type of tenancy it is, or when a new tenancy starts or is renewed.

Since July 2021

Boarding houses

If your property is a boarding house, it must already comply with the healthy homes standards.

Private rentals

If you have signed a new or renewed tenancy, your property must comply within certain timeframes.

If the tenancy started or was renewed between 1 July 2021 to 27 August 2022:

Rental properties had to comply with the healthy homes standards within 90 days of any new or renewed tenancy.

If the tenancy started or was renewed on or after 28 August 2022:

Landlords must ensure their rental properties comply with the healthy homes standards within 120 days of any new or renewed tenancy.

From 1 July 2024

Kāinga Ora and registered Community Housing Provider homes must comply with the healthy homes standards.

From July 2025

All rental homes will need to comply with the healthy homes standards.

It could be that your property should already have met the standards. You can find out the compliance date for your property by using the 'Compliance timeframes decision tool' on our website.
www.tenancy.govt.nz/hhs-timeframes-tool.

If your rental property does not yet comply, now's the time to be scheduling the work that needs to be done.

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.

It's important to remember too, you can face financial penalties if you do not meet your obligations under the healthy homes standards.

Landlords who don't meet their obligations under the standards are in breach of the Residential Tenancies Act 1986.



The healthy homes standards checklists

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

Your ongoing responsibility

Once your rental property is up to scratch, you'll need to make sure it continues to meet the required standards.

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 www.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 relevant healthy homes compliance date. 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 records

You must keep all records and documents that show how you are complying with the healthy homes standards. This includes information about any future 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 both boarding houses and standard tenancies.



We have templates you can use to help make sure you meet your obligations.

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.

Find the templates and information about what you need to include in your tenancy agreement by using our 'Healthy homes standards compliance statement tool' on our website. www.tenancy.govt.nz/hhs-statement-tool.



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