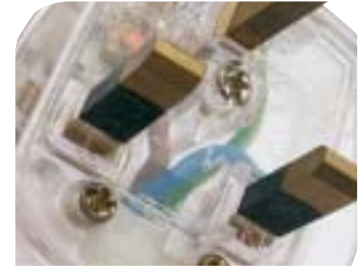


# Product safety in rented accommodation



Health and Environmental  
Services Department

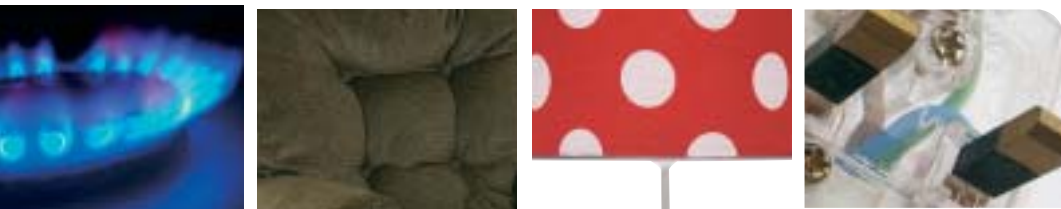
A guide for landlords and letting agents



We have written this guide to help landlords and letting agents understand their legal responsibilities under consumer protection legislation.



Health and Environmental  
Services Department



# advice Regulations

Furniture & Furnishings  
information

Requirements  
Safety



## Contents

Furniture and furnishings	1
How to tell if furniture meets legal standards	2
Electrical equipment	3
What sort of dangers should I check for?	4
Gas cooking	5
Fireguards for domestic heaters	6
Other appliances and equipment	7
What happens if I supply unsafe items?	8



# Furniture and furnishings

*(Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988*

## What the law says

These regulations were introduced to reduce the number of people killed and injured by poisonous fumes given off when upholstery material burns. Since 1 March 1993, upholstered furniture in rented accommodation has had to meet the same strict fire-resistant rules that apply to new and second-hand furniture in the shops.

## These regulations apply to:

- Upholstered furniture, including settees, armchairs and scatter cushions;
- Beds; and
- Headboards.

All covers and fillings must be made from fire-retardant materials that will not catch fire. These controls do not apply to furniture made before 1 January 1950. Bedclothes, carpets, curtains and pillowcases are also excluded.



# How to tell if furniture meets legal standards

## Labelling

Look to see if there is a permanent label on any furniture you want to buy.

- Labels are usually under the main cushion or on the base of the furniture. It is good practice to leave labels attached, as this is the best way to show that the furniture meets the regulations.
- If you are supplying furniture that needs to be re-upholstered, the upholsterer must only provide or use materials that meet the regulations.
- Mattresses and bed bases should have a label showing that they meet BS 7177. This label has a blue border with white lettering and black cigarette and flame symbols.

## CARELESSNESS CAUSES FIRE Batch/ID. No.....

To comply with The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire)(Safety) Regulations:

This article does not include a schedule 3 interliner. All foams, fillings and composites have been tested to ensure compliance with the relevant ignitability test. All covers and fillings have been tested to ensure they are cigarette resistant. All covers have been tested to ensure they are match resistant.

*Further details are available from your retailer*

# Electrical equipment

*The Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994*  
*The Plugs And Sockets (Safety) Regulations 1994*

## What the law says

The regulations apply to any person who supplies electrical equipment as part of their business. The safety of any electrical equipment you provide in furnished accommodation is controlled by the regulations. All new or second-hand electrical equipment you supply with the accommodation must be safe. If it meets a currently acceptable standard, for example, a British or European Standard, it will normally meet the safety requirements.

## You should provide electrical equipment with instructions for how to use it safely.

Electrical appliances must be correctly fitted with an approved plug. All plugs should carry the name and reference number of the approved organisation, normally BSI (British Standards Institute) or ASTA BEAB (the hallmark of electrical approval). The plug does not have to be moulded on but it must have the correct fuse for the appliance.

## The law applies to:

- Electric fires
- Cookers
- Fridges
- Washing machines
- Lamps

These regulations do not apply to the fixed electrical and lighting circuits.



# What sort of dangers should I check for?

- Poor insulation and earthing
- Accessible live parts
- Worn and damaged cables
- Moving parts that are not covered
- Poor cord grips on appliances

## Wiring colour codes

*The wires of a three-core mains lead are usually coloured as follows.*

**Earth - Green and Yellow** 

**Neutral - Blue** 

**Live - Brown** 

If the wire is the old red, black and green colours, the product may not be safe and so may be illegal.

We strongly recommend that a qualified electrician check the equipment before the new tenant moves in, and at regular times after that.



# Gas cooking

## Gas Cooking Appliances (Safety) Regulations 1989

The regulations apply to second-hand gas cookers.

### What the law says

Second-hand gas cookers must:

- Have clear markings on the controls;
- Be marked with the manufacturer's or importer's name;
- Have suitable pan supports;
- Have tap handles which are easy to use but which cannot be turned on accidentally;
- Ignite quickly;
- Have oven doors which seal in hot gases; and
- Have instructions for how to use them safely.

They must not have:

- Sharp edges; or
- A casing which gets hot enough to injure someone.

Any hob cover must shut off the gas supply, or it must have a warning label saying that it does not.

### The Gas Safety (Installation & Use) (NI) Regulations 2004

Every year 30 people die from carbon-monoxide poisoning caused by gas appliances and flues. By law, any person who rents out a property and owns gas appliances and installation pipework must make sure that they are well maintained and safe to use. Please contact the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland for more information.

# Fireguards for domestic heaters

## Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994

## The Heating Appliances (Fireguards) (Safety) Regulations 1991

### What the law says

When you provide second-hand electric, gas or oil fires in rented accommodation,

*You must make sure that they have a built-in guard which meets the rules shown below.*

The gas fires controlled by these rules include mobile bottled-gas fires.

There should not be any gaps in the guard or between the guard and the fire, larger than those shown below (measurements are not to scale).

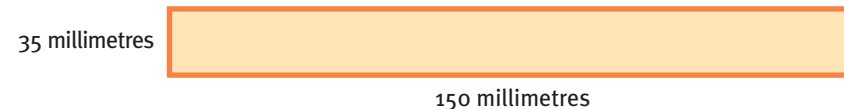
Electric fires with open metal elements (other than heaters for ceiling attachments)



Electric fires with silica covered elements (may have a guard with gaps this size)



Gas and oil fires (with some exceptions)



# Other appliances and equipment

## General Product Safety Regulations

All products that are not covered by specific regulations must meet the General Product Safety Regulations. You must make sure that all the items you provide in the accommodation are safe. This will include providing warnings and instructions with the products.

### For example

- Lawnmowers and strimmers must have the necessary guards in place.
- Chairs and stepladders must be strong enough to support a person's weight.
- Glass in furniture should meet British standards, where this applies.
- You should consider using safety glazing in doors and low level windows.

*Please check all the items regularly to make sure they are safe.*



# What happens if I supply unsafe items?

If you are convicted of providing unsafe items, the maximum fine is £5000 and you may be sent to prison for up to six months.

For further information contact the Environmental Health Department on 028 9027 0428

## Other useful contacts

### Bin collection, street cleaning or buying wheelie bins

Phone: 028 9027 0230

### Collecting bulky items (This service is free.)

Phone: 028 9027 0230

### Noise problems

Contact the noise hotline.

Phone: 028 9037 3006

### Housing problems

Information on providing rent books or enquiries about the law relating to unlawful eviction and harassment

Phone: 028 9027 0428