

Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2022



FIRE AND ELECTRICAL SAFETY STANDARDS

REGULATIONS

Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2022



Sections 1-6
commenced
on 1 April
2023



Section 7 Rent Controls

Statutory commitment fulfilled to research, consult and report on rent cut/freeze.

Decision on regulation for incoming Minister.



Section 8 & 10 Fire and Electrical Safety

Regulations and Guidance Notes closed on 6 December 2023. Summary Reports due early 2024.



Section 9 Energy Efficiency Standards

Planning on what needs to happen to underpin the setting of standards for the PRS.



Section 11 Notice to Quit Exceptions

In the process of undertaking a full Equality Impact Assessment, alongside drafting of regulations.



Section 12 Payment Options

Statutory commitment fulfilled to consult on tenant payment methods and report published.

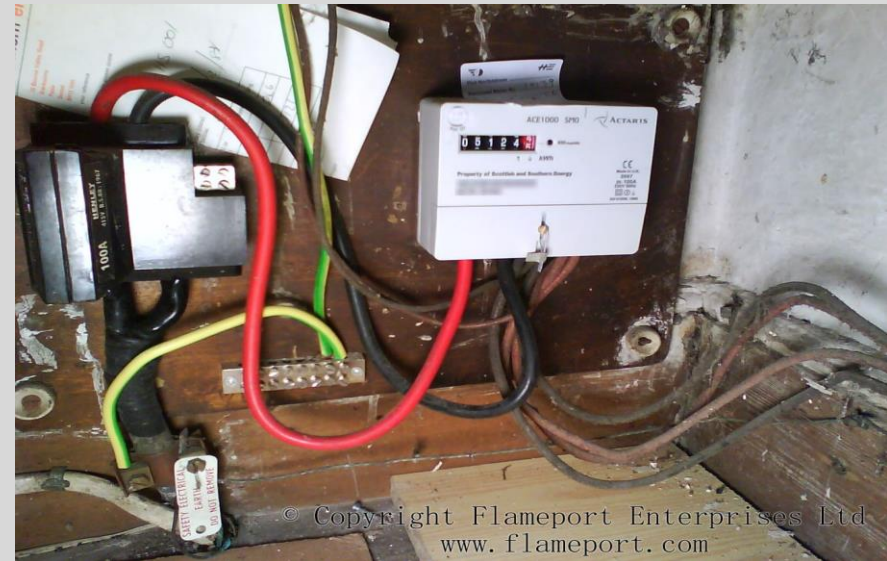
Decision on regulation for incoming Minister.



SAFETY STANDARDS FOR PRIVATE RENTAL PROPERTIES



**SECTION 8 SMOKE HEAT
AND CARBON MONOXIDE
ALARMS**



**SECTION 10 ELECTRICAL SAFETY
STANDARDS**

The Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2022

- Royal assent granted 27 April 2022.
- Implementation of Section 8 Smoke (Alarms) & Section 10 (Electrical Safety) underway.
- Expert Panel set up in September 2022 to advise.
- Panel members: NIFRS, Building Standards Technical Engineer, Electrical Safety First representative, & Council Representatives.
- Online 12-week public consultation commenced 13th September 2023 and closed 6th December 2023

Section 8: Smoke, heat, & carbon monoxide alarms

- Purpose of introduction: To reduce the risk of fire and the consequent loss of life, injury and damage to property.
- According to national fire statistics fires in properties that have alarms in place continue to:
 - ✓ Be discovered more rapidly (less than 5 minutes) after ignition.
 - ✓ Be associated with lower casualty rates.

Alarm Minimum Standard requirements

- A landlord must ensure the property has a minimum of:
- 1 smoke alarm installed in the room which is most frequently used by the occupants (living room)
- 1 heat alarm installed in every kitchen
- 1 smoke alarm in every circulation space
- 1 carbon monoxide alarm installed in any room which contains a fixed combustion appliance (other than a gas cooker) or an associated flue/channel.
- **The layout and design of property (such as open plan) means one alarm can combine the protection.**
- **Once the regulations are made** it is proposed that it apply to new tenancies within 3 and existing tenancies within 6 months.

Important points to note

- **Smoke and Heat Alarms**

- Can be mains wired, battery or a combination of both.
- Alarms must be interlinked.
- If area is open plan one smoke alarm can cover the whole room provided it can be located no more than 7.5 meters from any point in the room. (if the space includes a kitchen area it should be a heat alarm rather than a smoke alarm.)

- **Carbon Monoxide Alarms**

- Can be mains wired, battery or a combination of both.

- **All Alarms**

- If mains wired must be installed by a qualified electrician and will be subject to building control regulations.
- Must have a visible expiry date and must be replaced **before** expiry date.
- Battery alarms must be sealed tamper-proof units and have long life batteries.

Section 10: Electrical Safety Standards

PURPOSE

- To reduce the risk of death or serious injury due to electrical faults in Private Rental Properties.
- A Censuswide survey of Private Renters in Northern Ireland provided the following statistics:
 - ❑ 31% experienced broken sockets or light switches.
 - ❑ 28% experienced exposed wiring.
 - ❑ 27% experienced broken, damaged or overheating of electrical appliances provided by the landlord.
 - ❑ 25% experienced frequent tripping of the fuse box that was found to be caused by an appliance provided by their landlord.

Electrical Safety Standard Requirements

- Electrical safety standards must be met during the period the property is let.
- All electrical installations in the property to include hardwired appliances are inspected and tested by a **qualified electrician**.
- Inspections must be completed at least every **5 years**.
- The appropriate electrical inspection certificates (EICR, MEIWC and EIR) must be provided to the landlord for retention, the tenant and if requested the District Council.
- If the inspection identifies a fault remedial action or further investigation should be completed within the timescale stipulated.
- **Once the regulations are made** it will apply to all new tenancies within 9 months and existing tenancies must have the inspection/test completed within 18 months.

HMO's

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are covered under the HMO Licensing Scheme

Next Steps after consultation

Feedback

- Department is currently analysing points and recommendations received.
 - Reviewing Regulations and guidance accordingly.
 - Referencing back to experts on the original panel.
 - Two Summary Reports are being drafted up for publishing.
 - Finalisation of the final Regulations with the Dept Solicitors office.
-
- ❖ Section 8 can be implemented without an assembly and scheduled for early 2024.
 - ❖ Section 10 cannot progress without a functioning executive.



QUESTIONS

prs@communities-ni.gov.uk