



What landlords need to know about the new electrical safety laws

Landlords face tough financial penalties if they fail to comply with new electrical safety laws

The government has already announced that it intends to introduce legislation requiring landlords to carry out additional electrical checks.

Now it's taking things a step further by insisting that these checks are completed by 'competent and qualified' workmen.

What electrical qualifications will be required?

However, what these competent and qualified inspectors actually look like has yet to be decided, with the government still to publish further details.

What's known is that the workmen will be required to carry out the tests in line with existing British Standards (known as BS7671), which cover the safety of electrical installations.

But the government insists the requirements won't place 'excessive cost and time burdens on landlords'.

Reducing the risk of faulty electrics

The Minister for Housing and Homelessness, Heather Wheeler MP said: "These new measures will reduce the risk of faulty electrical equipment, giving people peace of mind and helping to keep them safe in their homes.

"It will also provide clear guidance to landlords on who they should be hiring to carry out these important electrical safety checks."

Electrical checks every five years

The measures follow a consultation carried out a year ago into electrical safety in the private rented sector.

In response to the consultation, the government announced last July that regulations would be introduced requiring landlords to undertake safety checks of their 'electrical installations' every five years.

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The government has defined these 'electrical installations' as 'the installations within a dwelling used for the supply of electricity', and cites 'consumer units' rather than individual electrical items such as kettles as an example.

It says the new regulations requiring landlords to have electrical installations in privately rented homes checked every five years will be brought in 'as soon as parliamentary time allows'.

Starting with new tenancies, it intends to introduce the new requirements on a phased basis.

Supporting tenants to feel safe

The government says the measures build on action to drive up standards in the private rented sector, helping people to feel safe at home.

Ministers have also introduced new powers for councils to tackle any rogue landlords renting out poor quality properties, including fines of up to £30,000 and banning orders for landlords who do not comply.

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