

Electrical safety for private tenants

This factsheet looks at electrical safety if you rent your home from a private landlord.

Your private landlord is responsible for electrical safety in your home.

Electrical installations

Electrical installations include wiring, plug sockets, light fittings and the consumer unit (sometimes called a fuse box).

Your landlord must inspect and carry out repairs within a reasonable time if you tell them that:

- any of the electrical installations in your home is unsafe, for example, loose wiring, exposed cables or a faulty plug socket
- there is a problem with electrics in your home that is making the property unfit to live in, for example you have an old fuse box that isn't broken but is not suitable to use with modern appliances.

How long it is reasonable for your landlord to take to do a repair depends on the seriousness of the problem and the nature of the work needed. For example, less time is needed to repair a broken socket than to rewire a house.

It's always good to notify your landlord in writing and retain proof of how and when you told your landlord about the problem, including keeping emails and texts. If you're unsure how to tell your landlord, you can use Shelter's [sample letter](#).

If your landlord doesn't do the necessary repairs, you can take action yourself or [contact the council](#). Ask for the private rented sector team or environmental health department.

Check the [NHAS factsheets](#) about repairs & safety and [section 21 notice](#) for more information on how to take action on repairs and what protection you may have if the landlord retaliates with a section 21 notice.

Electrical appliances

Your landlord is only responsible for fixing or replacing electrical appliances they have provided, unless your tenancy agreement says they must do more.

Some landlords may arrange for portable appliance testing (PAT) of the appliances in your home. This is not a legal requirement unless your landlord has been told to do so by the local council. This normally happens if the property you live in is a house in multiple occupation (HMO) subject to licensing by the council.

If you are concerned about an appliance in your home, tell your landlord. Don't use it if it's unsafe and don't attempt repairs yourself.

Electrical safety checks

If your tenancy started or was renewed on or after 1 June 2020, your landlord must:

- have arranged an electrical safety check and obtain an electrical safety report for the property before you moved in
- arrange follow up checks
- act on any recommendations in the electrical safety report
- ensure the electrics are safe throughout the tenancy
- show the report to tenants and prospective tenants.

After the first check, your landlord must carry out checks every five years, unless the latest report says the next one must be carried out before then.

If the report highlights a fault, your landlord must arrange for further inspection or repairs within 28 days, unless the report says they must do it sooner.

If you have been a tenant since before 1 June 2020 and have not renewed your contract:

- the rules on electrical safety checks will apply from 1 April 2021
- your landlord has until 1 April 2021 to carry out the first check.

These rules apply to all tenancies in the private rented sector. They don't apply if you are a lodger.

Next steps

If your landlord doesn't arrange for a check or ignores the engineer's recommendations, [contact the council](#).

The council can:

- serve a notice on the landlord ordering them to comply with the rules
- fine the landlord
- carry out the necessary works and pass the cost to your landlord.

Further advice

You can get further advice from england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice, your local Shelter advice service or local Citizens Advice. If you have nowhere to sleep tonight, are at risk of harm or losing your home within the next 2 months, call Shelter Helpline on **0808 800 4444** for advice and information on your options.*

*Calls are free from UK landlines and main mobile networks.



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Note
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