



Excess Cold

Hazard information for landlords

A healthy indoor temperature is around 21°C. Adverse health effects begin once the temperature drops to below 19°C but with serious risk below 16°C. Below 10°C, the risk of hypothermia increases, particularly in the elderly.

Cardiovascular conditions (heart attacks and strokes) account for half of the excess winter deaths and respiratory diseases (Influenza, Pneumonia and Bronchitis) for another third.

A range of health issues, illnesses and infections can be triggered by low indoor temperatures.

Causes

Absence of, or inefficient/faulty heating will stop the property from being heated to acceptable levels.

Lack of insulation will increase heat loss, making it more costly to keep the property at healthy indoor temperatures.

Excess ventilation can cause cold draughts to enter the property and reduce the temperature, leading to heat loss. Structural disrepair will also cause this along with too much ventilation. It can also reduce the thermal insulation of the property and set off issues with dampness, reducing the effectiveness of the thermal insulation and structure of the property.

The energy efficiency of a property will be directly affected by the thermal insulation, fuel type, size, design and type of heating installation and the ventilation. Too little insulation and heating or disrepair will reduce the energy efficiency.

Relevant Legislation

- The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015
- Housing Act 2004
- The Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985

Legal obligations of the landlord

All private rented properties rented from April 2018 must have a minimum energy efficiency rating of 'E'*

A minimum heating standard is at least 18°C in bedrooms and 21°C in living rooms, when the temperature outside is minus 1°C and it should be available at all times.

The heating installation must be kept in good working order at all times.

The design and maintenance of the property should not give rise to excess draughts.

Recommendations

- Supply and install loft insulation to a minimum depth of 220mm (dependant on materials used for insulation).
- Supply and install suitable wall insulation (cavity, internal or external).
- Make sure the heating system to the property is appropriate for the design, layout (including room sizes) and construction of the property, so that it's efficiently heated. Also let tenants understand how to use the heating.
- Each radiator/heater should be fully controllable and fitted with thermostatic controls. There should be timers fitted to individual heaters.
- Check the windows are maintained in good order and replace all louvre type single glazing or fully upgrade to double glazed windows.

*This requirement extends to all privately rented properties as of April 2020 regardless of tenancy start date.

More information on dealing with Excess Cold can be found at:

<http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/housing/heating-requirements-for-privately-rented-properties.pdf?sfvrsn=4>