

The private rented sector is currently the second largest housing tenure, accounting for one-in-five homes in England alone.

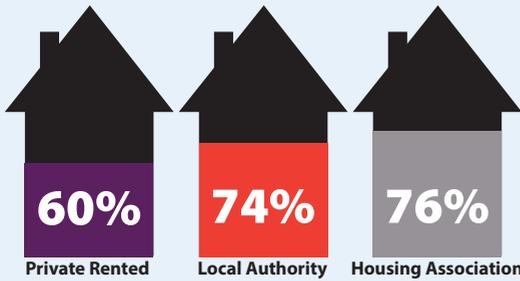
There is currently no requirement for landlords in England and Wales to undertake regular electrical safety checks in the private rented sector, exposing tenants to unnecessary levels of risk.

This can be simply addressed by bringing requirements for the sector in line with existing requirements for houses of multiple occupation (HMOs).



Risk

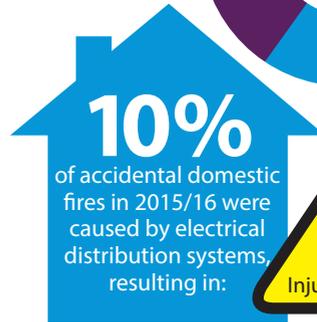
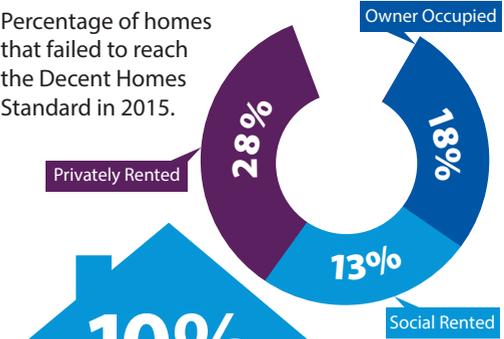
Installation of the 5 Recommended Electrical Safety Features



- 1 Modern PVC wiring
- 2 Modern earthing
- 3 Modern consumer units
- 4 Miniature circuit breakers
- 5 Residual Current Devices

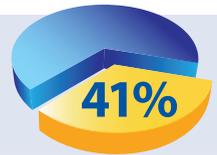
Decent Homes Standard

Percentage of homes that failed to reach the Decent Homes Standard in 2015.



*In Great Britain as a whole.

Over 41% of NAPIT Trade Association members see more serious electrical hazards in private rented homes than any other form of tenure.



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Comparison

If a rented property has a gas appliance, an annual gas safety test certificate, carried out by a registered engineer, is a mandatory requirement before letting is permitted.



If it has a solid fuel burning appliance, a carbon monoxide alarm is required and must be tested every year in England.

A smoke alarm on each storey of the house, tested every year, is also a legal requirement in England.



Issue



There is no detail in the Landlords and Tenants Act 1985 (England and Wales), of how the electrical safety of a property should be demonstrated by private rented sector landlords. The act just states that there is "implied a covenant by the lessor - to keep in repair and proper working order the installations in the dwelling-house for the supply of water, gas and **electricity**". This makes it difficult to know what type of electrical test is required, and the testing intervals that would be considered appropriate. It also makes it difficult for tenants to request for proof of the electrical safety standard of the home they wish to live in.

Proposal



Over 90% of NAPIT Trade Association members support the idea of mandatory electrical safety checks every five years, or more frequently, for homes in the private rented sector.

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Solution

We suggest that this electrical safety check should be in the form of an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) carried out by a competent registered installer with experience and knowledge in electrical inspecting and testing. This should be supported by a Routine Visual and Operational Check annually or at change of occupancy, carried out by the landlord or a responsible person, to ensure ongoing electrical safety between formal inspections, as recommended in the IET's Guidance Note 3, table 3.2. Both England and Wales have consulted on introducing mandatory EICR's every 5 years in the private rented sector.



Implementation

- 1 Utilise the Electrical Safety Clause (122) within the Housing and Planning Act 2016 (England) which received Royal Assent on the 12th May 2016, and gives the Government the powers to introduce Electrical Safety Standards within the Private Rented Sector through secondary legislation in England:
 - A) Ensure that an electrical safety check in the form of an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR), is to be carried out by a competent registered installer with experience and knowledge in electrical inspecting and testing, at least every 5 years, and
 - B) Obtain a report from the person conducting that test, specifying the results.
- 2 Require a Routine Visual and Operational Check of the electrical installation is carried out by the landlord or responsible person, annually or at change of occupancy, to ensure ongoing electrical safety between formal inspections.



The above implementation proposal should be adopted in both England and Wales. Scotland already requires an EICR to be completed in all privately rented homes at least every 5 years.

NAPIT

For more information, please contact Charlotte Lee, Head of External Affairs,
on **01623 812957** or **charlotte.lee@napit.org.uk**

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