

Healthy Homes Standards

New healthy homes standards for rental properties in New Zealand became law on 1 July 2019. The standards will play a significant role in improving the wellbeing of New Zealanders and their families.

Why is this important?

Nearly 600,000 households rent in New Zealand, and research tells us that rental properties are poorer quality than owner-occupied homes. The research shows a link between cold, damp and mouldy homes and negative health outcomes, particularly for illnesses such as asthma and cardiovascular conditions.

By improving the quality of rental homes, New Zealanders who rent will experience improved health, as well as lower medical costs and lower levels of hospitalisations. Warmer and drier homes are also less likely to have issues with mould or mildew damage, which better protects a landlord's investment.

What is the main information that I need to know?

Heating

All rental properties must have one or more fixed heaters, which can directly heat the main living room to at least 18°C and can maintain this temperature all year round. Certain heating devices that are inefficient, unaffordable or unhealthy will not meet the requirements of this standard.

Insulation

Ceiling and underfloor insulation has been compulsory in all rental homes since 1 July 2019, where it is reasonably practicable to install. Some existing insulation in rental properties will need to be topped up or replaced. Depending on location, ceiling insulation needs to meet minimum R-values,* or existing ceiling insulation installed before 1 July 2016 needs to be at least 120mm thick. Underfloor insulation needs a minimum R-value of 1.3. * 'R' stands for resistance – an R-value is a measure of how well insulation resists heat flow.

Ventilation

Rental properties must have at least one door or window (including skylights) that opens to the outside in all bedrooms, dining rooms, living rooms, lounges and kitchens. The openable windows and doors must have a total area of at least five per cent of the floor area in each respective room. The windows or doors must be able to be fixed in the open position. All kitchens and bathrooms must have an extractor fan that ventilates externally

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Moisture ingress and drainage

Rental properties must have efficient drainage for the removal of storm water, surface water and ground water, including an appropriate outfall. The drainage system must include gutters, downpipes and drains for the removal of water from the roof. If the rental property has an enclosed subfloor, a ground moisture barrier must be installed if it is reasonably practicable to do so

Draught stopping

Landlords must block any unreasonable gaps and holes in walls, ceilings, windows, floors and doors that cause noticeable draughts. Open fireplaces must be blocked unless the tenant and landlord agree otherwise.

There are some exemptions that apply to each of these standards, and there are also general exemptions that may apply to some rental homes.

Further information about exemptions is available on the Tenancy Services website at www.tenancy.govt.nz/healthy-homes/exemptions-to-the-healthy-homes-standards/

Source (Tenancy.govt.nz)

Private landlords must ensure their rental properties comply with the healthy homes standards within 90 days of any new, or renewed, tenancy.

If you have any questions about the above please do not hesitate to contact your property manager.

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