NAPIT | campaigns

Electrical Safety in the Private Rented Sector

In 2012-13, the private rented sector overtook the social rented sector to become the second largest form of tenure in England.

There is currently no requirement for landlords 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



In 2014, **16%** of private rented sector tenants in England experienced problems with electrical hazards.

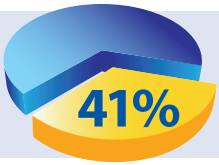
1,440,000
People in England estimated to be living in properties with unsafe electrics.
Source; YouGov survey commissioned by Shelter

12% of accidental domestic fires in 2013/14 were caused by electrical distribution systems, resulting in:



Source; DCLG

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



NAPIT | trade association

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 carbon burning appliance, a carbon monoxide alarm is required from October 2015 and must be tested every year.

A smoke alarm on each floor of the house, tested every year, is also a legal requirement from October 2015.

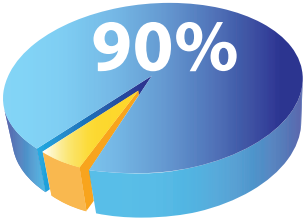


Issue



There is no detail in the Landlords and Tenants Act, of how the electrical safety of a property should be demonstrated by private rented sector landlords. This makes it difficult to know what type of electrical test, and the testing intervals that would be considered appropriate. It also makes it difficult for tenants to ask 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.

NAPIT | trade association

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 an annual visual check, carried out by the landlord or a responsible person, to ensure ongoing electrical safety between formal inspections.



Implementation

1. Amending the Landlords and Tenants Act 1985 to bring the wording into line with that of The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006:



A) Ensure that every fixed electrical installation is inspected and tested at intervals not exceeding five years by a person qualified to undertake such inspection and testing

B) Obtain a certificate from the person conducting that test, specifying the results of the test



2. Requiring an annual visual electrical check to be carried out using an industry agreed checklist, with the results kept securely as proof of compliance.



NAPIT

For more information, please contact Charlotte Lee, Group Public Affairs Manager, on **01623 812957** or **charlotte.lee@napit.org.uk**

NA/ES/0515 v1.0)