

Client Help Sheet 1 of 3

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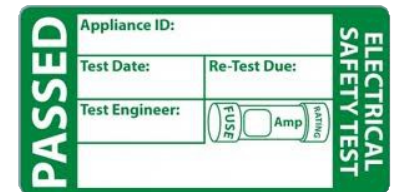
'Electricity Kills' Protect yourself, your family and friends in your rented home

Q: I currently live in rented accommodation, what do I need to look out for in regards to electrical safety?

A: Check the following:-

- Sockets, switches and light fittings are in good condition, with no signs of damage such as burn marks or cracking.
- Leads and cables on your appliances aren't damaged or frayed.
- Electrical appliances provided by your landlord have up to date PAT (Portable Appliance Test)

stickers on them. Although this is not a legal requirement, it is recommended by the Electrical Safety Council. A typical PAT sticker looks like this as shown on the right of the page. In most cases a passed item is given a green sticker and a failed item a red sticker. Please look out for any red PAT stickers, I've seen them about and the items in use in homes.



- The consumer unit/fuse box had RCD protection. An RCD is a life-saving device that protects against electric shock and reduces the serious risk of electrical fires. Your fuse box should look like this to the left of the page. If your consumer unit/fuse box does not look like this or at least very similar then please ask your landlord about getting the unit updated, it is his legal responsibility.
- The consumer unit as shown on the left is a 17th edition dual RCD protected unit which offers RCD protection across all the electrical circuits.
- That there is a report confirming that the electrical installation has been assessed and is safe to use. The report is called an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR). This was previously known as a Periodic Inspection Report (PIR). The Electrical Safety Council recommends that the EICR be carried out by a registered electrician at least every five years or on the change of tenancy.
- If you notice any recent electrical work has been carried out or your home is having electrical work carried out ask your landlord that if there is certification for the work confirming that it meets the UK national standard BS 7671.
- In fact please ensure that any work carried out in your home is carried out safely and to a safe standard.

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Q: Right so I've checked the above is there anything else I should look out for?

A: Yes there a few things that you can look out for to keep you safe. If you see any of these in your rented property then '**be warned**' as they show that the electrical installation is old and it may not have the proper safety checks.

- Check to see if the power cables are coated in black rubber. (Please be careful when you do this, if you are not competent to do this the please consult a fully registered electrician).
- Have a look to see if the consumer unit/fuse box has a wooden back, is made of wood, metal or indeed cast iron and if there seems to be a number of them in the same area.
- Old round pin socket fronts and round light switches, cables covered in fabric hanging from ceiling roses, brown or black light switches as shown on the right of the page and sockets mounted on skirting boards.
- Light switches mounted on the wall of the bathroom.



Q: OK, are there things that I can do day to day that will help keep me safe?

A: Yes there are, please remember not all electrical accidents are caused by faults. Some accidents are due to the tenants conduct within the home. To reduce the risk of electrical accidents and fires once you're in your rented home remember these few simple rules.

- DON'T overload sockets
- DON'T attempt to use electrical appliances from overseas in the UK. Products manufactured for use in other countries may operate at a different voltage and frequency.
- DON'T attempt any repairs to the electrical wiring or appliances yourself.
- DON'T take mains powered electrical products into the bathroom.
- DON'T touch electrical appliances or switches and sockets with wet hands.
- DON'T plug adaptors into adaptors.
- DON'T use fake or cheap counterfeit electrical equipment.
- DO tell your landlord/managing agent if you think there is a problem with the electrics, do not leave it to chance.

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Q: As usual one last question, what can I do if I have reported a problem and nothing is done about it?

A: If you have reported a problem to your landlord or managing agent and they have ignored it or refused to put the situation right, you should contact your local authority who will be able to assist you. Local authorities will ensure a landlord is meeting their legal obligations and can take enforcement action against them if they are found not to be.

Q: Are there any information help web sites that I could look at for safety help in my rented home?

A: Yes certainly there are, the below list is not exhaustive but will help you on the right track for tenant safety.

- www.electrical-experts.co.uk this is our own web site. There is lots of information and advice also we have other client 'help sheets' to download. You can ask a question using the contact page or book an appointment for one of our engineers to visit.
- www.esc.org.uk for more information on electrical safety in rented properties.
- www.gassaferegister.co.uk for information about gas safety in rented properties.
- www.firekills.direct.gov.uk this site will give you information about fire safety in rented properties.

Please remember electricity can be very dangerous. On average each week someone dies in their home¹ due to an electrical accident.

Almost half of all domestic fires are caused by electricity and, if you live in a privately rented house or flat, statistics show² you are at a higher risk of an electric shock.

