

Amenities and fire precautions

Adopted standards for the provision of amenities and fire precautions in houses in multiple occupation



**London Borough
of Hounslow**

As a landlord you have a legal responsibility to provide accommodation which is safe for your tenants to occupy, and which is of a decent standard.

This guide's aim is to seek to explain the minimum standards that the London Borough of Hounslow will apply to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and to assist you to meet your legal responsibilities. It is expected that all HMOs in the Borough will comply with these standards.

This is intended as a general guide only and the council will not accept any legal responsibility for any reliance solely on information provided.

The main legislation which affects you is contained in the Housing Act 2004, The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006, The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2006 and The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998.

Heating

Each unit of accommodation must be equipped with adequate means of space heating, capable of maintaining an average minimum temperature of 19°C throughout the entire house including the communal areas, for example bathroom, hallway etc. Ideally, a minimum temperature of 21°C should be achievable.

The occupier of each unit of accommodation must be able to control the temperature within their dwelling, for example via thermostatic temperature valves where central heating is provided, or individual wall mounted electric heaters.

Where possible, structural thermal insulation should be provided to minimise heat loss.

For more information on energy efficiency measures, please contact Charles Pipe, Energy Efficiency Officer 020 8583 3963.

Space Standards

Area of room	Maximum number of persons
ROOMS CONTAINING COOKING FACILITIES	
Less than 10.2 sq. m	0
Between 10.2 and 13.2 sq. m	1
More than 13.2 sq. m	2
ROOMS NOT CONTAINING COOKING FACILITIES	
Less than 6.5 sq. m	0
Between 6.5 and 9.5 sq. m	1
More than 9.5 sq. m	2

Note:

All rooms shall have a minimum floor to ceiling height of at least 2.14 meters (7 feet) over not less than 75% of the room area. Any floor area where the ceiling height is less than 1.53 metres (5 feet) shall be disregarded. Where bunk beds are used there shall be a minimum floor to ceiling height of 2.5 metres (8 feet 2 inches).

Washing Facilities

SCHEDULE OF AMENITY STANDARDS IN RELATION TO NUMBER OF PERSONS

1 - 4 persons

At least 1 bathroom and 1 WC (the bathroom and WC may be combined)
No requirement for wash hand basins in sleeping rooms

5 persons

1 wash hand basin is required in each sleeping room
1 bathroom AND 1 separate WC with WHB (but the WC can be contained within a second bathroom)

6 - 10 persons

1 wash hand basin required in each sleeping room
2 bathrooms AND 2 separate WCs with WHBs (but one of the WCs can be contained within one of the bathrooms).

11 - 15 persons

1 wash hand basin required in each sleeping room
3 bathrooms AND 3 separate WCs with WHBs (but two of the WCs can be contained within 2 of the bathrooms).

Kitchens

Shared kitchens

Where all or some of the units of accommodation share kitchen facilities, the following shall be provided as a minimum for every 5 people sharing one set of facilities:

- A fridge freezer with a gross capacity of at least 10.6 cubic feet / 300 litres.
- An oven and grill with a 4 ring hob
- Two 13 amp electric power points in addition to any provided for the oven, and washing machine/dishwasher and fridge-freezer. At least one of these power points should be at work top level.
- Work top made of a smooth and impervious material, measuring at least 1000 x 600 mm, and securely fixed in place.
- A sink with drainer made of smooth and impervious material with a supply of hot and cold water. The sink should be properly connected to pipes which safely carry away waste water to discharge into drainage system.

- A lockable food storage cupboard of at least 0.93m² per unit of accommodation

In all shared kitchens we recommend that in addition to the above, one microwave is provided for every five people.

We also recommend that wherever possible, each unit of accommodation is provided with a fridge with a gross capacity of at least 130 litres, with a frozen food compartment of at least 15 litres.

Kitchens for exclusive use

Where kitchen facilities have been provided for the exclusive use of the occupiers of any unit of accommodation, the following shall be provided as a minimum:

Single person unit of accommodation:

- a fridge with a gross capacity of at least 130 litres, with a frozen food compartment of at least 15 litres.
- A lockable food storage cupboard of at least 0.93m² per unit of accommodation.
- A sink with drainer made of smooth and impervious material with a supply of hot and cold water. The sink should be properly connected to pipes which safely carry away waste water to discharge into drainage system.
- Two 13 amp electric power points in addition to any provided for the oven, and washing machine/dishwasher and fridge-freezer. At least one of these power points should be at work top level.
- Work top made of a smooth and impervious material, measuring at least 1000 x 600 mm, and securely fixed in place.
- An oven with grill facility and at least two cooking rings.

'Space saver' kitchens are acceptable in single person units of accommodation only.

Unit of accommodation shared by two people:

As for single person accommodation above, however, a 4 ring hob must be provided, and space saver kitchens are not acceptable.

Water Supply

Each occupancy shall be provided with a supply of cold running water suitable for drinking, complying with statutory standards. The supply is to be sited over a sink. The water supply shall be protected as necessary from frost damage.

Stop valves to be provided for each floor or each separate letting in such a position as to be accessible by all persons in the building..

Soft Furnishings

You must ensure that any furniture and furnishings you supply meets the fire resistance requirements laid down in the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended).

Some materials used to fill or cover furniture may be a fire risk, highly flammable and may produce poisonous gases on burning, such as cyanide or carbon monoxide. The

Regulations set to phase out those potentially dangerous furniture and furnishings and make sure that those left or newly provided can pass tests for fire safety.

The Regulations require that:

- furniture and furnishings in accommodation let for the first time since 1 March 1993 must meet all the fire resistance requirements specified in the Regulations
- any new, replacement or additional furniture, including second-hand furniture, provided for an existing letting since 1 March 1993 must comply with the Regulations
- for new tenancies created on or after 1 March 1993, all furniture and furnishings must comply with the Regulations.

For more information, please contact Trading Standards 020 8583 5555

Gas Safety

The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 place duties on landlords to ensure that gas appliances, fittings and flues provided for tenants' use are safe.

Landlords must ensure an annual safety check is carried out on each gas appliance / flue in the HMO by a GAS SAFE registered gas installer. They should keep a record of each safety check for at least two years, and provide all tenants with a copy of the most recent certificate.

You can also call during normal office hours on 0800 408 5500 or log on to the Gas Safe website on www.GasSafeRegister.co.uk.

Electrical Safety

Landlords should ensure that the electrical equipment and installations in the HMO are safe.

We advise landlords to arrange for the testing of electrical installations within the HMO every 5 years by an approved contractor.

If landlords provide any electrical appliances (cookers, kettles, toasters, washing machines, immersion heaters, etc) as part of the tenancy, the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994 require them to ensure the appliances are safe to use. All portable appliances should be tested annually by an approved contractor

Fire Safety

The HMOs design, construction and condition should limit the spread of fire and smoke. In addition, there should be adequate fire protection to the means of escape and between each unit of accommodation. The HMO should be also be provided with appropriate detection and alarm systems and, as appropriate, emergency lighting and fire fighting equipment.

If building work is needed, for example to achieve adequate means of escape,

including electrical work such as appropriate emergency lighting or fire detection and alarm systems, it will also be necessary to submit an application to Building Control before doing the work.

All HMOs

Walls and ceilings to all standard rooms

- ~ within dwellings (including ceilings beneath attics)
 - ~ between dwellings
 - ~ bordering the means of escape route
 - ~ between basement / cellar and ground floor escape route
- must be capable of 30 minutes fire resistance.

Walls and ceilings to all higher risk rooms, such as large kitchens and inner rooms

- ~ within dwellings (including ceilings beneath attics and within basements or cellars)
 - ~ between dwellings, including those separating residential areas from commercial ones
 - ~ bordering the means of escape
- must be capable of 60 minutes fire resistance.

Polystyrene ceiling tiles are not acceptable in any area.

For all walls and ceilings, Construction specification to be tested to BS 476: Part 8: 1972 or BS 476: Parts 20 - 22: 1987 as appropriate

Doors to all standard risk rooms

- ~ within dwellings
 - ~ opening onto the protected route
- must be capable of 30 minutes fire resistance (FD30S).

Doors to all higher risk rooms, such as large kitchens and inner rooms

- ~ within dwellings
 - ~ opening onto the protected route
 - ~ within a separating wall
- must be capable of 60 minute fire resistance (FD60S).

For all fire doors, construction specification to be tested to BS 476: Parts 22, 23 and 31.1, and Installation to BS 8214: 1990.

Cupboards

Where situated within a staircase enclosure treat the cupboard as a standard risk room (as above). Door to be kept locked shut when not in use.

Under stairs cupboards must also be treated as a standard risk room. This may involve upgrading soffits and spandrels in addition to the cupboard door. To achieve the appropriate standard of fire resistance, see British Standard details above for doors, walls and ceilings.

Fire fighting equipment

13 A Water type fire extinguishers (typically 9 litre capacity) are required in the means of escape. One extinguisher should be provided for up to every 100 sq. m. of floor space, and as a minimum, one extinguisher should be provided per floor.

Fire fighting equipment should be located in a position that can be readily seen by persons following the escape route.

One 34B Carbon dioxide extinguisher (typically 2Kg capacity) is required in each shared kitchen within the HMO.

Portable fire extinguishers should have the BSI kitemark showing they comply with BS EN 3: 1996. They should be serviced annually

One fire blanket (*to comply with BS 6575: 1985*) shall be provided in each kitchen within the HMO. Fire blankets should be located near to the cooker, but not directly above it.

Automatic Fire Detection and Alarm Systems (AFDs)

The purpose of an AFD system is to detect and alert the occupiers of the HMO to the presence of smoke and / or fire. AFDs are required in all HMOs because the risk of death from fire is significantly greater in HMOs than in single family dwellings.

AFDs must comply with British Standards. In general the appropriate British Standard for AFDs in **hostels** is BS 5839: Part 1: 2002, and the appropriate British Standard for AFDs in **all other HMOs** is BS 5839: Part 6: 2004. The specification for the grade and category of AFD will vary depending on the size and layout of the HMO, and a summary of the requirements has been provided below, sorted by storey height of the HMO.

In general AFDs in HMOs would incorporate manually operated call points and a control panel on the means of escape. Automatic smoke detectors and alarms should be installed in the communal areas, storage cupboards and all sleeping rooms. In rooms with cooking facilities, automatic heat detectors and alarms should be installed. The alarms should be mains wired and linked so that all sound when one is activated. They should be wired to a single independent circuit at the main distribution board.

Two storey HMOs

Install an automatic fire detection and alarm system to Grade D, Category LD2 in all two storey HMOs. *System to conform to BS 5839 : Part 6 : 2004.*

In two storey Hostels, install an automatic fire detection and alarm system to L2 Category throughout. *System to conform to BS 5839 : Part 1 : 2002.*

Emergency lighting is not required unless the property is presented with a complex / unusual layout. *System to conform to BS 5266 : Part 1 : 1988.*

Three storey HMOs

Install an automatic fire detection and alarm system to Grade A, Category LD2, as well as Grade D, LD2 coverage in risk rooms. *System to conform to BS 5839 : Part 6 : 2004.*

In three storey Hostels, install an automatic fire detection and alarm system to L2 Category throughout. *System to conform to BS 5839 : Part 1 : 2002.*

Emergency lighting to be provided in the escape route. *System to conform to BS 5266 : Part 1 : 1988.*

Four storey HMOs

Install an automatic fire detection and alarm system to Grade A, Category LD2, as well as Grade D, LD2 coverage in risk rooms. *System to conform to BS 5839 : Part 6 : 2004.*

In four storey Hostels, install an automatic fire detection and alarm system to L2 Category throughout. *System to conform to BS 5839 : Part 1 : 2002.*

Emergency lighting to be provided in the escape route. *System to conform to BS 5266 : Part 1 : 1988.*

Five storey HMOs

Lobbies are required between **all** risk rooms and the stairway on all storeys except the top storey unless:

- there is a secondary means of escape; or
- there is an independent second stairway

Install an automatic fire detection and alarm system to Grade A, Category LD2, as well as Grade D, LD2 coverage in risk rooms. *System to conform to BS 5839 : Part 6 : 2004.*

In five storey Hostels, install an automatic fire detection and alarm system to L2 Category throughout. *System to conform to BS 5839 : Part 1 : 2002.*

Emergency lighting to be provided in the escape route. *System to conform to BS 5266 : Part 1 : 1988.*

Before installing any AFD, we would advise you to consult either your local Fire Station, Hounslow Council's Private Sector Housing Unit or a Fire Safety Engineer.

Contacts

HMO Team
Private Sector Housing
Civic Centre
Lampton Road
Hounslow TW3 4DN

Tel: 020 8583 3870 or 020 8583 3871
Email: hmo@hounslow.gov.uk

Fax: 020 8583 3990

Building Control
Civic Centre
Lampton Road
Hounslow TW3 4DN

Tel: 020 8583 5403/04 Fax: 020 8583 5405
Email: buildingcontrol@hounslow.gov.uk

Borough Planning Department
Civic Centre
Lampton Road
Hounslow TW3 4DN

Tel: 020 8583 2000 Fax: 020 8583 4900
E-mail: planningcomments@hounslow.gov.uk

Trading Standards
Health and Safety Executive
Gas Safe Register
DCLG
NICEIC
Approved contractors