

Risk Assessments and Homestay Fire Safety

All homestay accommodation must comply with current law regarding the accommodation of paying guests. This includes regularly updating gas safety certificates and carrying out a fire risk assessment at least once a year. All records need to be kept so that they can be seen by any UKguests staff member upon request.

Gas Safety

It is your responsibility to ensure you have proof that your property meets the regulations governing gas safety, and that all gas appliances in the property are checked for safety every 12 months by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

It is also recommended that you fit carbon monoxide detectors. These should be British Standard approved, with a battery life of up to five years. Fit them in each room with a gas appliance.

Fire Safety

Fire safety regulations only apply to Households in Multiple Occupation. However, all landlords and homestay hosts are subject to common law, and have a duty to make sure their properties are safe. We therefore ask that all hosts follow this fire safety advice:

- All new properties must have mains-operated interconnected smoke alarms fitted on every level of the property. In older properties, standard battery-operated smoke alarms should be fitted on every level.
- If you fit battery-operated smoke alarms (ideally with a 10-year battery life) in your property, they should be tested regularly, ideally once a week.
- You should make sure there are proper emergency exits (usually this can be the front and back doors), and that emergency exits and passageways are always kept free of clutter.
- Provide all guests with a fire escape plan so they know what to do in the event of a fire.

General Safety

If some of the bedrooms are on the ground floor or the windows of bedrooms can be accessed easily from outside, fit safety catches so the windows can only open a small amount.

Safety catches on windows should also be provided if guests have small children, especially if the accommodation is above the ground floor.

However, if a window is the only means of escape in the event of a fire, make sure that the safety catch is easily removable from the inside so that the window can be opened fully to get out.

To keep your guests safe from burglars, fit a door chain and a spy hole on the front door, so they can see who is at the door before opening it.

UKguests will provide further guidance, an example record form, and a checklist during the inspection visit to your homestay accommodation.

FIRE SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE

Here are five easy steps to help you complete your fire risk assessment:

Step 1 - Identify the fire hazards in your home

- Sources of ignition such as naked flames and heaters
- Sources of fuel such as accumulated waste and belongings
- Sources of additional oxygen, i.e. forced air circulation, meditational oxygen supply

Step 2 – Identify people at risk

- Children
- Parents with babies
- The elderly, infirm or people who are disabled or who have learning difficulties. For example, guests with a hearing impairment will not hear a standard smoke alarm, or despite having an evacuation plan, guests with restricted mobility may not be able to get out in time

Step 3 – Evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from risk

- Replace highly combustible materials with less combustible ones
- Ensure adequate separation between combustibles and ignition sources

Step 4 – Record and plan

- Have a fire safety record book or file
- Record the hazards and people identified as especially at risk in Steps 1 and Step 2
- Record what you did for Step 3
- Make an emergency evacuation plan and include any actions that need to be taken in the event of a fire – display this plan in each guest's room
- Keep a record of having informed guests about the emergency evacuation plan
- Keep a record of weekly checks made to battery-operated fire alarms and fire extinguishing equipment, e.g. fire extinguishers and blankets

Step 5 – Review

- Risk assessments should be up to date - re-examine them every time there is a significant change to the level of risk in your home, e.g. change of guest.

Fire Safety Risk Assessment Sheet

The Risk Assessment Sheet on the following page must be completed and kept for our review during our regular property visits every two years.