

Check Before You Rent



Thinking about renting a property?

Then **Check Before You Rent!** These checklists, give all the vital questions you need to ask when considering renting a property!

Check Before You Rent includes:

- What you need to know before viewing the property
- What to look out for when viewing the property
- What you should check before you sign any contracts for the property.

Questions cover all the legal aspects and requirements that you need to consider when renting a property. In addition also included in this guide are fire and security questions.

Please note that this is a guide - and highlights valuable information for you to check prior to making a decision to rent a property.

When you use the checklists, you may consider that the property has highlighted a number of warnings that you feel should be reported to the local authority. You have an option to report the property if you see fit and by doing so, agree to the information you provide from the checklist being used by the local authority. The local authority will take the information and make a decision if any action is required.

If the issues raised pose a substantial risk they may contact you for further information. Contact information is available on the Homestamp website.

Check Before You Rent is also available to download for FREE as an App.

Our app is now available on Google Play.™

Homestamp's Check Before You Rent for iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.



Photocopy the checklists and use them every time you view a property.

Information can be downloaded FREE from

www.homestamp.com

Check Before You Rent

Property Information

Information on the property you are looking to view for renting. The checklists use a 'traffic light check system - where red or orange boxes are checked - you should ask questions.

Address:

Postcode:

Phone:

Email:

Website:

How is the property rented?

via an Agency

Agency name

Agency address

Agency postcode

direct from a Landlord

Name:

Which Local Authority area is the property located in:

Is it a HMO property?

Yes No

HMO stands for House in Multiple Occupation,
for more details go to www.homestamp.com/hmo

What to ask before you view the property

If you are looking to rent via an Agency

Is the Agency a member of an independent complaints scheme? Yes No Don't know
(This is a legal requirement)

Which one? The Property Ombudsman Ombudsman Services Property Redress Scheme

Is the agent accredited through a professional body?

Yes No

Which one? ARLA NALS RICS Other

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Before you view a property

If you are looking to rent direct from a Landlord

Is the landlord a member of a Landlord's Accreditation Scheme or professional body?
Which one?

Yes No Don't know

How much is the rent?

£

When is it to be paid?

Weekly Monthly Don't know

Do you have to pay rent in advance?

Yes No Don't know

Does the landlord except housing benefits/Local Housing Allowance? (if applicable)

Yes No N/a

In the case of communal areas for services, is there a service charge and, if so, who pays for it?

Yes landlord Yes tenant N/a

If there is a service charge-how much is it?

£

When is it to be paid?

Weekly Monthly

Do you have to pay a deposit to price renting the property?

Yes No Don't know

How much is the deposit?

£

Where will the deposit be held?
(It is a legal requirements for the deposit to be held by one of the following agencies)

Deposit Protection Service
 My Deposit
 Tenancy Deposit Scheme

Which Council Tax band is the property?

Who plays the Council Tax?

Landlord Tenant

All there any other fees or charges will be applicable
(For example management fees, letting agencies)?

Yes No Don't know

How much are these fees?

£

Is there a written tenancy agreement?

Yes No Don't know

How much notice do you have to give if you want to leave?

Who plays the water, gas and electric bills?

Landlord Tenant

What type of heating does the property have?

Gas Electric Other

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Is there an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)?
(This is a legal requirements - EPCs can be used directly to compare running costs of different premises. You may want to check costs of this certificate was issued sometime ago)

Yes No Don't know

How much does the EPC show will cost each year for lighting?

£

How much does the EPC shows will cost each year of eating?

£

How much does the EPC show it will cost each year for hot water?

£

When was the EPC issued?

If there is a gas supply to the property, does it have a Gas Safety Certificate less than 12 months old?
(This is a legal requirement)

Yes No Don't know

Is there an electrical test certificate from the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contractors (NICEIC) or other suitably qualified electrical engineer?
(While this is not a legal requirement, it is recommended electrical safety should be checked)

Yes No Don't know

Is the property furnished?

Furnished Part-furnished Un-furnished

If you supply it doesn't conform to the appropriate fire regulations? (For further information see the Furniture and Furnishings advice)

Yes No Don't know

Is there an inventory carried out at the start end of the tenancy?
(A detailed inspection and list of the condition and contents of the property, agreed and signed by all parties)

Yes No Don't know

Is the property covered by insurance?
(Make sure that the insurance covers legal liability to cover you in the case of injury or damage)

Yes No Don't know

Is the property in a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme area?

Yes No Don't know

Who is responsible for garden/ out buildings maintenance?

Landlord Tenant Don't know

Is the property in an area known to flood and has been flooded in the past five years?

Yes No

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Viewing the property

Outside the property

- Are the bricks and joints between now in good condition? Yes No Don't know
- Are all external doors in good condition and can they be opened and closed easily? Yes No Don't know
- Are the windows in good condition, free from rot and glazing intact? Yes No Don't know
- All the windows double glazed? Yes Partly No
- Does the guttering and downpipes looking good condition? (Look for water stains down they brickwork from any broken or missing sections as this can cause serious internal dampness) Yes No Don't know
- Is the roof in good condition, free from missing or slipped tiles or slates? Yes No Don't know
- Does the chimney look safe? Yes No Don't know
- Is there a television aerial and does it look safe? Yes No Not Sure N/a
- All the garden and outbuildings in good condition? Yes No Not Sure N/a
- Are there any dangerous changes in garden level, steep steps without handrails or damage paths or steps? Yes No Not Sure N/a
- If there is a pond in the garden, is it safe?(This is important if there will be small children living in the property) Yes No N/a

Inside the property

- Do all doors and windows open and closed easily (try to open) and all windows are draught free? Yes No Not Sure
- Is the property clean and free from any musty (damp) smell? Yes No Not Sure
- Do the window and door locks work correctly and they safe and secure? (Try them!) Yes No Not Sure
- Does the property have full working central heating or a suitable alternative that will keep you warm in winter? (Check it!) Yes No Not Sure

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Do all windows above ground level have opening restrictors which can be easily opened by an adult in the event of an emergency?
(Important if there will be children in the household)

Yes No Not Sure

Is the property free from holes, gaps in walls, ceilings, around doors etc. where pests could enter or where fire could spread and spread from room to room within the property?

Yes No Not Sure

Do the stairs appear safe and fitted with a secure handrail all the way up?

Yes No Not Sure

Are all the floorboards even and safe with no trip hazards?

Yes No Not Sure

Are all areas free from mould growth, condensation or serious dampness?

Yes No Not Sure

Is there a supply of hot and cold water to all sinks, baths and showers?*(Try the taps!)*

Yes No Not Sure

Does the property have enough light, either natural or artificial?

Yes No Not Sure

Are the sockets and light fittings all modern?*(i.e. not round pinned plug sockets, 'Bakerlite' settings, black rubber covered wires or twin twisted wires to ceiling light fittings)*

Yes No Not Sure

Are there enough plug sockets in all habitable rooms?
(At least two double or four single sockets)

Yes No Not Sure

Are there smoke alarms fitted?

Yes No

If yes, do they work? *(From October 2015 it will be a legal requirement that there must be smoke alarm fitted on each floor - e.g. hall and landing)*

Yes No Not Sure

Is there a carbon monoxide detector fitted?
(This is a legal requirement of the property has a solid fuel burning heating system installed)

Yes No Not Sure N/a

KITCHEN

Are there enough work surfaces and cupboards?
(Would you be able to transfer pots to work surfaces both sides of the cooker?)

Yes No Not Sure

Are cupboards secure and in good condition?

Yes No Not Sure

Is there a cooker supplied? Does it work correctly?
(Check it)

Yes No Not Sure N/a

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Is there a fridge supplied? Does it work correctly? *(Check it!)* Yes No Not Sure N/a

Check any other appliances supplied - are they in safe condition and in good working order? *(Check to see if the equipment has been recently tested and labelled with an inspection date)* Yes No Not Sure N/a

Is there an extractor fan? Does it work? Try it! Yes No Not Sure N/a

If there are windows open and closed easily? Yes No Not Sure N/a

Is the sink secure and clean with no leaks from the pipes beneath the sink? Yes No Not Sure

Is there sufficient natural or artificial lighting? Yes No Not Sure

BATHROOM AND TOILET

All the toilets clean, in good working order (no leaks, fixed seat etc.), fitted securely with a wash handbasin in close proximity? Yes No Not Sure

Is this sufficient natural or artificial lighting? Yes No Not Sure N/a

If there is an extractor fan, does it work correctly? *(Try it!)* Yes No Not Sure N/a

All the wash and basins, bath and/or showers in working Yes No Not Sure

If there are windows, do they open and close easily? *(Try them)* Yes No Not Sure N/a

REQUIREMENTS FOR HMOs

Note: There are various legal responsibilities placed on landlords for HMOs *(for example where you are renting a bedsit in a property).*

Is there a fire and smoke alarm detection system fitted, is it working? *(Ask for a test and to see the test certificate)* Yes No Not Sure

If emergency lighting is fitted, does it work? *(Ask for a test)* Yes No Not Sure

Are there fire extinguishers and fire blankets provided? *(The Fire Service recommends people raise the alarm and evacuate premises in the event of a fire. Where equipment is installed the landlord should provide basic information in relation to the type of fire extinguishers and blankets available and their safe use)* Yes No Not Sure

Or all doors openable from inside without the use of the key? Yes No Not Sure

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- Are all internal doors in place, and fit well into the frames and closes and latch easily? Yes No Not Sure
- Are halls, stairs and landings clear of obstruction and storage? Yes No Not Sure
- If other escape routes are provided e.g. external stairs, do the access door(s) / window(s) open easily and fully? Yes No Not Sure
- Could you or anyone else who is going to live in the property physically get through any window provided for escape? Yes No Not Sure
- Can you vacate the property in an emergency without going through a risk room e.g. kitchen / living room? Yes No Not Sure
- To all escape routes lead to a place of safety away from the building that is not an enclosed space? Yes No Not Sure N/a

Renting the property

- Has the landlord ask you for references and checked your immigration status? *(Under the Immigration Act 2014, this is a legal requirement in Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, and Wolverhampton areas and it is anticipated this will be rolled out nationally)* Yes No
- Do you have the full contact information including the name, address and telephone number for your agent or landlord? Yes No
- Are you clear on the length and term of your tenancy and the notice period which should be given, when you choose to move out? Yes No
- Have you checked the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) and how much it will cost to heat the property? Yes No
- Have you checked the Gas Safety Certificate? Yes No
- Have you checked for an electrical test certificate? Yes No
- Has a full inventory check being completed to the satisfaction of both parties, and is there a written agreements of you both to sign? Photos can be attached to support an inventory list prior to signing. Yes No
- Have you checked that any furnishings conform to fire safety regulations? Yes No
- Are you satisfied by the condition of the building and its facilities? Yes No

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If not, are there any items that need to be replaced or repairs that need doing? You should agree with the landlord, in writing, any work that should be completed and by when, or insist that it is undertaken before you agree the contract or move in.

Yes No

Do you know where to contact for repairs in an emergency?

Yes No

How you confirmed property insurance and what is covered as part of this insurance?

Yes No

If you are paying a deposit, are you clear about which scheme it is being paid into? *(It is a legal requirement for deposit to be paid into one of three schemes. This must be done within 30 days of taking a deposit from you as the tenant and you must be informed how the deposit is being protected within 30 days).*

Yes No

How you been given a copy of the deposit scheme paperwork?

Yes No

Are you clear how you will be paying in rent, by way, how and to whom?

Yes No

If you are paying rent in advance, have you budgeted for this?

Yes No

Are you clear who is responsible for paying bills, which ones when and how?

Yes No

Have you taken meter readings?

Yes No

Gas:

Electric:

Have the utility companies for the services being notified?

Yes No

How do you checked if there are any restriction on the keeping of pets or animals?

Yes No

Is this a smoke free accommodation or are there conditions prohibiting smoking?

Yes No

Are you sure that the property is as safe from fire as possible?

Yes No

Have you checked that the property is as secure as possible?

Yes No

Do you have a copy of the tenancy agreement? *(Keep it in the same place with all of the paperwork concerning your tenancy)*

Yes No

Have you received a copy of the government's 'How To Rent' guide? This is a legal requirement from 1 October 2015.

Yes No

Check you are supplied with all keys to the property, including window locks etc!

Yes No