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## TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE

### NOTES FOR GUIDANCE

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## Safety Of Goods In Rented Or Let Accommodation

### Introduction

If you are in the business of letting furnished accommodation, such as houses, flats, bed-sits, holiday homes or caravans, you should be aware that:

- all goods which you supply with the tenancy must meet legal safety requirements; and
- anyone injured by unsafe goods you have supplied may be able to claim compensation from you through the courts.

If you are unsure if goods are safe then we strongly advise you not to include them in the letting arrangement until they have been checked by an expert.

### ***Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988***

Since 1 March 1993 upholstered furniture in rented or let accommodation must meet the same stringent standard for furniture sold in a shop.

The Regulations apply to furniture of any description for private use including sofa's and sofa-beds, armchairs and futons (including loose or stretched covers), beds, headboards and mattresses, fold-down beds, nursery furniture, scatter and floor cushions, pillows, seat pads on chairs, and so on.

The safety provisions require that this furniture must pass the cigarette test, fillings must be fire retardant, and furniture with permanent covers must pass specified match tests.

(Some of the above does not apply to mattresses, bed bases, pillows, cushions and insulated bags for carrying infants under the age of 6 months).

Furniture made before 1<sup>st</sup> January 1950 is excluded from the controls. Bed clothes, carpets, curtains and pillowcases are also excluded.

### ***How do I know if furniture complies?***

Upholstered furniture meeting the new requirements will normally carry a permanent label with the heading **CARELESSNESS CAUSES FIRE**. In the case of mattresses, look for a label stating compliance with BS 7177 Any items not bearing this labelling may not conform to the Regulations, and you are advised not to include them in any letting until you have obtained expert advice.

## **Does the same apply to furniture which isn't upholstered?**

No. Furniture which isn't upholstered is governed by the **General Product Safety Regulations 2005**, where the requirement is that the furniture, when used under normal or reasonably foreseeable conditions of use should present no risk (or minimal risk) to the user.

### ***Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994***

All mains electrical equipment, whether new or second-hand, supplied with the accommodation must be safe. If it complies with an acceptable British or European Standard, it will normally meet the safety requirements.

#### **These safety requirements cover:**

- construction
- insulation and earthing
- protection from electric shock
- adequate guards for radiant heaters or moving parts
- labelling
- the need to provide instructions for safe use.

#### **Generally:**

- Access to live, hot or moving parts must not be possible without the use of a tool
- Cables should be of the double insulated type with no basic insulation exposed
- Wiring should not be damaged in any way
- Cord grips on appliances must be effective
- All guards should be in place and effective

### ***Wiring Colour Codes***

The wires of a 3-core mains lead are usually coloured as follows:

- Earth - green and yellow
- Neutral - blue
- Live - brown.

As an electrical item fitted with a lead with the old red, black and green colours may be more than 30 years old, there is a danger that the insulation may have perished through time making it unsafe and so illegal.

If you change a lead have it checked by an electrician. Incorrect wiring may cause electrocution.

### ***Plugs and Sockets etc (Safety) Regulations 1994***

Electrical appliances must be correctly fitted with an approved plug with sleeved pins. All plugs should carry the name and reference number of the approved body, normally BSI or ASTA. The plug does not have to be moulded on, but it must be fitted with the correct fuse for the appliance.

All sockets (e.g. on mains extension leads), adaptors and similar devices must meet British or European Standards.

### **Heating Appliances (Fireguards) (Safety) Regulations 1991**

Electric fires must have a fireguard which meets British Standards, or the European equivalent. The distance between the bars and the strength of the guard are laid down in these Standards.

The fireguard is satisfactory if any vertical bars are 5 mm or less apart, otherwise the guard must satisfy one of the following:

- If the horizontal bars are 12 mm or less apart the vertical bars must not be more than 125 mm apart; or
- If the horizontal bars are 20 mm or less apart then the vertical bars must not be more than 50 mm apart.

### **Electric Blankets**

We advise you not to supply second-hand electric blankets, as their history, usage and condition may be unknown.

### ***Checking for Compliance***

You must take all reasonable precautions to ensure electrical equipment is safe and correctly labelled. You are strongly advised to have the equipment checked by a qualified electrician before the start of each let. It would be good practice to have the equipment checked at regular intervals thereafter. You are also advised to obtain and retain test reports detailing the equipment, the tests carried out and the results.

### **Gas Appliances**

There are requirements relating to the installation and use of gas appliances. These are enforced by the Health and Safety Executive. Further information can be obtained by contacting the HSE Gas Safety Advice Line on 0800 300363.

Regulations enforced by Trading Standards which control the **supply** of gas appliances include:

### **Gas Appliances (Safety) Regulations 1995**

Require that all new gas appliances must be safe and come with instructions when supplied.

## **Gas Cooking Appliances (Safety) Regulations 1989**

Applies to second-hand cookers.

### **They must:**

- have legible and durable markings on the controls;
- be marked with the manufacturers or importers name;
- have adequate pan supports;
- have tap handles which are easy to operate, but not liable to be turned on accidentally;
- ignite promptly;
- have oven doors which seal in hot gasses;
- have instructions for safe use.

### **They must not have:**

- sharp edges;
- a casing which gets hot enough to cause injury.

Any hob cover must either shut off the gas supply, or be clearly and durably marked with a warning that it does not shut off the gas supply.

## **Fireguards on gas fires and oil heaters**

Fireguards on gas fires and oil heaters must comply with the relevant British or European Standard.

## ***Gas Catalytic Heaters***

Gas catalytic heaters must not contain asbestos.

## ***Oil Heaters (Safety) Regulations 1977***

The Regulations cover the stability, flame extinction and labelling of paraffin heaters.

## ***Other appliances and equipment***

All equipment and items not covered by specific regulations must comply with the **General Product Safety Regulations 2005**. You must ensure that all items and equipment you supply with the accommodation are safe. This will include supplying warnings and instructions where this is necessary for their safe use.

For example, garden equipment must be provided with the necessary guards in place; chairs and step ladders must be strong enough to support a person's weight. Glass in furniture should satisfy British Standards where applicable. Household items should not have sharp edges which could cause injury in normal use. You are advised to check all items at regular intervals to ensure they are safe.

If you require further information please contact the Trading Standards Service.

*This is not an authoritative document on the law and is only intended for guidance.*

For a copy of this document on audio cassette, in large print or Braille, or if you require assistance in reading this, please contact the Council's Policy Unit.

Shetland Islands Council Policy Unit  
Town Hall, Hillhead, Lerwick, Shetland ZE1 0HB

Tel: 01595 744537

Email: policy@shetland.gov.uk

This document is also available at [www.shetland.gov.uk/tradingstandards](http://www.shetland.gov.uk/tradingstandards)

### Do you require the services of an interpreter?

If you do, please contact **01595 744537** for assistance.

We will provide an interpreter, or we can supply the document in your choice of language.

你是否需要傳譯服務?

如果需要，請致電 01595 744537 尋求幫助。

我們會適當地為你安排傳譯人員或者提供你需要文字的文件。

ਕੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪਰੈਟਰ (ਤੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਆ) ਦੀਆਂ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ?

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਲਈ 01595 744537 ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

ਜਿਥੇ ਸੰਭਵ ਹੋ ਸਕਿਆ ਇੰਟਰਪਰੈਟਰ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ ਜਾਏਗਾ ਜਾਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਪਸੰਦ ਵਾਲੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਭੇਜਿਆ ਜਾਏਗਾ।

### আপনি কি একজন দোভাষীর সাহায্য চান ?

যদি আপনার প্রয়োজন থাকে তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে যোগাযোগ করুন -01595 744537 যেখানে সম্ভব সেখানে একজন দোভাষীর ব্যবস্থা করা হবে অথবা আপনি যে ভাষাতে চা দলীলটি অনুবাদ করে আপনাকে প্রদান করা হবে।

کیا آپ کو انٹریپرٹری کی ضرورت ہے؟

اگر ایسا ہے تو پھر (انٹریپرٹری) مدد حاصل کرنے کیلئے فون نمبر 01595 744537 پر بات کریں۔

جہاں ممکن ہو وہاں انٹریپرٹری کی سہولت فراہم کی جائے گی یا پھر (مطلوبہ) دستہ دیز کارتر جم آپ کی

پسندیدہ زبان میں فراہم کیا جائے گا۔