

New healthy homes standards for rental properties

Ministry of Housing 2019

New minimum standards will make rental properties drier and warmer. The healthy homes standards, which become law later this year, aim to improve heating, insulation, ventilation and drainage, reduce moisture and stop draughts.

Ensuring all tenants have a warm and dry home is a priority for the Government, to help improve the wellbeing of New Zealanders and their families. Nearly 600,000 households rent in New Zealand, and research has shown that New Zealand's rental housing is of poorer quality than owner-occupied homes.

The healthy homes standards

Heating	The main living area must have a fixed heating device that can heat the room to at least 18°C.
Insulation	Ceiling and underfloor insulation must either meet the 2008 Building Code (see more about this below), or (for existing ceiling insulation) have a minimum thickness of 120mm and be in reasonable condition.
Ventilation	Ventilation must include openable windows in the living room, dining room, kitchen and bedrooms. Rooms with a bath or shower or indoor cooktop must have an appropriately sized extractor fan.
Drainage	Rental properties must have efficient drainage, guttering, downpipes and drains.
Moisture	If a rental property has an enclosed subfloor space, a ground moisture barrier must be installed where possible.
Draughts	Any gaps or holes in walls, ceilings, windows, floors and doors that cause noticeable draughts must be blocked. This includes all unused chimneys and fireplaces.

[About the healthy homes standards \(external link\)](#) - Ministry of Housing and Urban Development

Meeting the 2008 Building Code

Insulation requirements under the 2008 Building Code are measured by R-value. 'R' stands for resistance — how well insulation resists heat flow. The higher the R-value, the better the insulation.

You can check the R-value of new insulation by checking the product packaging. For existing insulation, you may need a professional insulation installer to tell you if it meets the regulations. If you're looking for an installer, the Insulation Association of New Zealand and the Energy Efficiency Conservation Authority can help.

[Insulation Association of New Zealand \(external link\)](#)

[Insulation installers \(external link\)](#) - EECA Energywise

Map of climate zones Minimum R-values vary across New Zealand's three climate



zones.

- Zone 1 — ceiling R 2.9, underfloor R 1.3
- Zone 2 — ceiling R 2.9, underfloor R 1.3
- Zone 3 — ceiling R 3.3, underfloor R 1.3

Many rental homes in New Zealand are well below the World Health Organization's recommended minimum indoor temperature of 18°C.

Existing insulation may meet the standard — or not

Many rental homes in New Zealand don't have adequate insulation, meaning they're more likely to be cold and damp. Insulation minimises heat loss, making homes easier and cheaper to keep warm and dry, and healthier to live in.

Some landlords have installed new insulation during the past three years to comply with legislation that was introduced in 2016. Those properties should already meet the 2008 Building Code, so they won't need to do anything further to meet insulation requirements under the healthy homes standards.

However, insulation in some homes may need to be 'topped up' to meet the new minimum requirements under the healthy homes standards.

It's important for landlords to remember that existing insulation requirements under the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 still apply. Under this Act, landlords must make sure homes comply by 1 July 2019 with the insulation requirements that were introduced in 2016.

[Insulation standard \(external link\)](#) - Ministry of Housing and Urban Development