



MINISTRY OF HOUSING  
AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

# Healthy Homes Standards

Common Questions and Answers

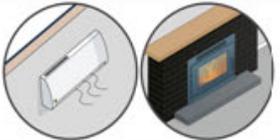
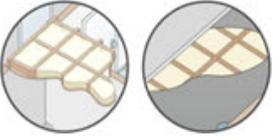
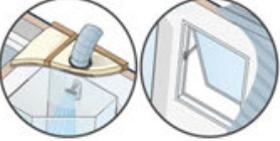
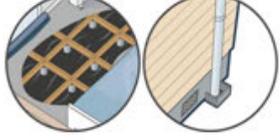
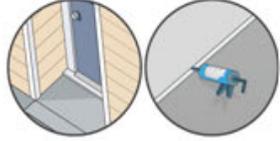
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## THE HEALTHY HOME STANDARDS

	Standard	Required Standard
	Heating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There must be fixed heating devices, capable of achieving a minimum temperature of at least 18°C in the living room only. Some heating devices are inefficient, unaffordable or unhealthy and will not meet the requirements under the heating standard.</li> </ul>
	Insulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The minimum level of ceiling and underfloor insulation must either meet the 2008 Building Code, or (for existing ceiling insulation) have a minimum thickness of 120mm.</li> </ul>
	Ventilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ventilation must include openable windows in the living room, dining room, kitchen and bedrooms. Also an appropriately sized extractor fan(s) in rooms with a bath or shower or indoor cooktop.</li> </ul>
	Moisture ingress and drainage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landlords must ensure efficient drainage and guttering, downpipes and drains. If a rental property has an enclosed subfloor, it must have a ground moisture barrier if it's possible to install one.</li> </ul>
	Draught stopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landlords must stop any unnecessary gaps or holes in walls, ceilings, windows, floors, and doors that cause noticeable draughts. All unused chimneys and fireplaces must be blocked.</li> </ul>
	Compliance timeframes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 July 2021 – From this date, private landlords must ensure that their rental properties comply with the healthy homes standards within 90 days of any new tenancy.</li> <li>1 July 2021 – All boarding houses must comply with the healthy home standards.</li> <li>1 July 2023 – All Housing New Zealand houses and registered Community Housing Providers houses must comply with the healthy home standards.</li> <li>1 July 2024 – All rental homes must comply with the healthy home standards.</li> </ul>

## OVERVIEW

### Why are the healthy homes standards being implemented?

One-third of New Zealand households (nearly 600,000) rent, and rental homes tend to be older and of poorer quality than owner occupied dwellings.

Renters have less autonomy to make improvements to their homes than owner occupiers, and maintaining and improving the quality of the dwelling is the responsibility of the owner.

While many landlords maintain and upgrade their properties, there are some who don't, leaving tenants living in cold, damp homes.

The healthy homes standards will make it easier for renters to achieve warmer, drier homes, helping to reduce mould and damp and the potential for associated health conditions. They will also provide a clear set of minimum standards all landlords will need to provide their tenants.

### What do the healthy homes standards do?

The healthy homes standards create specific and minimum standards for heating, insulation, ventilation, draught stopping, moisture ingress and drainage in rental properties.

### When will I have to meet the standards?

The type of tenancy you are in or the type of landlord you are will determine when you will have to meet the standard. The table below clarifies:

Type of tenancy or landlord	The date of compliance.
Private landlord, residential tenancy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rental property will have to comply with the standards within 90 days of the renewal or start of a new tenancy after 1 July 2021.</li> <li>• If your tenancy starts, or is renewed after 1 July 2021, then the landlord must comply with the standards within 90 days of the start of your tenancy.</li> </ul>
Boarding house tenancy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The boarding house will have to comply with the standards by 1 July 2021.</li> </ul>
Tenancies under Housing New Zealand or registered Community Housing Providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rental property will have to comply with the standards by 1 July 2023.</li> </ul>

### **What will the healthy homes standards mean for tenants?**

The healthy homes standards are designed to support the government's goal of tenants being able to rent a warm, dry and healthy home. The standards will require a rented property to have a fixed heater or heat pump in every living room or lounge. The heat pump or heater must be able to heat the living room to a minimum of 18° C. The insulation and draught stopping standards are designed to ensure that heat is retained and not lost too quickly.

The ventilation and moisture ingress and drainage standards are designed to help prevent dampness which has negative health outcomes for tenants. These standards should also help prevent the growth of mould and improve the moisture management system and air circulation in a home.

### **What will the healthy homes standards mean for landlords and property managers?**

A landlord is required to ensure their rental properties meet the standards by the deadline that applies to them. Most landlords are required to meet the standards within 90 days from the start of any new tenancy from 1 July 2021. This means that any new or renewed tenancy after 1 July 2021 will have to meet the standards within 90 days. All tenancies must meet the standard by 1 July 2024.

The cost to landlords will vary, and will depend on a property's characteristics (for example, size, age, condition), and the amount of work required to bring each property up to the minimum requirements.

Landlords may need to install new heating devices or extractor fans in certain rooms.

Regardless of whether any work is done, a landlord will have to keep records of how they are complying with the healthy homes standards. These records must be able to be provided to the Tenancy Tribunal or the Tenancy Compliance and Investigations Team. Landlords will also have to declare in any new tenancy agreement whether they already comply or intend to comply by their deadline.

Once implemented, the healthy homes standards will mean that landlords may need to do less maintenance to their houses as they will be less prone to moisture damage and the damage caused by mould growth.

The healthy homes standards will also provide a clear set of minimum standards for heating, insulation, ventilation, draught stopping and moisture ingress and drainage that all landlords will need to provide for their tenants.

### **What documents does a landlord have to provide in a tenancy agreement under the healthy homes standards?**

Decisions are still being made in relation to what a landlord has to provide a tenant in a tenancy agreement under the healthy homes standards. Helpful and clear guidance will be provided to landlords on what records they need to keep.

It is most likely a landlord will have to present a tenant a declaration of compliance and the details of how a home complies with a print off of the heating tool's results, or a report from a suitably qualified professional. These requirements will have to be presented to a tenant with their tenancy agreement. Officials are still working through the finer details of what landlords will need to provide.

### **What documents does a landlord have to keep as records?**

Decisions are still being made in relation to what records a landlord will have to keep under the healthy homes standards.;

Landlords should maintain any records that adequately show compliance with all standards. There will be guidance that will be published by Tenancy Services on what records are best to maintain, however it is advisable to keep any and all documents that show compliance. Such documents that landlords may wish to keep are:

- Any records of building consents regarding the building work in relation to the standards.
- Any records from professionals or labourers who did any building work in relation to the standards.
- Photographic evidence of compliance.
- Copies of inspection reports
- Receipts/invoices for material and labour.
- Any other salient records or documents.

These records would be good for a landlord to keep regardless, as they are records that landlords would have to retain as part of running their business, and having access to these documents may help with re-sale value.

### **Will landlords receive any assistance in achieving compliance with the healthy homes standards?**

User friendly and comprehensive guidance will be provided to help landlords to comply with the standards. These will be available on the Tenancy Services website and will help landlords understand any technical matters in meeting the healthy homes standards. There will also be an online tool to help landlords and tenants work out what size and type of heater is needed in order to meet the requirements under the heating standard.

### **My property is up to the standards of the Building Code, will my property meet the healthy homes standards?**

If you met the acceptable solutions of the most recent building codes, you may meet most of the healthy homes standards, but not necessarily all. It is recommended you check your house for all standards, in particular, the heating, ventilation and moisture ingress standards.

### **How can a landlord or tenant resolve a dispute under the healthy homes standards?**

A landlord will have a legal obligation to comply under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1986* with the healthy homes standards by the required compliance deadline. A landlord will also have to comply with any requirements for record keeping and statements in the tenancy agreement.

If you require any assistance as a landlord or tenant in a dispute, you can contact Tenancy Services on 0800 836 262 or find more information on the [Tenancy Services website](#).

A tenant can hold a landlord accountable to the standards by applying to the tenancy tribunal.

Tenants and landlords can resolve disputes through mediation or adjudication by making an application to the Tenancy Tribunal. In severe cases or where there is a pattern of breaches, tenants may make a complaint to the Tenancy Compliance and Investigation team.

If a landlord is non-compliant with the healthy homes standards, a tenant can apply to the Tribunal for a monetary order and/or a work order. The Tenancy Tribunal may award exemplary damages, a financial penalty of up to \$4000 against the landlord, which is usually awarded to the tenants. The amount awarded by the Tribunal is dependent on the intention of the landlord, the effect of the non-compliance on the tenant, the interest of both parties as well as the public interest. The Tribunal may also award compensation for any material loss and/or general damages for intangible loss, stress, humiliation, and inconvenience suffered by the tenant due to the landlord's non-compliance.

### **If I meet an exception for one standard do I have to meet the other standards?**

Yes, you have to meet the other standards. Each standard has a list of exceptions, but they only apply to the specific standard or a specific part of a standard.

### **Who can I talk to if I have any more questions?**

If you have a question relating to the healthy homes standards that you cannot find an answer to in this document, you can email the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development at [healthyhomes@hud.govt.nz](mailto:healthyhomes@hud.govt.nz).

Tenancy Services can provide clarification around tenancy rules and laws. You can email them at [info@tenancy.govt.nz](mailto:info@tenancy.govt.nz) or call them during office hours on 0800 836 262.

For media enquiries about the healthy homes standards, you can contact the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development media team at [media@hud.govt.nz](mailto:media@hud.govt.nz)

### **Are these the final standards?**

Not completely. The next step is for the standards to be drafted in regulations and approved by Cabinet. The detailed regulations will then become law by mid-2019.

**Will the Government provide assistance to tenants who cannot afford to heat their rental homes?**

Tenants who receive income support payments from Work and Income, NZ Superannuation or a Veteran's Pension are eligible for an additional Winter Energy Payment to assist with heating costs. The Winter Energy Payment was paid automatically to those eligible from 1 July to 29 September in 2018 and will be paid from 1 May to 1 October from 2019.

**What did the consultation tell the Government?**

The consultation process highlighted many themes and positions from both tenants and landlords.

The standards also reflect the feedback from a wide range of stakeholders, including landlords, tenants, public health experts and building experts. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) appreciated receiving over 1700 submissions with valuable insights and feedback from tenants, landlords, property managers, respective advocacy groups, industry providers, the health sector and other interested parties.

A consultation summary with analysis of the responses is available on the HUD website – [www.hud.govt.nz](http://www.hud.govt.nz)

**How did you arrive at the healthy homes standards?**

The areas of rental properties that are to be regulated by the healthy homes standards were set by the *Healthy Homes Guarantee Act 2017*. Within the parameters set by the Act a series of options was produced and consulted on.

The cost benefit analysis produced by the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research showed that different options had different cost-benefit ratios.

The process was rigorous and the cost and benefit of each option was weighed up in light their impact and cost benefit ratio. Our analysis of the New Zealand rental market, building science research and feedback from consultation, the quality of New Zealand rental stock and the options led to these resulting standards.

**When are the guidance documents going to be published?**

The guidance documents will be published later this year on Tenancy Services' website.

**What do these standards mean for builders and tradespeople?**

Many landlords may choose to use professional services for the installation of appliances and any building work that has to be carried out in meeting the standard.

It is therefore recommended that a builder who may be asked to carry out work in relation to the healthy homes standards familiarise themselves with the standards.

As with all building work, the work must meet the standards of the building code.

### **What do the healthy homes standards mean for Māori?**

Raising the quality of rental homes will help to address the needs of identified at-risk groups including Māori. Māori families are more likely than other ethnic groups to live in, and feel the effects of, cold and damp rental homes.

Cold and damp homes are strongly associated with people experiencing health issues, including respiratory and cardiovascular conditions, toxic reactions, allergies, and other infections.

This leads to wider negative social outcomes, such as absent days from school or work. We sought specific feedback from Māori through the workshops and the consultation process. This included from iwi housing providers, Rūnanga, Māori advocacy groups (such as social and health providers), and from Te Puni Kōkiri at an agency level. We received a good level of feedback from these groups

## WHEN DO I HAVE TO MEET THE STANDARDS?

### **When will a rental property have to meet the standards?**

There are several different compliance deadlines, depending on what type of tenancy applies to your property. The compliance deadlines are as below:

- For most residential tenancies, from 1 July 2021 a landlord will have to ensure that a tenanted property is compliant within 90 days of the start of every new or renewed tenancy. All residential tenancies will have to be compliant by 1 July 2024.
- Two types of tenancy must comply by fixed dates:
  - All boarding house tenancies will have to meet the standards by 1 July 2021.
  - All Housing New Zealand or registered community housing will have to meet the standards by 1 July 2023.

### **Will different standards come into force at different times?**

No, all five standards need to be met at the same time. The exact time compliance is required is dependent on the type of tenancy.

### **From 1 July 2021 a landlord will have to comply with the standards within 90 days of the start of a new or renewed tenancy. How will a landlord have access to my home/their house to do the work?**

From 1 July 2019 a landlord will have the lawful right of access to the premises of a tenancy in order to undertake work to comply with the healthy homes standards, under a notice of entry served at least 24 hours before the entry.

A landlord may have a right of entry under a notice lawfully served. However a landlord also has an obligation to respect a tenant's quiet enjoyment, or reasonable peace, comfort and privacy. It is best landlords and tenants communicate and clearly set expectations with each other so as to ensure an effective relationship based on privacy and respect.

It is important that landlords respect a tenant's legal right of occupation under a tenancy agreement. However, a tenant must also respect a landlord's right to inspect their property and to undertake the work needed. This balance means that clear communication is essential.

## HEATING:

### **What is the heating standard?**

The heating standard requires landlords to provide a fixed heating device, capable of achieving a minimum temperature of at least 18°C in the main living room only. Some heating devices are inefficient, unaffordable or unhealthy and will not meet the requirements under the heating standard.

An online heating tool will be developed by Tenancy Services to help landlords and tenants identify what capacity is required for their rental property.

### **How will landlords and tenants know their heater is sufficient for the performance requirement of 18 degrees?**

An online tool will be developed by Tenancy Services that will calculate the required capacity of a heater in kilowatts. This tool will provide a kilowatt figure using the size of the room and information about insulation and windows as variables. As well as calculating a minimum kilowatt figure, the tool will provide a print-out of the variables and required minimum capacity of the heater. This print-out can be used to show compliance with the heating standard.

### **How easy is it for landlords to use this tool?**

The tool will be designed to be user-friendly but will require some figures and measurements to be supplied in order to use the tool. These figures should be the dimensions of the room, dimensions of any windows or skylights and information about insulation that is in place.

There will be a guidance document that will accompany the online tool.

### **I want to get started on bringing my rental property up to standard, when will this tool be made available to me so I can make sure I am making the correct changes?**

We are aiming to make the heating tool available by 1 July 2019.

### **Why is heating not required in bedrooms?**

Living rooms are generally of a larger size than bedrooms, meaning that they usually require a more powerful fixed heating device than the portable heaters that many tenants may provide for themselves.

Tenants will still be able to provide a portable heating device for their use in a bedroom, a landlord will not be required to provide a heater for tenant's bedrooms.

Tenants can seek assistance from WINZ if they are struggling to pay for a heater for use in their bedroom.

**Why is 18 degrees the minimum temperature heaters must be sized for?**

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends a minimum indoor temperature of 18°C for the wider population. The temperature of 18°C was chosen for the standards as tenants will benefit from the installation of a fixed heating device (if there was not one already) and will be able to heat their living room, if they choose to. This approach balances the cost to landlords with the benefit to tenants.

It is important to note that devices capable of heating a living room to 18°C on the coldest days, which is the requirement under the heating standard, will be able to heat a living room to higher temperatures most days in the year.

**Are there any heaters that cannot be used to meet the standard, even if they meet the performance requirement?**

Yes, there will be a list of devices that cannot be used to meet the standard. A different type of fixed heater or heat pump that meets the standard will have to be added. Devices that cannot be used to meet the standard will be:

- Unflued combustion heaters, such as portable LPG bottle heaters
- Open fires.
- Multiple electric heaters (except heatpumps) with a combined capacity of 2.4 kilowatts.
- All electric heaters (except heat pumps) with a capacity of greater than 2.4 kilowatts.

These are included in a list of heaters that may not be used to satisfy the heating standard because they are either inefficient, unaffordable to operate and/or unhealthy to run.

**Are there any exceptions to the heating standard?**

Yes there are 4 exceptions to the heating standard. There will be guidance on whether your properties do or do not fit under these exceptions. The 4 exceptions are:

- where the landlord intends to demolish or substantially rebuild the home within 12 months and has applied for any necessary resource consent or building consent. This exception only applies for the relevant 12-month period or until any necessary resource consent lapses or is otherwise terminated; and
- for 12 months from the date the tenancy commences, if the tenant is the former owner of the home; and
- where the rental property is part of a Body Corporate under the *Unit Titles Act*, where the body corporate rules do not allow a heating device above 2.4 kilowatts to be installed; and
- where the rental property is a certified passive house.

## INSULATION:

### **What is the insulation standard?**

The insulation standard requires insulation in a rental property to be up to a standard equivalent to the 2008 building code standard for both ceiling and underfloor insulation. Existing ceiling insulation must be at least 120mm thick. All insulation in a rental home will have to be in a reasonable condition.

### **Do I need to meet the 2016 RTA insulation requirements now that there are new healthy home standards?**

Yes, the 2016 RTA insulation requirements will continue after 1 July 2019. Ceiling and underfloor insulation is compulsory in all rental homes from 1 July 2019. For more information on the 2016 insulation requirements see <https://www.tenancy.govt.nz/insulationdeadline/>.

After 1 July 2021 the minimum allowable ceiling insulation will increase, this means a new group of homes that did not have to install insulation under the 2016 RTA requirements will have to 'top up' their insulation. Insulation installed to meet the 2016 requirements, for installs after 1 July 2016, will continue to meet the higher requirements under the healthy homes standards as long as it remains in a reasonable condition.

### **My home had enough insulation to meet the 2016 RTA requirements, will my home need more insulation under the healthy home standards?**

The healthy homes standards increase the minimum level of existing ceiling insulation from 70mm to 120mm thick. If a rental home has less than 120mm of insulation in the ceiling space or the insulation is not in reasonable condition, then the home requires an insulation 'top up' within 90 days of a new or renewed tenancy that starts after 1 July 2021.

### **What if I have or am in the process of installing insulation to meet the 2016 RTA requirements?**

Providing that any new insulation installed to meet the 2016 requirements remains in a reasonable condition, there are no further insulation requirements under the healthy homes standards. However, if no work was done to meet the 2016 requirements, you may still have to retrofit your insulation to bring it up to the healthy homes insulation standard.

If any insulation is installed from now, it should meet the healthy homes standards, the standard requirement for new building work is equivalent to new installations made after 2016.

### **I installed new insulation in my rental property to meet the requirements introduced in July 2016, am I covered under the healthy homes standards?**

The level of insulation required under the healthy homes standards is the same as new installs made in rental homes after July 2016. This standard is the same as the 2008 building code insulation requirement for ceilings and underfloors. However, even if you did install it recently, it is still advised that a landlord inspect the insulation to confirm it is still in a reasonable condition.

A landlord will now have to keep records which will show that they comply with the standards.

### **Why is the healthy homes insulation standard being introduced?**

Insulation keeps heat in a room or property from escaping or dissipating, as such, the better insulated a rental home is, the more it will retain heat, generally. This means, all things being equal, heating a rental home will require less energy if it is better insulated. A tenant is therefore able to heat a room and their home, in a more affordable way, with more insulation.

### **How will I know whether the insulation is in a 'reasonable condition'?**

Guidance will be made available later in 2019. However there are a few signs of damage that a landlord, tenant or professional may look for, they are:

- dampness, mould, water damage;
- rips, tears;
- gaps in the insulation coverage, except where safety clearances are required;
- settlement or compression below 120mm of depth;
- vermin or bird nests;
- other contamination;
- any other damage or compromise to the condition of the insulation;

### **What exceptions are there to the insulation standard?**

The exceptions to the insulations standard are:

- It is not reasonably practicable to install insulation. Eg. There is insufficient space to install insulation in the roof cavity or subfloor.
- The landlord intends to demolish or substantially rebuild the home within 12 months and applied for any necessary resource consent or building consent.
- For 12 months from the date the tenancy commences if the tenant was the previous owner of the property

### **When is it not reasonably practicable to install insulation?**

There will be a guidance document that will further detail this exception however a similar approach will be taken to the insulation exception under the current *Residential Tenancy Regulations*. A property may be excepted if the cavity is not reasonably accessible or it does not exist, for example concrete slab foundations. There is more information about exceptions for the existing regulations [here](#).

### **Can existing foil insulation be meet the insulation standard for the underfloor?**

Existing foil insulation may be able to meet the requirements, if it is still in reasonable condition.

However, new installs or retrofits of foil insulation are banned under the Building Act where a property has existing electrical installations. If foil insulation is torn, damaged or worn, it will not meet the insulation standard as it will no longer be in a 'reasonable condition'. Therefore it will need to be replaced with other forms of insulation.

If you are removing foil insulation it is recommended that you contact an electrician and turn off the power before doing any work.

For more information on foil insulation, please view the ban on new installations, [on the building.govt.nz website](https://www.building.govt.nz/website).

**Do I have to use a qualified insulation installer?**

No, there is no requirement that a professional install insulation under the healthy homes standards.

A landlord may choose to use a professional insulation installer, but there is no lawful requirement to do so.

If a landlord does choose to install insulation themselves, it is important to note that safety is crucial while doing any building work. New Zealand standard 4246:2016 Appendix B provides useful guidelines which you can find, [here](#). Otherwise you can follow EECA's helpful guidance on installing and retrofitting insulation which you can find, [here](#). Or you can follow the link: <https://www.energywise.govt.nz/at-home/insulation/>

## VENTILATION:

### **What is the ventilation standard?**

The ventilation standard has two parts. The standard places a requirement which applies to bedrooms, dining rooms, living rooms, lounges or otherwise habitable spaces (excluding rooms with showers, baths or cooktops). The second part of the standard applies to rooms with a bath, shower or cooktop.

The ventilation standard requires all properties rented under the Residential Tenancies Act to have openable windows in all bedrooms, dining rooms, living rooms, lounges, open plan rooms and kitchens. The openable windows in a room must have a total area of 5% of the floor area in their respective rooms. This clarifies an existing standard from the *Housing Improvement Regulations*.

The ventilation standard also requires all rooms with a bath, shower or cooktop to have an appropriately sized extractor fan that ventilates externally.

### **What are the exceptions to the ventilation requirement?**

Rental properties will have to meet the ventilation standard by the relevant deadline unless they fall under an exception. Some exceptions cover just a single room, while others may cover the entire property. There are four exceptions, which are below:

- If the property received a building consent at the time it was built, even though it did not have an openable window or windows in the relevant room.
- It is not reasonably practicable to install an extractor fan or fans.
- Where the landlord intends to demolish or substantially rebuild the home within 12 months and applied for any necessary resource consent or building consent. This exception only applies for the relevant 12-month period or until any necessary resource consent lapses or is otherwise terminated.
- There is a 12 month exception for tenancies from the point of the start of the tenancy which applies where the tenant is the previous owner of the property.

### **Why is there a ventilation requirement?**

The ventilation standard has benefits for tenants and landlords. Mould and dampness caused by poor ventilation is harmful for tenant's health as well as landlord's property. Therefore the ventilation standard was formed to target dampness and mould in key areas of the home. It also reinforces an existing standard that there must be openable windows in habitable areas unless the property received a building consent which indicates otherwise.

**What size/flow rate does an extractor fan have to be to meet the standard?**

The size or flow rate of an extractor fan required will depend on when it was or will be installed and whether it is installed in a room with a cooktop or a room with a bath or shower. All extractor fans must be vented to the outside of the property to meet the healthy homes standard.

Officials are working through the details of the size and flow rate of the extractor fans and range hoods. These details will be available when the regulations are Gazetted. Guidance will also be provided to clarify the minimum requirements.

**I have more than one extractor fan in a bathroom/kitchen, can they work together or will at least one fan have to meet the requirement?**

No, at least one of the fans will have to meet the requirements.

**I have more than one kitchen or bathroom, do I need to put extractor fans in all of them?**

Yes, you will have to install appropriately sized extractor fans in all rooms with baths, showers or indoor cooktops.

**I have a range hood in the kitchen, will it meet the ventilation standard?**

Yes it may. A range hood can be suitable if it ventilates to the outside of the rental. To balance the fire safety and effectiveness of a range hood, range hoods must be placed no less than 650mm and no further than 900mm from an indoor cooktop.

**Will having a positive pressure ventilation system meet the ventilation standard?**

No. The goal of the healthy homes standards is to ensure tenants are able to live in warm and dry homes. While a positive pressure ventilation system is helpful, it does not extract air from damp areas like rooms with showers, baths or cooktops. Therefore the requirement set in the ventilation standard is to have extractor fans of an appropriate size and performance.

Landlords can still install positive pressure ventilation systems, however, they will not be a way of meeting the healthy homes standards.

## DRAUGHT STOPPING:

### **What is the draught stopping standard?**

The draught stopping standard is the requirement for landlords to stop any unreasonable gaps or holes in walls, windows, floors and doors that cause noticeable draughts. As a part of this requirement, landlords will have to block unused fireplaces and chimneys.

### **Why is there a draught stopping standard?**

Draughts in homes increase the likelihood of lower temperatures in houses.<sup>1</sup> Draughts may also make it more expensive for a tenant to heat their home to a reasonable and healthy temperature. Stopping draughts and blocking unused chimneys is a simple and effective way to lift the burden of expensive heating bills from tenants.

### **How can I tell whether I need to block or fill a hole or not? When is a draught noticeable?**

There will be guidance to help landlords and tenants identify whether a hole or gap needs to be filled.

### **Will I need to stop a draught caused by a door?**

Yes, if a door fits the criteria of having an unreasonable gap that causes a noticeable draught, then there will be a requirement to stop the gap. While there is no set maximum gap for doors, there will be guidance made available to help landlords and tenants identify when a gap needs to be stopped.

### **Will there be any exceptions to the draught stopping standard?**

The following are the two proposed exceptions to the draught stopping standard and they are:

- where the landlord intends to demolish or substantially rebuild the home within 12 months and has applied for any necessary resource consent or building consent. This exception only applies for the relevant 12-month period or until any necessary resource consent lapses or is otherwise terminated; and
- for 12 months from the date the tenancy commences, if the tenant is the former owner of the home.

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<sup>1</sup> healthy homes standards discussion document

## MOISTURE INGRESS AND DRAINAGE:

### **What is the moisture and drainage standard?**

The moisture ingress and drainage standard places three minimum requirements for rental properties, they are:

- Efficient drainage for the removal of storm water, surface water and ground water.
- Gutters, downpipes and drains for the removal of roof water are in place; and
- The subfloor cavity, *if enclosed*, has a ground moisture barrier installed in accordance with New Zealand Standard 4246 Section 8.

### **What are the exceptions to the moisture and drainage standard?**

There are three exceptions to the moisture and drainage standard, they are:

- Where it is not reasonably practicable to install a ground moisture barrier.
- Where the landlord intends to demolish or substantially rebuild the home within 12 months and has applied for any necessary resource consent or building consent. This exception only applies for the relevant 12-month period or until any necessary resource consent lapses or is otherwise terminated; and
- for 12 months from the date the tenancy commences, if the tenant is the former owner of the home.

### **When is it not 'reasonably practicable' to install a ground moisture barrier?**

We are still working through the details, however it is expected that several scenarios could mean that it is not 'reasonably practicable', such as the subfloor space not being accessible or due to the nature of the building it is not possible or reasonable to expect a ground moisture barrier be installed.

There will be guidance made available on the standards to provide several examples and explanations of when a property may or may not be exempt from the standard.

### **Why is there a moisture and drainage standard?**

Moisture entering the home can lead to dampness and mould. Subfloor moisture is potentially a large source of dampness in a home. This dampness can lead to poor health outcomes for tenants and can be destructive to the quality of a house. Therefore this standard has been introduced to reduce the amount of dampness in rental homes.

### **When is a sub-floor space considered 'enclosed'?**

The definition of enclosed for this standard is where the air flow in and out of the subfloor space is obstructed by:

- a masonry foundation wall; or
- other claddings such as cement board or a solid timber skirt; or attached structures, such as a garage or carport; or
- earth; or
- any other solid obstruction to air flow.

The space is not considered enclosed where at least three of its sides the subfloor space is either open, has trellis cladding or continuous slots between baseboards.

**I have subfloor vents, will I still need to install a ground moisture barrier?**

Yes, if the subfloor space is enclosed then you will have to install a ground moisture barrier. Even with vents there will be a benefit from the installation of a ground moisture barrier. This will also remove the complication or testing the adequacy or functionality of the ventilation.

**What do you mean by ground moisture barrier?**

[New Zealand Standard NZS4246](#) section 8 outlines the requirements for a ground moisture barrier or an 'on-ground vapour barrier'. The standard outlines a ten-step set of instructions on how to install a ground moisture barrier. NZS4246 is sponsored and therefore available to the public to view for free, online. You may choose to purchase a hard copy of the standard from Standards New Zealand.

Generally the barrier is a polythene sheet that can be bought from most building materials retailers. It can be installed by a house owner or any building professional