

HOUSING HEALTH & SAFETY RATING SYSTEM

HAZARDS IN YOUR HOME: WHY IT MATTERS

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

HHSRS is a risk-based rating system which helps Birmingham City Council to identify and protect tenants and properties against risks and hazards to health and safety.

It was introduced under the Housing Act 2004 and applies to all residential properties in England and Wales.

The rating system supports us when carrying out inspections, identifying any hazards, and categorising them to decide the level of action required.

What is a Hazard?

A hazard is any risk of harm to the health or safety of our tenants, that develops from an issue in the property, building, or surrounding areas. Health and safety include mental health.

The HHSRS helps identify hazards and their likely impact on the health and safety of tenants.

Key Principles of the HHSRS

Properties should:

- provide a safe and healthy environment for the tenant,
- be designed, built and maintained with non-hazardous materials,
- be free from both unnecessary and avoidable hazards,
- provide satisfactory protection from all potential hazards occurring in the local environment.

Birmingham City Council's Responsibilities

The HHSRS refers to hazards that are linked either entirely, or partly, to the building and/or maintenance of the property.

These hazards are typically our responsibility to fix. Hazards can be reported to our repairs and environmental services who will visit your home, assess and rectify the hazard.

Tenant's Responsibilities

These hazards don't just damage property, they put people's safety at risk. Keeping your home safe is our top priority and you play a vital role.

We urge our tenants to understand their responsibilities of learning about the hazards, remaining alert and if recognised in your home, ensuring they are reported to us as soon as possible.

We expect reasonable household conduct from our tenants, which will help the prevention of hazards. Guidance can be found in your conditions of tenancy, you can view them on our website:

[Conditions of Tenancy | Birmingham City Council](#)

What are the Hazards?

The HHSRS assesses 29 categories of housing hazard.

Each hazard has a scale which will help decide whether the property is rated as having category 1 (serious) or category 2 (other) hazard.

HAZARD TYPE	INFORMATION ABOUT THE HAZARD
1. Damp & Mould Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light mould staining, minor dampness • Chronic mould especially in bedrooms, defecting heating and ventilation or significant leaks • Condensation, rising damp, or water ingress
2. Excess Cold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No heating in winter • Limited heating, drops below 16°C occasionally
3. Excess Heat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overheating due to poor ventilation • Unventilated top-floor flat in heatwave • High indoor temperatures leading to dehydration or heatstroke
4. Abestos & MMF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damaged asbestos insulating board panels • Sealed materials containing asbestos
5. Biocides Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poisonous substances from treatments • Residues from timber treatments
6. Carbon Monoxide & Fuel Combustion Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide from faulty appliances • Faulty gas boiler emitting CO • Minor back-drafting from open fire
7. Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threats to health from lead ingestion from paint, water pipes, soil and fumes from leaded petrol
8. Radiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radon gas exposure • Radon levels above action threshold • Radon above background but below action level
9. Uncombusted Fuel Gas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of explosion or asphyxiation • Detectable gas leak in occupied room • Slight leak detected and contained
10. Volatile Organic Compounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat to health from a diverse group of organic chemicals including formaldehyde that are gaseous at room temperature
11. Croding & Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of privacy, insufficient beds, excessive noise • Limited access to amenities like kitchens or bathrooms
12. Entry by Intruders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security risk broken door locks in high-crime area • Poor-quality locks but secure location
13. Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate natural or artificial lighting • No lights in kitchen/bathroom • Poor natural light in a bedroom
14. Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External or internal noise • Road or neighbour noise
15. Domestic Hygiene, Pests & Refuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pest infestation or waste • Infestation of rats or blocked bin store • Minor mouse droppings in kitchen build-up
16. Food Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No sink, hob, or food storage
17. Personal Hygiene, Sanitation & Drainage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes toilets, bathrooms, waste pipes • No working toilet or bath/shower • Damaged WC seat or minor leaks
18. Water Supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No water supply or unsafe water • Intermittent supply or lukewarm tap
19. Falls associated with Baths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falls associated with baths, showers
20. Falls – Level Surfaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falls on floors, yards, patios • Broken floorboards or paving • Uneven tiles
21. Falls – Stairs (Between Levels)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falls on internal stairs • Steep stairs, no handrail, poor lighting • One missing handrail
22. Falls Between Level Falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falls from balconies, windows • Unsecure windows
23. Electrical Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconvenient socket placement • Exposed live wires or overloaded sockets
24. Fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No smoke alarms • Battery alarm not working
25. Flames, Hot Surfaces & Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of burns from appliances • Exposed hot pipes • Radiator too hot to touch
26. Collision & Entrapment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharp edges, doors trapping fingers • Glass doors without safety glazing • Heavy doors closing fast
27. Explosions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From gas leaks or aerosols • Poorly maintained gas supply
28. Position & Operability of Inaccessible Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poorly placed controls Boiler controls out of reach • Wall cabinet too high
29. Structural Collapse & Falling Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk from unstable buildings • Loose roof tiles, unstable wall components • Loose fence panel in garden

QUICK GUIDE FOR REDUCING RISKS OF HAZARDS IN YOUR HOME

- Always allow access to our officers/contractors to your property. They have the expertise to identify hazards, and complete important safety checks.
- Never store or use portable oil, paraffin or gas cylinder heaters in your home.
- Ensure air vents and extractors are clear.
- Avoid smoking indoors, check lit flames are put out, check smoke alarm is working regularly.
- Report any suspicions of asbestos immediately; do not to disturb any materials potentially containing asbestos.
- Open windows and ventilate regularly, dry clothes outdoors where possible, use dehumidifiers.
- Maintain good personal and home hygiene, seal gaps in walls and floors, store food securely, empty bins regularly at designated refuse site.
- Avoid overloading plug sockets, report flickering lights or burnt smells.
- Lock doors and window, test alarm systems regularly, report faulty locks.
- Reduce clutter and remove obstacles around property and stairs, install handrail on stairs.
- Check and change bulbs as needed, consider using energy-efficient bulbs, fit exterior lights.
- Check that taps, pipes, and water storage tanks are all in good condition.
- If in doubt, contact your local housing officer for advice.

HELPFUL SERVICE CONTACTS

Contact Centre**0121 303 1111**

Find out who your local housing officer is.

Birmingham City Council Repairs Team**0121 216 3330**

Report hazards in and around your home.

Birmingham City Council Environmental Health**0121 303 6666**

Report environmental hazards in and around your home.

Citizen's Advice**0808 223 1133**

Support with grants and benefits for energy bills.

Groundwork & Groundwork's Green Doctors**0121 236 8565**

Helping households stay warm and save money on their household bills.

West Midlands Fire Service Safe & Well**0800 389 5525**

Covering a range of topics with a link to fire risk including smoking, mobility, including slips, trips and falls, hoarding, home security.