

Empty Homes Lettable Standard

Item	Minimum Standard
Overview	All Empty Homes will meet the requirements of the <i>Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019 (S.I. No. 137/2019)</i> and comply with the <i>Guidelines for Housing Authorities in Implementation of Minimum Standards in Rented Accommodation 2017</i>. As a minimum, a dwelling should be capable of satisfying the basic and fundamental needs for the everyday life of a household. It should provide shelter, space and facilities for the occupants. And, it should be suitable for the spectrum of households and individuals who could normally be expected to occupy a dwelling of that size and type. Consideration should be given to the following: • Exterior and structural elements of the dwelling • Installations within and associated with the dwelling for: i. the supply and use of water, gas and electricity; ii. personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage; iii. food safety; iv. ventilation; v. space heating; and vi. heating water. All main component replacements shall meet the requirement of Circle Housing's <i>Main Component Replacement in Residential Properties</i> and all works, and workmanship must comply with the relevant Building Regulations and other relevant statutory regulations and associated guidance notes.

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1. Unoccupied Properties over 45 days	a. Notify the companies insurer that the property will be vacant for an extended period. b. turn off all electrical gas and water supplies at the mains other than those supplies connected to automatic sprinkler installations or isolated electrical circuits to lighting and alarm systems which remain in operation for security or fire protection purposes c. drain down all water tanks apparatus pipes and heating systems (other than those connected to automatic sprinkler installations) d. take all reasonable precautions to ensure that Buildings are secure against entry by intruders including: i. securely lock and fasten all doors and windows ii. seal any letter boxes iii. set all security and alarm protections in full operation and ensure that the protections are in proper working order e. remove all waste and obsolete combustible materials from either within or outside the buildings at the Premises f. inspect (or arrange for an authorised representative to inspect) the Buildings both internally and externally at least once every 7 days for the purposes of insuring that i. no deterioration in the condition or state of repair of the Buildings has occurred ii. all physical security and alarm protection systems remain in full operation and a record of each inspection is kept (which must be available to the Company on request) and any deterioration or defects in the physical security and alarm protections systems rectified remedied or repaired immediately g. remove from the site temporary Buildings and skips not in regular use h. drain and purge all tanks and pressure vessels containing combustible fuels or Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG)

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	i. maintain perimeter fence integrity and security j. notify the Company immediately if the Buildings and/or the Premises are to be occupied by contractors for renovation, alteration or conversion purposes k. complete any risk improvements put forward by the Company within the timescales specified by the Company.
2. Structure	a. The building structure will comply with S.I. No. 138/2012 - Building Regulations (Part A) as amended. Any defects shall be surveyed by a suitably qualified and accredited Structural Engineer. No empty home will be let to tenants if a major structural defect is identified, until such a time the defect has been remediated and the repairs have been quality assessed by the Structural Engineer specifying the remediation works. b. Empty Homes should be adequately surveyed for any signs of damp or water ingress. No home will be let if such signs are identified, until such a time adequate remediation has taken place.
3. Fire Safety	a. Empty Homes forming part of a Multi-Unit Development with common parts, require a Fire Risk Assessment to determine compliance with S.I. No. 57 of 2017 – Building Regulations (Part B) as amended and the buildings Fire Safety Certificate. It is the Owners Management Company or their representative agent that should provide details of this prior to the property being let. b. Empty Homes forming part of a Multi-Unit Development shall have an emergency evacuation plan shall be displayed within the home displaying the following information: a) The action to be taken in the event of fire, discovering a fire or hearing the fire alarm. b) The procedure for calling the fire brigade. c) A floor plan of the building providing the following information: • The location of all relevant escape routes from the building. • The location of fire alarm call points (break glass units) and fire alarm control panel.

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	• The location of firefighting equipment in the building. c. Any works carried out within the home that breaches a fire break or fire stop shall be suitably re-sealed using a proprietary fire resistive material that complies with current Building Regulations. Pink coloured expanding fire foam or equivalent as a means of fire stopping is not acceptable. All fire stopping works is to be approved by an accredited installer. d. A suitably located smoke alarm will be installed in the ground floor hallway (or room in open plan design) and each upper floor landing of the stairway. Smoke alarms are either mains-wired with battery back-up or 10-year self-contained battery operated and will be interlinked. Each smoke alarm must carry the CE mark and comply with I.S. EN 14604:2005 Smoke Alarm Devices and should be installed as per the manufacturer's instructions by a competent person. e. All new or existing detectors should be tested and to ensure the smoke alarm is in working order and is within its 'end of life' indicator. f. In each multi-unit building, a suitable common fire detection and alarm system should be installed in the building. The common fire detection and alarm system in the building should consist of a control panel with suitably located smoke detectors and sounders at each level of the stairway and in each circulation space and a heat detector and sounder inside each unit within the building, located in the entrance hallway, where provided. Details of the communal fire detection system should be sought from the Owners Management Company or their agent to confirm its suitability and ongoing maintenance. g. In each multi-unit building, the common areas should be provided with an emergency lighting system installed and maintained in accordance with I.S 3217:2013. Emergency lighting should be provided throughout all common escape routes, i.e. corridors, lobbies and stairways. Details of the communal

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	emergency lighting system should be sought from the Owners Management Company or their agent to confirm its suitability and ongoing maintenance. h. A fire blanket will be fitted in the home and located in the kitchen. The fire blanket must be securely wall mounted in a prominent location and provided with clear instructions on its use. The fire blanket should be a light duty blanket, complying with IS 415:1988. Preferably, the fire blanket should be 1.2m by 1.8m in size.
4. Asbestos Containing Materials	a. All Asbestos related works will be carried out in compliance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Exposure to Asbestos) Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 386/2006) and as amended (Amendment) Regulation 2010 (S.I. No. 589/2010). All Asbestos removal should be carried out by a specialist Asbestos removal contractor. b. All empty homes constructed prior to the year 2000 will have an Asbestos Management Survey completed by a specialist Asbestos contractor prior to any repairs work being carried out. Details of the survey will be made available to all contractors prior to works been undertaken and a plan submitted to the employer for approval that clearly demonstrates how any Asbestos containing materials will be managed. c. In the instance where more intrusive works are to be undertaken on the property, such as a replacement Kitchen or Bathroom for example, a targeted refurbishment and demolition survey will be carried out by a specialist Asbestos contractor. Details of the survey will be made available to all contractors prior to works been undertaken and a plan submitted to the employer for approval that clearly demonstrates how any Asbestos containing materials will be managed. d. All Asbestos Insulating Board is to be removed by a specialist Asbestos removal contractor. e. Where Asbestos floor tiles have been identified and carpet is not being left in-situ, all tiles and bitumen should be removed, and floor levelling compound applied. (Note: where bitumen has been applied as

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	a tile adhesive, it must be determined if the adhesive is acting as a DPM before its removal. A suitable replacement liquid DPM must be used and floor levelling compound applied on removal of the floor tiles). f. On completion of any Asbestos removal works, the Asbestos Contractor will complete an air test and provide a certificate of re-occupation prior to any other persons entering the area.
5. Gas & Oil Appliances	a. Declaration of Conformance with IS 813 Annex E inspection report by an RGII registered Gas installer shall be completed submitted to the employer prior to occupation. For all new lettings including new homes, casual vacancies or mutual exchanges we will provide a current and appropriate gas certification prior to tenancies commencing. No properties will be let without a current safety certificate. b. At the end of tenancy, the incoming gas supply will be isolated at the meter by an RGII registered Gas installer. The Gas will be reinstated at the time of the IS 813 Annex E inspection report taking place. c. Should a new Gas boiler be required, the first choice of boiler will be a wall hung condensing boiler unit. The location of the wall-hung boiler is preferred to be in the kitchen. In some instances, it may be necessary to install the boiler in other locations i.e. bedrooms subject to the Employer's approval. In these instances, the boiler shall be enclosed in a suitably built enclosure. The installation shall comply with Circle Housing's Material & Workmanship Performance Specifications for Main Component Replacement in Residential Properties and must comply with all relevant Regulations. d. The Contractor must ensure that all rooms containing installed gas fired open flue appliances, such as back boiler/fire units, warm air units water heaters, boilers, fires or wall heaters have permanent ventilation to BS 5440-2:2009 or equivalent Irish standard and Building Regulations. e. Carbon monoxide alarms should be provided in accordance with Technical Guidance Document J5. Where open flued or flueless appliances (i.e. where combustion air is taken from the room, for example

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	an open fire, gas fire, wood burning stove, Gas or Oil boilers that are not balanced flued (this list is not exhaustive)) it requires the provision of a carbon monoxide alarm in the room where the appliance is located and either inside each bedroom or within 5m (16ft) of the bedroom door. They should be installed as per the manufacturer's instructions and each alarm should be in working order and be within its 'end of life' indicator.
6. Electrical Power & Lighting	a. Electro Technical Council of Ireland (ETCI) Periodic Inspection report by a Safe Electric registered electrical contractor shall be completed and submitted to the employer prior to occupation. An Electrical safety check will be completed prior to re-letting a property. b. All electrical modification work must fully comply with National Rules for Electrical Installations – ET101 and be carried out by a Safe Electric registered electrical contractor. c. All fixtures and fittings installed by a tenant such as sockets, switches and light fittings will be removed and replaced with plastic fixtures and fittings. Low energy lighting will be installed as a replacement for light fittings needing renewal. d. For the purposes of Kitchen and Bathroom refurbishments, all electrical works will be carried out in conjunction with the employer's requirements (Main Component Replacement in Residential Properties Specification.)
7. Heating & Hot Water	a. If a property is expected to be empty for an extended period i.e. where it will remain unoccupied for over 45 days, all water systems will be drained and the organisations insurance Company notified. b. Any cold-water tanks will have a cover provided (if not already present) and will be drained and cleaned if required and the taps, showers and toilets regularly flushed. c. Any dead legs identified within the heating plumbing system will be removed and capped appropriately capped off.

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	d. Where a property has been acquired and it is identified that the property has remained unoccupied for an extended period i.e. where the property has been unoccupied for over 2 months, appropriate water sampling will be conducted, and the system will be drained and cleaned. e. Hot Water Cylinders without an appropriate level of insulation will be replaced with a new Hot Water Cylinder as specified within the Main Component Replacement in Residential Properties. f. Where defective heating appliances are identified, they will be repaired or replaced on a like for like basis in compliance with the employer's requirements (Main Component Replacement in Residential Properties Specification.) g. Where a heating system has been identified as needing replacement, an options appraisal will be conducted by the Heating Contractor and recommendations given to the employer in respect to the most efficient and economical replacement system. Where an Electric or Gas Heating system is to be installed, it will comply with the employer's requirements (Main Component Replacement in Residential Properties Specification.)
8. Ventilation	a. Every room used, or intended for use, by the tenant of the house as a habitable room shall have adequate ventilation. b. All window vents and fresh air vents will be checked for their correct functionality. c. All openable windows will be checked for their functionality. d. Bathroom and Kitchen ventilation is to be provided by mechanical extract ventilation that complies with Building Regulation Part F. Where no fan exists or there is deemed to be inadequate ventilation, a wall mounted electrical centrifugal continuous running 2-speed Filter-less kitchen extract fan, with built in integral automatic humidity tracking system and with pull cord override will be installed. The fan is to be: • Compliant with Building Regulations, Ventilation: Approved Document F

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	• 150mm Envirovent Infinity or equivalent, CE marked and shall be to the current performance requirements of the Building Regulations. • Installed in compliance with the employer's requirements set out in the Main Component Replacement in Residential Properties Specification. e. Where there are signs of mould growth, a ventilation survey will be conducted to determine the adequacy of the heating and ventilation systems. Note: No property is to be let until adequate provision has been put into place to remedy the problem if mould growth is deemed excessive and a risk assessment indicates it could be potentially harmful to health.
9. Chimneys	a. Ground floor open fire places are to be bricked up and hearth and surround removed where appropriate to so and finishes made good. b. First floor open fire places are to be boarded over and finishes made good ready for decoration. c. A Cowl with a bird guard is to be fitted to the Chimney Pot(s).
10. Decorations	a. All pre-decorated surfaces shall have all hooks, screws and brackets removed and all holes made good in preparation for decorations. b. Where wallpaper exists, it will be removed, and surfaces made good ready for decoration. c. Where a property is to be let to an able-bodied person or persons, and the property only requires a maximum of two coats of paint to all finished surfaces, decoration vouchers will be issued to the incoming tenants for the purposes of decoration. d. Where a property is in a particularly poor decorative condition, i.e. surfaces are cigarette smoke damaged, the property requires extensive re-decoration due to staining of surfaces or greater than three coats of paint will be needed to surfaces, the property should be part decorated or fully decorated depending on the needs of the property at the time of the survey. e. Other circumstances where partial or full decoration may be carried out include:

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	a. Where the incoming tenant is elderly, vulnerable or has a disability, the property will be fully decorated. b. When the property is in a particularly hard to let area and this is evidenced by difficulties with gaining nominations. In this instance, partial decoration should be considered as a first option. c. Where the property is Social Leased, and the SLA specifically states that decoration should be carried out at a change of tenancy or prior to hand back to the Local Authority.
11. Entrance Doors	a. The main entrance door will have a letterbox and a house number and will be in good decorative order. b. Thumb turn mechanism to be fitted to front and rear entrance doors. c. Lock to be changed to front and back doors (3 keys to be provided per door) d. Where a new front and/or rear entrance door is required by the employer, they will be installed to comply with the employer's requirements (Main Component Replacement in Residential Properties Specification.)
12. Windows	a. All windows will be tested for their functionality at the time of Survey. Minor repairs will be completed prior to re-let, however, if glazing needs to be replaced and there is a long lead in time for the manufacture of replacement glazing, the window will be secured, and arrangements made for the glazing to be replaced when the property is let if required. b. All windows that have an opening section through which a person may fall and the bottom of the opening section is more than 1400 mm above external ground level, suitable safety restrictors shall be fitted as per the manufacturer's instructions and be in good working order.

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	c. Safety restrictors should operate so that they limit the initial movement of an opening section to not more than 100mm. Lockable restrictors, which can only be released by removable keys or other tools, should not be fitted to window opening sections required for escape or rescue purposes. d. Safety restrictors should operate so that they: a) Limit the initial movement of an opening section so that a clear opening of not more than 100mm is achieved at any point; b) Are releasable only by manipulation not normally possible by a child under 5 years; c) Are readily identifiable and capable of being released by an adult (without prior instruction) on windows suitable as a means of escape in case of fire; d) Re-engage automatically when an opening section is returned to the initial restricted opening position, or to a closed position (whether latched or not); e) Are not lockable by a removable key or other device on windows suitable as a means of escape or rescue in case of fire. f) Safety restrictors should be designed specifically to operate on the types of window on which they are to be installed (See BS 8213-1:2004 for further details). e. Where a new Windows are required to be installed by the employer, they will be installed to comply with the employer's requirements in the Main Component Replacement in Residential Properties Specification.
13. Attic	a. Clear attic space of any rubbish or previous residents' belongings. b. Remove any flooring and/or cladding installed within the attic space. c. Asses roof felt for any holes in felt or other defects. Report minor defects to Repairs team for a works order to be raised at re-let. d. Install boards to water tank for access.

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	e. Check header tank support board is at least 15mm thick and extends at least 200mm from tank. f. Mineral wool insulation to be installed to meet the requirement of Building Regulations Part L (Conservation of Fuel and Energy – Dwellings). Insulation should be fitted in such a way that it does not limit the free flow of air through the roof space. If required, additional vents are to be fitted within the roof space to maintain good ventilation and limit condensation.
14. Floors and Walls	a. Make good any major defects to plasterwork, walls and ceilings and leave ready for decoration. b. Floor covering such as carpets and laminate to be removed unless the floor covering is in good condition and agreement has been made to gift them to the incoming tenant. Where floor coverings are removed, ensure all floors are reasonably level and ready for new floor coverings. Where floors have been tiled, the tiles may remain if they are in good condition and evenly laid so unlikely to present a trip hazard. In such instances, the flooring should be gifted to the tenant. c. Remove all carpet grippers where floor coverings are being removed. Where Asbestos tiles exist below floor coverings, the carpet grippers are to be removed by a specialist Asbestos contractor in conjunction with the works specified in section 3.5. d. Floor tiles are to be removed where damaged e. Repair or replace damaged floorboards / floor tiles f. Renew missing skirting and architrave on a like for like basis or closet match. g. Where flooring is to be replaced in Kitchens, Bathrooms and separate W.C's, it will comply with the employer's requirements (Main Component Replacement in Residential Properties Specification.)
15. Internal Doors	a. Thumb turns to be fitted to Bathroom and Toilet doors b. Keys to internal doors to be removed and bolt locks to be removed from all doors. c. All internal doors are to be assessed for correct functionality at the time of survey. Doors are to be eased and adjusted as required. Any damaged doors should be replaced to comply with the employer's

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	requirements in the Main Component Replacement in Residential Properties Specification. Consideration will be given to Building Regulations Part B when replacing any fire doors.
16. Kitchen	a. Kitchen units will be in good working order, such as that doors and drawers' function correctly, worktops are free from damage, doors and draws are not delaminating and carcasses can be cleaned to a presentable level etc. A full assessment of the condition shall be undertaken at the time of survey. b. Kitchen units will be repaired where possible and when it is financially viable to do so. c. Where integrated appliances exist and they are in good working order, a Portable Appliance Test (PAT) will be completed where the appliance is on a plug, and the appliance will be gifted to the incoming tenant. d. Where integrated appliances exist and they are not in good working order, they will be removed and disposed of and the kitchen carcass will be adapted, and a space will be left for a free-standing appliance. e. Dispose of all free-standing white goods. f. Where an integrated oven and hob exists and it is good condition, a Portable Appliance Test (PAT) will be completed where the appliance is on a plug, and the appliance will be gifted to the incoming tenant. g. Where an integrated oven and hob exists and it is in poor condition, they will both be removed and a space left for a new oven and hob, to be provided by the tenant. h. Where a cooker space is to be provided, ensure the cooker space is 640mm wide and there is 300mm of worktop either side of the cooker space and that there is 760mm clearance above the hob. The cooker must be able to be pushed back fully into space with no protrusions and there must not be any combustible material behind the cooker location. For example, must not be any power points, switches, boilers or alarm sensors directly above the cooker space. Additionally, there must not be any flammable material such as wallpaper, wood, fabric wall coverings, curtains or shelving.

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	i. Where required a point for a gas or electric cooker will be provided j. Plug and chain will be provided where they are broken or missing. k. Where any Kitchen component needs to be replaced or a full kitchen needs to be renewed, its design and installation will comply with the employer's requirements (Main Component Replacement in Residential Properties Specification.)
17. Bathroom	a. Remove and dispose of bathroom furniture including holders, rails, shelves and free hanging mirrors and make good finishes. b. Provide wipeable splashback to Wash Hand Basin c. Repair leaks to sanitary pipes and fittings d. Plug and chain will be provided where they are broken or missing. e. Ensure that bathrooms have a bath or shower, wash hand basin and WC, in good working order. f. Renew toilet seat g. Where any Bathroom component needs to be replaced or a full kitchen needs to be renewed, its design and installation will comply with the employer's requirements (Main Component Replacement in Residential Properties Specification.)
18. Shower	a. Where an over bath shower has been installed by a previous tenant, the shower(s) will electrically be tested and if compliant with the electrical regulations, they will be gifted to the incoming tenant making them responsible for all repairs and replacement of the shower. Any Non-compliant showers will be removed, and finishes will be made good. b. All showers specifically installed within a shower cubicle as primary means of washing or designed and intended for the use by disabled tenants will be maintained by Circle Housing. c. Damaged shower cubicles will be repaired or replaced as required. Shower screens to baths will be tenant's responsibility.

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19. Separate Toilet	a. Remove and dispose of bathroom furniture including holders, rails, shelves and free hanging mirrors and make good finishes. b. Provide wipeable splashback to Wash Hand Basin c. Repair leaks to sanitary pipes and fittings d. Plug and chain will be provided where they are broken or missing. e. Ensure that the wash hand basin and WC are in good working order. f. Renew toilet seats g. Ensure there is a separate and adequate means of ventilation. h. Where any component needs to be replaced or a full toilet suite needs to be renewed, its design and installation will comply with the employer's requirements (Main Component Replacement in Residential Properties Specification.)
20. Hot Press	a. Clear of any rubbish b. Remove shelves installed by previous tenants
21. External Areas	a. Repair or replace any leaking rainwater guttering or downpipes, check for missing stop ends and replace if missing. b. Ensure that paths, fences and gates are in reasonable condition and do not present an excessive health and safety hazard. c. Ensure there is a path along the side of the house where back door is situated. d. All grass areas to be trimmed to a manageable level and maintained until the new tenancy is in place. e. Bushes will be cut back to a manageable level f. All air brick vents to be checked for obstructions and cleared if necessary g. Remove any dangerous structures such as sheds, greenhouses and garages, if in good condition leave and gift to new tenant.

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	h. Clear the property and garden of all rubbish. i. Remove and dispose of all redundant wheelie bins.
22. Cleaning	a. The floors will be swept and be free of debris. b. Kitchen worktops and units will be cleaned of any visible stains. c. Bathroom fixtures will be cleaned of any visible stains. d. Extractor fans to be cleaned to remove all dirt and dust. e. Woodwork will be washed down and be free of dust and mould. f. All ground floor windows will be cleaned inside and out. On other floors windows will be cleaned on the inside.
23. General Items	a. Remove and dispose of free-standing wardrobes. b. Provide a Building Energy Rating Certificate (BER) where a current one doesn't already exist. c. Treat visible infestation of insects and/or rodents.