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# Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards

## Quick guide

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# Contents

Contents .....	2
What are the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards? .....	3
What is the purpose of the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards? .....	3
How can landlords be compliant with the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards? .....	4
How will the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards be enforced? .....	4
How can landlords be compliant with the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards? .....	4
What are the exemptions? .....	5
Where can I find more information? .....	5

# What are the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards?

The Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) states that a minimum energy efficiency level must be achieved for both domestic and non-domestic rented properties. This quick guide will solely be focused on MEES for the domestic private rented sector (PRS).

Currently, for domestic properties, the minimum energy efficiency level is EPC E. Therefore, properties with an energy rating of EPC F or G cannot be let. This is only applicable to PRS properties which are legally required to have an EPC and are being let on one of three relevant tenancies, such as:

- An assured tenancy
- A regulated tenancy
- Domestic agricultural tenancy

PRS landlords with properties covered by the MEES regulations are required to either register an exemption or improve their properties to at least EPC E. Landlords are encouraged to aim beyond the current requirement as the Government have ambitions to improve MEES further by proposing EPC C by 2030. Currently, MEES does not apply within the social housing sector, but a target of EPC C by 2030 is being explored by the Government.

## What is the purpose of the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards?

The Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards primarily aim to improve the energy efficiency of domestic rented properties. However, there are many benefits from this, which include:

- Improvement to the overall property condition. For example, reducing the likelihood of condensation, damp and mould, which could mean lower maintenance costs for landlords
- Supporting tenants, especially those that are vulnerable to the cold, to reduce their energy bills and improve their health. This will also mean reduced pressure on the NHS from cold-related health issues
- Lower energy demand which also means reduced greenhouse gas emissions, supporting the UK to meet targets of net zero by 2050

# How can landlords be compliant with the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards?

If a landlord cannot register an exemption to MEES (see below for more information on exemptions), it must install 'relevant energy efficiency improvements'. Recommended energy efficiency measures for the property can be identified through EPC recommendations or a surveyor's report. However, for this energy efficiency improvements to be classed as 'relevant', they need to fall within the following categories:

- Can be covered by third-party funding for the full cost of purchasing and installing the measure(s). This can include the Energy Company Obligation or Local Authority Grant Funding such as the Warm Homes: Local Grant
- Can be covered by landlord, where third-party funding is unavailable, up to £3,500 (including VAT) for the purchase and installation of the measure(s)
- Can be covered by a combination of landlord funding and third-party funding, up to £3,500 (including VAT) for the purchase and installation of the measure(s)

## How will the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards be enforced?

MEES will be enforced by local authorities via Trading Standards or Environmental Health Officers. Compliance notices can be served with a request for further information, to determine if the property is in breach of MEES. These compliance notices can be served up to 12 months after the suspected breach.

Landlords can also receive a publication penalty, where the address of the property and details of the breach are released to the public via the PRS Exemptions Register. Landlords may also be fined an amount decided by the local authority.

## How can landlords be compliant with the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards?

Landlords are required to spend up to the cost cap to improve their properties to at least an EPC C and also encouraged to go beyond the EPC C by 2030 target. Landlords can take advantage of the Warm Homes: Local Grant if their Local Authority is taking part and are recommended to get in touch with their Local Authority to receive support.

Other third-party funding exists and includes ECO, Green Deal Finance Plan, LA grant funding.

# What are the exemptions?

Landlords can apply for MEES exemptions if any of the following applies:

- Recommended measures are not a “relevant energy efficiency improvement” because the cost of purchasing and installing would exceed the £3,500 (inc. VAT) cap (“high cost” exemption)
- Where all relevant improvements have been made and the property remains below an E
- Where the property is below EPC E and there are no relevant improvements which can be made
- Registering a wall insulation exemption – where the recommended wall insulation measure would have a negative impact on the property (or building of which it is part)
- Registering a consent exemption – consent was refused, or was granted subject to a condition that the landlord was not reasonably able to comply with. If a tenant withheld consent, the exemption will only remain valid until the tenant’s tenancy ends
- Registering a devaluation exemption – installation of ‘relevant measures’ would devalue the property by more than 5%
- Registering an exemption upon recently becoming a landlord

## Where can I find more information?

Detailed guidance documents for domestic MEES can be found here:

- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-private-rented-property-minimum-energy-efficiency-standard-landlord-guidance>

The legislation can be found here:

- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/962/contents/made>

More information for landlords can be found here:

- <https://www.elmhurstenergy.co.uk/minimum-energy-efficiency-standards-measures-for-landlords/>



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