

THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY CHECKLIST

This checklist highlights the energy efficiency measures to look out for when choosing a rental property. If you can answer "yes" to the following questions, then you'll use less energy in your new home, saving money on your fuel bills and reducing the effects of climate change!

INSULATION

▶ Does the property have plenty of loft insulation?

A quarter of the heat loss in a property is through the roof so check if it's properly insulated. As a rule the insulation should be around 270mm or 1ft deep.

▶ Are the walls insulated (eg. with Cavity Wall Insulation)?

About one third of the heat in a house is lost through the walls. Losses are even higher when you include heat lost through ill fitting doors and draughty windows. Ask your landlord if your walls are insulated. Also look for other measures such as draught proofing, insulation round pipes and a hot water cylinder jacket.

▶ Does the property have double glazing?

Double glazing and even "secondary glazing" will not only reduce heat loss but will also reduce the level of outside noise.

HEATING AND HOT WATER

▶ Is there a central heating system?

If not, the cost of keeping warm during the winter might be very high. Portable gas fires and electric heaters can cost a lot to use every day.

▶ Does the property have gas central heating?

Gas central heating is usually cheaper to run than alternatives such as electric storage heaters.

▶ Is it an old boiler?

If it's more than 10 years old, it might need replacing. The older it is, the more likely it will be running inefficiently and wasting your money.

▶ Can you control the temperatures in each of the rooms?

If the property has central heating, a programmable room thermostat and thermostatic radiator valves will make your heating system more efficient.

▶ Is there is a hot water cylinder and does it have a thermostat?

If so, it should be set at about 60°C; any more will be wasteful and cost you money. The cylinder should be insulated either with a jacket or foam or best of all both.

▶ Can you set the time when you want the heating and the water to go on/off?

Leaving your heating and hot water on all day is expensive and unnecessary. You'll save a lot of money by having them on only when you need them.

▶ Is the heating system safe?

Modern gas boilers must be installed and maintained by CORGI registered installers so ask to see the landlord's CORGI gas safety certificate to make sure all is in working order. These are valid for 12 months.

▶ Will you be given instruction manuals?

It's always worth having the instruction manuals close at hand, so ask for copies.

KITCHEN APPLIANCES

▶ Are they "A" rated?

Most new kitchen appliances such as washing machines, fridges/freezers and tumble dryers have an energy rating from A-G with "A" the most efficient. The best products carry the Energy Saving Recommended logo .

LIGHTING

▶ Are most of the lightbulbs energy efficient ones (CFLs)?

On average an efficient CFL will last 12 times longer than a normal one and save about **£100** on your energy bills and 40kg of carbon dioxide over its lifetime.

ENERGY SUPPLIERS

▶ Have you signed up to the cheapest energy supplier in your area?

Energy suppliers' charges vary so it's worth checking which is best for you. Most suppliers also offer a 'green' tariff where the fuel you use comes from a renewable source so you'll be helping to reduce the effects of climate change even more.

For more information visit www.est.org.uk or call 0800 512012

ENERGY SAVING TIPS FOR WHEN YOU'RE IN YOUR HOME

Saving energy doesn't mean that you have to spend money. There are many things that you can do to reduce your energy consumption, save money and, in the long run, reduce the effects of climate change.

These include:

- ▶ Turning the thermostat down by 1°C can cut your heating bill by about 10 per cent, that's around **£100** per year.
- ▶ Make sure the thermostat on the water cylinder is set at 60°C.
- ▶ When a room is empty, make sure that the lights are turned off.
- ▶ Close the curtains at night to reduce draughts and heat loss through the windows.
- ▶ Stop draughts from badly fitting windows and doors and you could save up to **£20** on your bills.
- ▶ Set your heating to come on around half an hour before you come home rather than leave it on all day whilst no one is in the house.
- ▶ Don't put furniture in front of a radiator as the heat will be wasted. You can also put silver foil behind the radiator to make it even more efficient.
- ▶ Although it's easy to leave your appliances on standby or continually charge your mobile, it simply wastes energy. Make the effort and turn them off.
- ▶ Replace your light bulbs with energy efficient ones. Over its lifetime, one bulb can reduce your lighting costs by up to **£100** and will last up to 12 times longer.
- ▶ Try to use washing machines only when full and set the temperature for 40°C rather than the usual 60°C. You'll use about 30 percent less energy, reduce CO₂ emissions by about a third and still end up with clean clothes.
- ▶ Use the shower and not the bath. You'll use only 30 percent of the water and heat.
- ▶ Fix dripping taps as soon as possible. In one week, a hot water tap can waste the same amount of water as a hot bath.
- ▶ When using the kettle don't fill it too full. If you're only making a Pot Noodle only boil enough for your needs.

For further information on saving energy and reducing the effects on climate change visit the Energy Saving Trust website www.est.org.uk or call your local Energy Efficiency Advice Centre on freephone **0800 512012**

If you have a friendly landlord why not talk to them about improvements they can make to the structure of the property – improving the insulation could cost only a few hundred pounds and will increase the value of his or her house.