

A GUIDE FOR SELF-CATERING PROVIDERS IN ARGYLL AND BUTE:

SAFETY IN SELF-CATERING PROPERTIES



Self-catering accommodation within Argyll and Bute is varied in form and ranges from small town-centre flats to large properties in isolated farmland to beachside caravans.

This guidance sits alongside

- A guide for self-catering providers in Argyll and Bute: Managing Bookings
 - A guide for self-catering providers in Argyll and Bute: Private Water Supplies
- Together they aim to provide a general introduction to providing self-catering premises and as such there may be some guidance which is not applicable to your property.

The information focuses on the issues dealt with by Regulatory Services (which includes Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Animal Health) but is not exhaustive. If you require assistance in relation to any Regulatory Services matter you can contact us using the details at the end of this document.

For matters outside of the scope of Regulatory Services further contact details are provided so that you can contact the relevant organisations directly.

The information aims to provide:

- What you **must** do – legal requirements;
- Best practice – what would be best practice over and above the minimum legal standard.

You should however note that whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the guidance is as comprehensive as possible, other regulations or legislation may apply and you should not rely solely on the information contained within these leaflets.

THE PROPERTY

You are responsible for the safety of the property and the goods you supply within it. It is therefore advisable that you carry out appropriate checks on a regular basis.

BEST PRACTICE

Keep records of checks including

- what checks were done (and the results)
- who carried out the checks and
- when they were done.

If any problems arise at the property you may need to show that you have acted correctly. Undertaking regular checks, including checks by competent contractors, as appropriate, recording the checks and any remedial works will help to show that you have acted responsibly.

BEST PRACTICE

Make sure that the décor in your property is fresh and clean. The furnishings and other equipment should all be of a good quality and suitable for the number of guests your property accommodates.

BEST PRACTICE

You should keep the property in a clean and tidy condition.

GAS

If your property has gas (natural, calor, LPG or similar) then you are required to ensure the gas appliances, fittings and flues are safe. This requirement extends to chalets and caravans as well as traditional dwellings.



MUST

Ensure an annual gas safety check is carried out by an appropriately qualified Gas Safe Engineer.

MUST

Rectify any defects which are making the appliance unsafe.

MUST

Retain copies of the gas safety certificate for at least 2 years.

BEST PRACTICE

Fit a carbon monoxide alarm in the property.

Any work carried out to gas appliances should be done by a Gas Safe Registered engineer. You can search for a suitably qualified engineer online at www.gassaferegister.co.uk or call 0800 408 5500. When searching for an engineer, remember to check what works they are qualified to undertake, this is particularly important in relation to work at caravans as not all engineers are qualified for this.

Further information on gas safety in domestic properties can be found on the Health and Safety Executives website www.hse.gov.uk/gas/landlords/index.htm

If you are buying a used gas cooker it must meet the requirements of the Gas Cooking Appliances (Safety) Regulations 1989. If further information is required please contact Trading Standards.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY AND INSTALLATIONS

MUST

You must make sure that all electrical systems in the property are safe and properly maintained.

BEST PRACTICE

You are advised to instruct a competent electrician to undertake an Electrical Installation Condition Report at regular intervals to ensure the electrical installations are safe.

BEST PRACTICE

Check visually the electrical fixtures and fittings at changeover – check for broken accessories and signs of scorching – and record that the check was made.

Further information in relation to electrical safety can be found on the Electrical Safety Council website www.esc.org.uk

WATER

Whether your property is on a public or private water supply, you should ensure that your guests have an adequate supply of safe water for drinking and washing.



BEST PRACTICE

Make guests aware of any expected interruptions to the supply and provide details of how to obtain water if alternative supplies, e.g. bowsers, are to be provided.

If you are on a private water supply please also refer to A Guide for Self-Catering Providers in Argyll and Bute: Private Water Supplies.

APPLIANCES AND EQUIPMENT

MUST

All items you supply with the accommodation must be safe. This will include supplying warnings and instructions with the items, where they are necessary, for their safe use.

All equipment and items not covered by specific regulations below must comply with the General Product Safety Regulations 2005.

Electrical Appliances and Equipment

You are required under the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994 to ensure that portable appliances e.g. electric kettles, fridges, televisions etc. are safe.

MUST

Ensure electrical appliances bear at least the CE Mark to show that the manufacturer claims the appliance meets the requirements of European legislation.

BEST PRACTICE

Seek products that display the British Standard Kitemark or BEAB Approved mark (which shows that the product has been assessed by an independent body).

BEST PRACTICE

Portable Appliance Testing should be carried out on all electrical appliances by a competent person and records of inspections maintained.

BEST PRACTICE

Check visually the safety of appliances at changeover –

- Is the wire and plug in good condition?
- Are safety covers still in place?
- Are there any loose parts or missing screws?
- Is there any sign of burning?
- Is the appliance still in a good general condition?

BEST PRACTICE

Provide copies of manufacturer's instructions so that guests can refer to them as required.

Generally:

- access to live, hot or moving parts must not be possible without the use of a tool
- cable should be of the double insulated type, with no basic insulation exposed
- wiring should not be damaged in any way
- cord grips on appliances must be effective
- all guards should be in place and effective

If you need to change a plug, lead or other connection, have it checked by an electrician. Incorrect wiring may cause electrocution or fire.

Plugs and sockets

The Plugs and Sockets etc. (Safety) Regulations 1994 require all electrical appliances to be correctly fitted with an approved plug. All plugs should carry the name and reference number of the approved body, normally BSI or ASTA.

**MUST**

The plug must have the correct fuse for the appliance.

MUST

All sockets, adaptors and similar devices must meet British or European Standards.

If you have any queries, please contact Trading Standards.

Heaters

Gas and oil heater fireguards should meet the Heating Appliances (Fireguards) (Safety) Regulations 1991.

Oil heaters and used gas fires, which do not satisfy specific design criteria involving the hearth and installation instructions, must be fitted with a guard which meets the requirements set down in the regulations.

For electric fireguards the distance between the bars and the strength of the guard is also laid down in regulations.

MUST

Fireguards must be in place and should not be amended or tampered with.

The Gas Catalytic Heaters (Safety) Regulations 1984 prohibit the supply of gas catalytic heaters that contain unbonded asbestos.

The Oil Heaters (Safety) Regulations 1977 apply to paraffin heaters and control stability, flame extinction and labelling.

BEST PRACTICE

Fit a carbon monoxide alarm in the property if using gas or oil heaters or a wood or solid fuel stove.

Please contact Trading Standards if you require advice regarding these items.

Furniture and Furnishings

The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 apply to all holiday let properties.

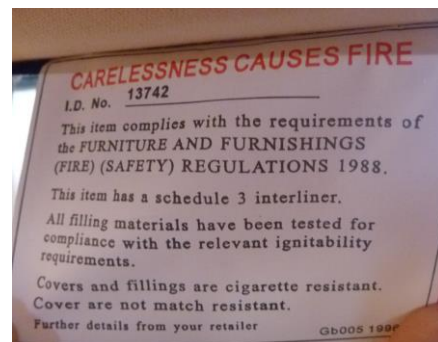
Furniture supplied within the property is required to be safe; this requirement applies to most upholstered furniture including padded dining chairs.

MUST

The upholstery and coverings used on furniture (excluding mattresses, bed bases, pillows and cushions) must pass the various flammability safety tests.

Existing furniture produced since the regulations came into force should have a permanent safety label. The label should include

- “Carelessness Causes Fire”;
- Details of the manufacturer, batch number and date of manufacture; and
- A description of the fillings, coverings and any interlinings.



The Regulations do not apply to furniture or furnishings manufactured before 1950, which are considered to be antique.

They also do not cover bedding, carpets or curtains. Mattresses and bed bases may however still be subject to the ignitability test. This may be shown by a label stating compliance with BS 7177 as shown.



MUST

Only buy furniture which displays a permanent label including the wording CARELESSNESS CAUSES FIRE. New furniture should have been tested and include the required label.

BEST PRACTICE

Check your existing furniture to ensure that it is safe to use. The permanent label can often be found on the underside of a seat or the base of an item.

BEST PRACTICE

Remove any items of covered or filled furniture which do not include a safety label until you are satisfied that they conform to the regulations.

Bunk Beds

MUST

Bunk and high beds must have a safety barrier

Fire Safety

The requirements for fire safety will depend upon the size and layout of your property. Guidance in relation to self-catering premises can be obtained from www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/public-safety/fire-and-rescue-services/FireLaw/SectorSpecificGuidance/SleepingAccommodationPremisesGuides

For most premises you must:-

MUST

Carry out a fire risk assessment and implement and maintain a fire management plan.

MUST

Take fire safety measures which are reasonable to ensure the safety of persons using the property.

MUST

Install smoke detection alarms as required.

You can find out more information about fire safety from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service - www.firescotland.gov.uk.

Toys and Play Equipment



You should ensure that any toys and play equipment you provide are safe and do not pose a hazard to any user.

MUST Only buy new toys and play equipment that show a CE marking.

BEST PRACTICE Second hand toys must comply with toy safety regulations however they may not display the CE mark.

BEST PRACTICE Check toys and equipment regularly to ensure they have not been damaged, become unsafe or are incomplete.

Guidance on toy and play equipment safety can be found on the website for the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents - www.rospa.com/homesafety/adviceandinformation/product/toy-safety.aspx or <http://www.rospa.com/leisuresafety/adviceandinformation/playsafety/>

HEALTH AND SAFETY

When providing holiday accommodation you must do so in a way that, so far as is reasonably practicable, means your guests are not exposed to health and safety risks.

BEST PRACTICE Carry out a risk assessment of the premises including identifying potential hazards, assessing the level of risk and identifying appropriate precautions to be implemented. You should keep a written record of this exercise.

In most cases hazards will be limited however you should consider the following

- Are there hazards in relation to slips, trips and falls either inside the property or in the grounds? If so can the risks be minimised by making changes?
 - Ensure floor surfaces are in good condition, free from obstructions and well lit.
 - Fit secure hand rails to stairs.
 - Maintain external paths, use barriers where there are significant changes in levels and ensure outside areas are adequately lit.
- Is all equipment provided suitable and safe for use?
- Are there any hazardous substances to be aware of?
- Are any ponds or other water where protection should be provided for small children?
- Have the above product safety regulations been complied with?

You can find out more about health and safety at www.hse.gov.uk

Employing Staff

If you employ a cleaner or a gardener directly you may have extra obligations as an employer including under Health and Safety at Work legislation such as carrying out the risk assessment, training employees and maintaining equipment. If you have any queries, please contact Environmental Health to discuss.

MUST Where you employ people, undertake a Risk Assessment if required.

If you are using a separate company to provide cleaning or maintenance of a property you should be satisfied that they are competent.

Spa Pools and Hot Tubs

Spa pools and hot tubs are becoming more common in holiday lets. However, they pose a significant risk of serious infections such as *Legionella* and *Pseudomonas* if not selected, installed, treated and monitored properly. If your holiday let has a spa pool or hot tub you:

MUST Carry out a risk assessment and implement identified controls to ensure the safe operation of the pool and handling of chemicals.

BEST PRACTICE

- Ensure that the pool is of the right type for the use it will get – domestic pools are not suitable without modification
- Ensure that the pool has a continuous dosing system
- Monitor the water quality regularly – three times a day
- Change the water and disinfect the pool between groups

Consult the HSE guidance at www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires/spa-pools.htm or contact Environmental Health for further advice.

OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- **Food** – If you provide any catering to the property then you may need to register as a food business with Environmental Health, if you are unsure contact your local Environmental Health office. You should not need to register if you leave a “welcome hamper” however you should of course ensure that any perishable items are appropriately stored.
- **Contact with Animals** - If your self-catering property is on a farm or other rural area, we would recommend providing guidance for visitors by including the leaflet Simple Precautions for Reducing the Risk of *E.coli* O157 Infection in Rural Families and Visitors in your visitor information pack. Copies of the guidance can be obtained from www.documents.hps.scot.nhs.uk/giz/ecoli/simple-precautions-O157.pdf.



REGULATORY SERVICES

Telephone 01546 605519

Email envhealth@argyll-bute.gov.uk
tradingstandards@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Bute and Cowal

22 Hill Street, Dunoon, PA23 7AP

Eaglesham House, Mount Pleasant Road, Rothesay, Isle of Bute, PA20 9HQ

Helensburgh and Lomond

Blairvadach, Shandon, Helensburgh, G84 8ND

Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islands

Area Office, Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, PA31 8QU

Oban, Lorn and the Isles

Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban, PA34 4AW

Headquarters

Kilmory, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RT

OTHER COUNCIL SERVICES

- Council Tax - If the property is made available on a commercial basis as a self-catering unit for 140 days or more then it may be excluded from the Council Tax Valuation List and entered in the non-domestic rates Valuation Roll. For further information contact Council Tax on 01546 605511.
- Business Gateway – Advice for businesses can be provided by Business Gateway on 01546 605459 or visit www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/business-and-trade/business-gateway-service