

How The HHSRS Works

HHSRS lists 29 hazards that can be found in homes, ranging from excess cold, damp and mould growth, to structural collapse. As part of the assessment, an officer must look for and rate each one.

The assessment has two parts: considering the likelihood of a hazard, and then the potential harm that hazard can have.

The officer classes each hazard as either Category 1 or Category 2. A Category 1 hazard means there is a very real and immediate risk to health and safety, and the officer must act. Category 2 hazards are less serious, but these risks still require attention and repair.

You can use this guide to familiarise yourself with HHSRS, and carry out your own property checks so you know what inspectors will look for.

This page is designed as a brief guide to HHSRS, not as a full statement of housing law and should not be used as such.



The 29 HHSRS Hazards

The hazards listed include risks to physical health, mental and social wellbeing that any issues or disrepair may cause. As part of the assessment, all parts of the property are considered, including access paths, outbuildings, and any exterior space as well as the interior.

1. Damp and mould growth

Health threats arising from significant numbers of house dust mites, damp, mould/fungal growth caused by damp and/or high humidity.

These can include asthma, allergy flare-ups, and infection toxins caused by mould and fungal growth.



2. Excess cold

Risks to health caused by indoor temperatures that are too low. The colder the temperatures, the higher the risk.

Healthy indoor temperatures are between 18°C and 21°C. Anything below 16°C can cause serious risks to health.

Heart attacks, strokes, and respiratory conditions can be caused or aggravated by cold temperatures.



3. Excess heat

Health problems caused by indoor temperatures that are too high.

Temperatures above 25°C increases the risk of dehydration, heatstroke, cardiovascular issues, strokes, and respiratory problems.



4. Asbestos and MMF

The presence of and exposure to asbestos and manufactured mineral fibres (MMF). In the past, these materials were used as insulation before the health risks were discovered.

Asbestos can severely damage the lungs and cause cancer. MMF presents risks to the lungs, eyes, and skin.



5. Biocides

Biocides are used to treat mould growth and timber, but can cause health threats. Inhaling these chemicals and allowing them to make contact with the skin can be extremely dangerous.

Insecticides and rodenticides, though they are classed as biocides, don't apply under HHSRS.



6. Carbon monoxide and fuel combustion products

Faulty boilers are one of the biggest causes of high levels of carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, and smoke.

Threats to health include nausea, confusion, headaches, unconsciousness, respiratory issues, and death.



7. Lead

Lead can be found in paint, water pipes, soil, and leaded petrol fumes. Lead poisoning can cause serious health risks, including mental health problems, infertility, and blood production issues.

If lead poisoning is not addressed, it can result in death.



8. Radiation

Radon gas is produced when uranium breaks down in soil. It enters a property through basements and cellar floors as airborne particles, but can also be dissolved in water.

Radon gas and its daughters are linked to lung cancer and other issues.



9. Uncombusted fuel gas

The threat of suffocation caused by fuel gas escaping into the home atmosphere.

Uncombusted fuel gas can also cause unconsciousness, brain damage, and death.



10. Volatile organic compounds

Threats caused by VOCs, which are organic chemicals which remain in gas form at room temperature.

These can aggravate allergies, cause eye irritation, headaches, drowsiness, nausea, and dizziness.



11. Crowding and space

Risks that come from a lack of space for living, sleeping, and normal household life within a property.

Overcrowding can cause many hazards, both to physical health and wellbeing.



12. Entry by intruders

This category examines how difficult it is to keep intruders out of a property, and the maintenance of defensible space.

Risks include injuries caused by intruders, and the impact a burglary (or potential for burglary) would have on wellbeing.



13. Lighting

Risks to health and wellbeing stemming from inadequate light, both natural and artificial.

These include eyestrain, wellbeing impacts from a lack of natural light, or being unable to sleep due to too much artificial light.



14. Noise

Threats to health and wellbeing that come from noise within the home or its immediate surroundings.

These include stress, headaches, difficulty concentrating, a lack of sleep and its associated issues.



15. Domestic hygiene, pests and refuse

Poor design, layout or construction of a property can mean the home cannot easily be kept clean, making pests more likely, and improper storage and disposal of household waste all pose health risks.

These can include infections, diseases (including any caught from pests), breathing problems, and allergies.



16. Food safety

If the facilities for storing, preparing, and cooking food aren't adequate, these can result in risks to health, including digestive problems, infections, dehydration, and vomiting.



17. Personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage

Facilities for personal and clothes washing, sanitation, and drainage have a large impact on health if they are not adequate.

These can cause digestive problems, skin irritation and infection, and mental health issues.



18. Water supply

The quality and adequacy of the water supply for drinking, washing, cooking, cleaning, and personal hygiene, among other purposes, and any impact poor water supply may have on occupants.

This category also assesses health risks from potential contaminants, including viruses, bacteria, parasites, and chemical pollutants.

Risks include dehydration, headaches, bladder infections, fatigue, and Legionnaires' disease.



19. Falls associated with baths

Any falls that are linked to baths, showers, or similar. Injuries can include lacerations, bruising, and fractures.



20. Falls on level surfaces

Any falls that are associated with a level surface, such as paths, yards, and floors. These can be internal or external.

This category does include trip steps, thresholds and ramps, where the level change is less than 300mm.

Injuries can include fractures, spinal, head, and brain injuries.



21. Falls on stairs etc

Falls linked to stairs, steps, and ramps, (internally or externally) where the level change exceeds 300mm. This category also includes fire escape means, step guarding, and access to shared facilities.

Spinal, brain, and head injuries are just some of the potential injuries caused by falls of this nature.



22. Falls between levels

Falls from one level to another inside or outside the home, but excluding falls linked to stairs, steps, or ramps. This can be inside or outside a home. The level change exceeds 300mm.

Falls from balconies, landings, or out of windows are just some of the falls in this category. Injuries can include spinal, brain, and head injuries, as well as fractures and death.



23. Electrical hazards

Faulty electrical equipment or exposed wiring can be extremely dangerous, and exposure to electricity can cause shocks, burns, lightning strikes, and death.



24. Fire

Uncontrolled fire and the smoke it produces present various hazards, including burns, smoke inhalation, and death.



25. Flames, hot surfaces etc

Fire, hot liquids or objects, vapours, and hot non-water based liquids can result in burns, scalds, permanent scarring and death.



26. Collision and entrapment

Colliding with parts of the house such as doors, walls, windows, and low ceilings, or trapping body parts in doors and windows or other architectural features can cause numerous physical injuries.



27. Explosions

Threats from an explosion, including partial/total collapse of a building, any debris created, and physical harm.

Injuries from explosions include spinal and head injuries, fractures, crushing, and death.



28. Position and operability of amenities etc

Risks of physical strain and injury from functional space, location of amenities, layout, and other features at the home.

These can include sprains and strains.



29. Structural collapse and falling elements

The risk of any part of the home collapsing (internally or externally), being displaced, or falling due to disrepair, inadequate repairs, or adverse weather.

These pose serious risks to health, including death.



For more information on HHSRS go to

**https://england.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/legal/housing_conditions/local_authority_duties_to_deal_with_poor_conditions/hhsrs_definition_of_hazards
#the-housing-health-and-safety-rating-system**