

**Consultation Response**  
**Scottish Government Short-Term Lets:**  
**Consultation on a licensing scheme and planning**  
**control areas in Scotland**  
**9 October 2020**

## **1. Introduction**

**1.1.** Electrical Safety First is the consumer charity dedicated to preventing deaths, injuries and fires caused by electricity. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Government's *Short Term-Lets: Consultation on a licensing scheme and planning control areas in Scotland*. We have answered the question which is most relevant to our role as the leading consumer charity and technical authority on electrical safety and where we feel we can add value.

## **2. Our Response to Question 3: Please identify any issues with the proposed licensing order as set out in chapter 6, and how to resolve them.**

**2.1.** We welcome the proposed licensing order which will require all Short-Term Lets (STLs) in Scotland to meet mandatory safety conditions. This will include a requirement for five-yearly electrical safety checks of both the electrical installation and any appliances provided as part of the let.

**2.2.** We have long campaigned for such a measure to be introduced. Our 'Short-changed' campaign has been calling for STLs to meet the same electrical safety standards as the Private Rented Sector (PRS) in Scotland.<sup>1</sup> This would ensure that people renting short-term have the same safeguards as those renting longer term and supports our overarching goal for a common standard for electrical safety in housing so everyone - regardless of tenure - is equally protected in Scotland.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/what-we-do/our-policies/scotland/short-changed/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/what-we-do/our-policies/scotland/inequality-street/>



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- 2.3.** We support the draft proposals for properties to demonstrate compliance with the mandatory conditions at the time of application and the obligation to display copies of the latest safety certificates for guests on arrival.
- 2.4.** However, we believe there must be a mechanism for guests to report any safety issues or concerns directly to the relevant licensing local authority. Guests will be well placed to be key monitors and enforcers of the mandatory safety conditions but there needs to be a route for them to escalate any issues which cannot be resolved with the host directly.
- 2.5.** We support the electrical safety proposals as specified but would recommend the following points be considered:
- 2.5.1.** In 6.19 (c), change “qualified” with “a suitably competent person”. This reflects the terminology used in the UK’s National Wiring Regulations, BS7671, and is used in the Scottish Government statutory guidance on electrical installations and appliances in private rented property.<sup>3</sup>
- 2.5.2.** The above guidance also states that a landlord, or other person, is considered competent to carry out a Portable Appliance Test (PAT) if they have successfully completed relevant training and provides examples of acceptable courses. This could be reflected for this duty.
- 2.5.3.** In 6.21, it states that “If the tester says that testing should be more frequent than once every five years... then the host must follow this advice.” We feel this may be too absolute and will require some guidelines to prevent over ambitious

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/electrical-installations-and-appliances-private-rented-properties/>

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inspectors calling for early inspections that are unfounded and not necessarily required.

- 2.6.** We believe a new measure should be added to the mandatory conditions requiring hosts to confirm that they have registered any electrical appliances provided in a let with the manufacturer.
- 2.7.** Last year, electrical products were the source of 80% of all house fires in Scotland and white goods, such as washing machines, tumble dryers and dishwashers, caused a house fire almost every day in Scotland.<sup>4</sup>
- 2.8.** We know that most of the properties available for short-term lets are whole properties which will usually mean a full range of electrical appliances, including white goods, will be provided for guests to use.
- 2.9.** Our research shows that product recalls achieve just a 10-20% response rate<sup>5</sup> and there are significant issues tracing consumers with a recalled item if it has not been registered. In a recent survey, only a third of Scottish consumers register their electrical appliances.<sup>6</sup>
- 2.10.** Our proposal would help to ensure any electrical products provided with lets are not subject to any product recalls or safety alerts, ultimately benefiting hosts by protecting their property from potential fire risks. It would not be an onerous task and could rely on self-declaration and is already recommended as best practice in the statutory guidance for the PRS electrical safety duty.<sup>7</sup>
- 2.11.** The combination of all these measures would benefit both guests and hosts by reducing the key risks from electrical fire and shock to people and property.

<sup>4</sup> Electrical Safety First analysis of data provided from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/product-recalls/>

<sup>6</sup> YouGov survey of 2102 people, representative of the UK population, carried out in January 2020.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/electrical-installations-and-appliances-private-rented-properties/>

