

Changes to the Residential Tenancies Act

Building and Housing Minister Dr Nick Smith announced on Thursday 9 July that the Government is proposing to amend the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 to improve rental standards and tenancy services. For many landlords the proposed changes will be significant.

The proposed changes are:

- a new requirement for smoke alarms in all residential rental properties from 1 July 2016;
- new requirements for ceiling and underfloor insulation in residential rental properties (with specific exemptions) by 1 July 2016 for Housing New Zealand and Community Housing Provider tenancies, and by 1 July 2019 for all remaining tenancies;
- a new requirement from 1 July 2016 for all landlords to state in tenancy agreements the level of ceiling, underfloor and wall insulation;
- strengthened enforcement provisions for the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to investigate and prosecute landlords for breaking tenancy laws;
- a new 10-day process to enable re-tenanting of properties where a tenant abandons a property with no intention of returning.

The exemptions to the requirements for ceiling and underfloor insulation are likely to be where it is physically impractical to retrofit insulation due to limited space underfloor or inaccessible raked ceilings, for example A-frame houses.

A Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill is to be introduced to Parliament by October of this year. We will keep you up to date as this Bill progresses.

If you require more information on the proposed changes please contact one of our [Residential Property team members](#).