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THE HHSRS: A LANDLORD'S GUIDE TO PROPERTY HEALTH & SAFETY

UNDERSTANDING HAZARD CATEGORIES AND COMPLIANCE BY CHARLES J HARRISON

Section 1: What is the HHSRS?

- The Risk Assessment Framework: The HHSRS is the risk-based evaluation tool used by local authorities to identify potential hazards in residential properties.
- The 29 Hazards: There are 29 categories of hazard, ranging from damp and mould to fire safety and electrical hazards.
- Hazard Categories: Hazards are split into Category 1 (serious) and Category 2 (less serious). Local authorities have a legal duty to take action if a Category 1 hazard is identified.
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Section 2: High-Priority Hazards in 2026

- Damp and Mould: Following updated legislation, this is now a top priority. Landlords must ensure properties have adequate ventilation, insulation, and heating to prevent significant moisture build-up.
- Excess Cold: Properties must be capable of being heated efficiently. This often links to your Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating and the quality of the thermal fabric of the building.
- Falling Hazards: This includes ensuring stairs have secure handrails, windows have appropriate safety catches, and there are no uneven floor surfaces that could cause trips.
- Fire Safety: Beyond just alarms, this covers the provision of fire-safe doors where required and ensuring escape routes are clear and unobstructed.
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Section 3: Inspections and Enforcement

- Local Authority Audits: Council officers can request an inspection at any time, often following a tenant complaint. Refusing entry can lead to a formal "Notice of Entry."
- Improvement Notices: If a hazard is found, the council may issue an Improvement Notice, legally requiring you to carry out specific repairs within a set timeframe.
- The Role of Inventories: A professional, independent inventory is a good basis at tenancy start. It provides date-stamped evidence of the property's condition.

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