

What Are the 29 Hazards Listed on the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)?

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) identifies 29 hazards affecting UK residential properties, grouped into four categories: physiological requirements (e.g., damp, cold), psychological requirements (e.g., crowding, noise), infection risks (e.g., pests, poor sanitation), and accident risks (e.g., falls, fires). Each hazard is assessed as Category 1 (severe) or Category 2 (moderate) based on its potential harm to occupants.

Understanding the 29 HHSRS Hazards

The HHSRS, established under the Housing Act 2004, evaluates risks in residential properties to ensure safe living conditions. Below is a breakdown of the 29 hazards, their health impacts, and mitigation strategies.

1. Physiological Hazards

These relate to **hygrothermal conditions** (heat, moisture) and **non-microbial pollutants**:

1. Damp and Mould Growth

- **Health effects:** Allergies, asthma, fungal infections, and mental health impacts.
- **Causes:** Poor ventilation, leaks, or inadequate heating. Children under 14 are particularly vulnerable [3](#).

2. Excess Cold

- **Health effects:** Respiratory illnesses (flu, pneumonia), cardiovascular issues.
- **Ideal temperature:** 18-21°C. Properties with insufficient insulation or heating fail this standard [4](#).

3. Excess Heat

- **Health effects:** Dehydration, heatstroke, cardiovascular strain.
- **Mitigation:** Adequate shading, ventilation, and insulation.

4. Asbestos and Manufactured Mineral Fibres (MMF)

- **Health effects:** Lung damage, skin/eye irritation.
- **Risk:** Common in older buildings with asbestos-containing materials [3](#).

5. Biocides

- **Health effects:** Toxicity from chemicals used to treat timber or mould.
- **Prevention:** Safe application and ventilation during treatments.

6. Carbon Monoxide and Combustion Products

- **Health effects:** Dizziness, nausea, death.
- **Source:** Faulty boilers or gas appliances.

7. Lead

- **Health effects:** Lead poisoning, affecting nervous systems and blood production.
- **Sources:** Old paint, pipes, or contaminated soil [4](#).

8. Radiation

- **Health effects:** Lung cancer from radon gas exposure.
- **Hotspots:** Areas with high radon levels (e.g., Cornwall, Devon).

9. Uncombusted Fuel Gas

- **Health effects:** Asphyxiation from gas leaks.

10. Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)

- **Health effects:** Headaches, allergies, respiratory irritation.
- **Sources:** Paints, adhesives, and cleaning products.

2. Psychological Hazards

These address **mental health and well-being**:

11. Crowding and Space

- **Health effects:** Stress, compromised privacy, hygiene issues.
- **Standard:** Minimum space per occupant, based on room function [3](#).

12. Entry by Intruders

- **Health effects:** Fear, stress, physical injury.
- **Mitigation:** Secure locks, lighting, and defensible space design.

13. Lighting

- **Health effects:** Eye strain, depression from inadequate natural/artificial light.

14. Noise

- **Health effects:** Sleep disruption, anxiety, reduced concentration.

3. Infection Risks

Hazards linked to **hygiene and sanitation**:

15. Domestic Hygiene, Pests, and Refuse

- **Health effects:** Infections, asthma from pest droppings.

16. Food Safety

- **Health effects:** Foodborne illnesses (e.g., salmonella).
- **Requirement:** Functional food storage and preparation areas.

17. Personal Hygiene, Sanitation, and Drainage

- **Health effects:** Skin infections, depression from inadequate facilities.

18. Water Supply

- **Health effects:** Dehydration, Legionnaires' disease from contaminated water.

4. Accident Risks

Physical injury hazards:

19. Falls Associated with Baths

- **Risk:** Slippery surfaces, lack of grab rails.

20. Falls on Level Surfaces

- **Causes:** Trip hazards (e.g., loose carpets, uneven flooring).

21. Falls on Stairs/Steps

- **Mitigation:** Secure handrails, non-slip surfaces.

22. Falls Between Levels

- **Example:** Falls from windows or balconies over 300mm high.

23. Electrical Hazards

- **Risk:** Faulty wiring, exposed sockets.

24. Fire

- **Prevention:** Smoke alarms, escape routes.

25. **Flames and Hot Surfaces**

- **Example:** Burns from unguarded heaters or cooking appliances.

26. **Collision and Entrapment**

- **Risk:** Trapping fingers in doors or striking low ceilings.

27. **Explosions**

- **Causes:** Gas leaks, structural weaknesses.

28. **Ergonomics**

- **Health effects:** Strain from poorly designed spaces.

29. **Structural Collapse**

- **Example:** Roof or wall collapse due to disrepair.

For landlords and tenants: Proactively assess your property against these hazards using the HHSRS framework to ensure compliance and occupant safety.