



Owner Property

Safety Guidance



Welcome to the Coast & Country Cottages property safety guide

Here you will find information on the main Health & Safety requirements you will need to consider when letting out your holiday home.

The areas which require your consideration are set out in the following pages of this guide and are intended to act as prompts to assist you in fulfilling your legal responsibilities for the safe letting of your holiday home.

Remember it is your responsibility as a holiday home owner to ensure that your property complies with current fire and health and safety legislation, and that we expect all owners working with Coast & Country Cottages to commit to this as part of their contractual agreement.

If you follow the correct Health & Safety advice and guidance, as well as using competent tradesmen to carry out maintenance work, you shouldn't go far wrong and every guest should have a safe and memorable stay in your holiday home.

If you require support with arranging any legislative documentation for your holiday home, the Managed Services team at Coast & Country Cottages would be delighted to offer their assistance or advice.

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New and refurbishment building work

It can be an exciting time as a holiday home owner, planning and designing changes to your holiday home.

It's really important that you have contacted your local planning and building control department before any work commences. This will ensure that you get the right advice from the beginning.

Within the UK and Ireland, there are different rules to follow regarding new and refurbishment works and it's best to make sure that your builder is aware of the current rules and regulations.

This can save you a lot of money and potentially having to change structural work already completed.

What you need to do

Always contact your local planning and building control departments prior to carrying out any structural changes within your property.

Engage suitable, competent and insured contractors to complete any works.

Further guidance on new and refurbishment building work in, [England](#) and [Wales](#), can be viewed [here](#).



As a holiday home owner, you need to comply with the relevant gas regulations to ensure the safety of your guests.

You must obtain a gas safety record by maintaining and servicing gas appliances by using a Gas Safe registered engineer for all pipe work, gas appliances, flues and LPG installed at your property.

In some property's flues are hidden behind walls or ceilings, to solve this problem, if all or part of the flue cannot be seen, you should arrange for inspection hatches to be fitted.

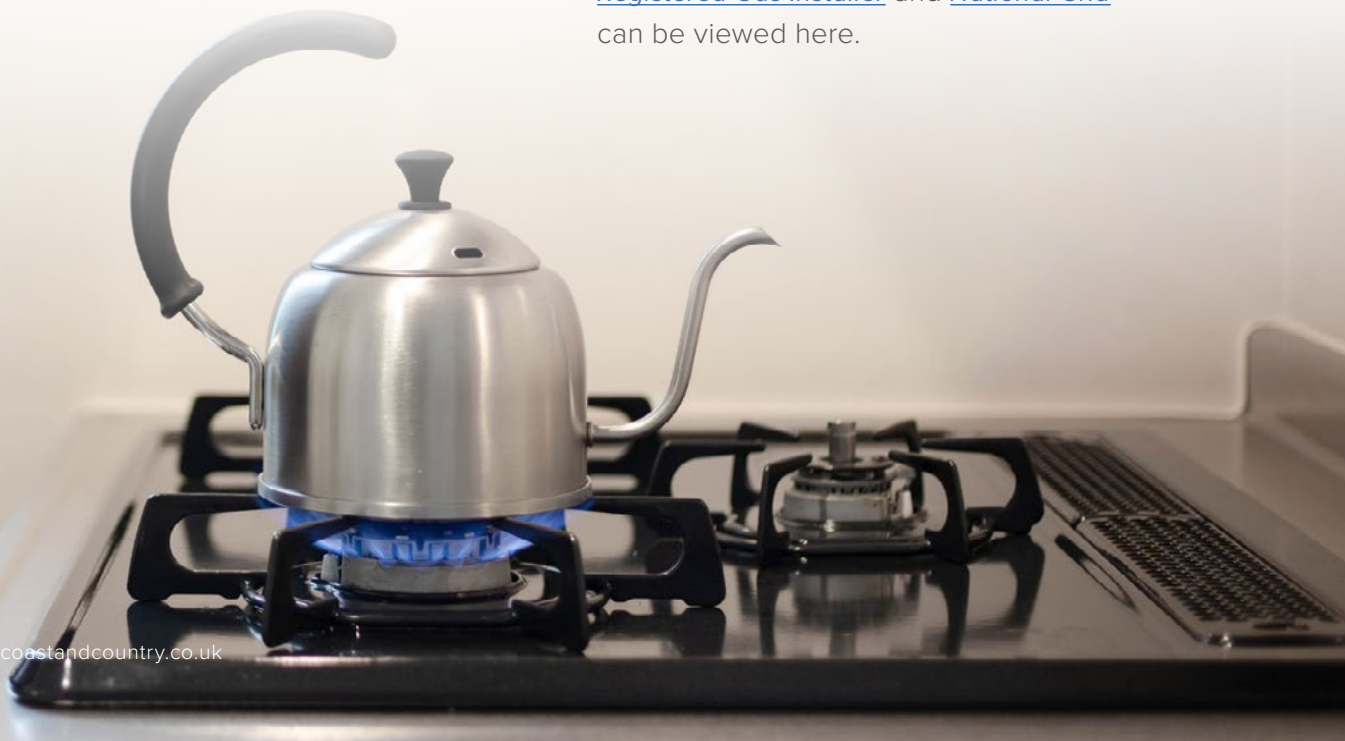
If gas appliances, such as ovens, cookers and boilers, are not properly installed and maintained, there is a danger of fire, explosion, gas leaks and carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carbon monoxide is a colourless, odourless, tasteless, poisonous gas produced by incomplete burning of carbon-based fuels such as gas, oil, wood and coal. They are safe to use, it is only when the fuel does not burn properly that excess carbon monoxide is produced.

What you need to do

- Use a competent registered gas engineer to install, maintain or repair your gas and LPG appliances including flues.
- Provide us with an annual up-to-date copy of your gas safety record on the Owners Portal. You will need to display a copy of this record within your property. If your gas boiler is new, then the registered paperwork will be required instead of a service record.
- Fit audible carbon monoxide alarms within the property which will alert guests if carbon monoxide is present to dangerous levels. These should be fitted in line with manufacturer's instructions. As a minimum there should be one alarm in each room that contains a solid fuel burning appliance and one alarm on each floor of the property.
- Always report concerns with gas immediately, turn off the equipment and contact the relevant authority.

Further guidance on gas safety including information from the [Gas Safe Register](#), [Registered Gas Installer](#) and [National Grid](#) can be viewed here.



The law requires each owner to complete a fire risk assessment for each holiday home and good practice requires this document to be formally reviewed on an annual basis.

The primary aim of a fire risk assessment is to reduce the risk of a fire and ensure that in the event of a fire that persons can escape unharmed.

Sykes Cottages has developed a simple, easy to use template for a 'typical 2 storey small family home' which can only be used for these types of properties. This has been developed from the guidance within government documents such as 'Do you have paying guests/Scotland Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing Premises with Sleeping Accommodation'.

Examples of properties that do not fit into this category for using our fire risk assessment template are:

- 3 storey properties
- Properties with basements
- Larger properties where there could be more than one family present
- Flats above shops and flats within buildings that are more than 2 storey
- Castles



Within the fire risk assessment, the purpose of the document is to make an assessment of the fire safety measures within the property such as:

- 5 yearly electrical wiring completed
- PAT testing annually
- Hard wired fire detection such as smoke detectors or heat detectors
- Emergency lighting such as torches or fixed lighting
- Gas safety inspection and certification
- Fire action plans
- Fire extinguishers
- Thumb turn locks in doors

This is not an exhaustive list, but together control measures are there to reduce the risk of a fire and ensure a safe evacuation. Some of these control measures are not the law, but they are good practice and together the assessment is about reducing the risk.

Some properties may have additional facilities such as swimming pools, hot tubs, saunas, steam rooms and these need to be taken into consideration when the fire risk assessment is completed. Additional annual electrical checks will need to be undertaken.

External fire risk assessments:

Where properties have been identified that they do not fit into the category of using our fire risk assessment template, then an external fire risk assessor should be contacted to complete a fire risk assessment for your holiday home.

The fire risk assessor will complete a full assessment of your property and provide an action plan you to complete. For some properties, it is likely that different safety measures will be required such as hard-wired emergency lighting or fire detection in each bedroom.

The reason for an external fire risk assessor to complete a fire risk assessment is to ensure that the fire risk assessment is 'suitable and sufficient'.

Examples of this are:

- A flat above a shop/restaurant may need fire detection that is linked to the shop/restaurant fire panel, so in the event of a fire below the flat, the guests will be alerted and they can then evacuate.
- A large home may have several families staying. In the event of a fire, it may not be known if everyone has vacated the property.
- Where loft conversions have been undertaken, the fire exit route from the loft must be practical and safe for guests to use.

Fire officer visits/letters

Where Fire Officers from the Fire Service request a visit to your holiday home, every effort should be made to accommodate the request and be helpful.

The Fire Officer will give some practical guidance and this will be confirmed in writing.

If they identify control measures that need to be put in place, then notices can be served such as an enforcement notice, prohibition notice or an alteration notice. It is a legal requirement to comply with these notices within a given timescale.

If owners receive any of these notices, then they should forward a copy of this to us.

What you need to do

Review your fire risk assessment annually and ensure that there is an up-to-date copy on the owner's portal.

Complete any actions identified within the fire risk assessment action plan.

Let us know if you are contacted by the Fire Service if they have planned or have visited your property.

Further guidance on Fire Risk Assessments in [England and Wales](#) (please note there are additional requirements for fire suppression systems within the county of Powys, Wales), can be viewed [here](#).

Electrical safety is considered to be critical in reducing the risks of a fire and electrical fires are the number 1 cause of fires in the home.

Whilst the law in the UK (except Scotland) may not specifically state that holiday homes must have set times for electrical checks, as part of the hospitality industry it is good practice to ensure that the following is carried out. Your fire risk assessment will ask you to confirm these take place too. It is also our policy that all owners follow the standard below. In Scotland, there is mandatory legislation that states this must take place.

The fixed wiring in your holiday home should be tested every 5 years.

All portable electrical items in your holiday home should be visually inspected before each let. This is normally done by the housekeeping team. On an annual basis, a suitable qualified electrician must test this equipment which is known as PAT testing.

If you have any facilities such as a swimming pool, hot tub, sauna or steam room then these will need to be checked annually by a suitably qualified electrician.

All electrical items should be purchased from a reputable supplier especially items such as phone chargers which have been responsible for recent fires.

Owners must be able to prove that all electrical equipment is in a reasonable state of repair and in a proper working condition.

What you need to do

Ensure that a suitable qualified electrician carries out PAT testing on an annual basis.

Ensure that a suitable qualified electrician completes a 5 year electrical safety check on all fixed electrics.

Complete an annual electrical safety check on facilities such as a swimming pool, hot tub, sauna or steam room.

Complete any actions identified as requiring any actions or maintenance.

All electrical certificates and checks should be uploaded to the owners portal.

Remove any faulty electrical equipment from your property.

Further guidance on electrical safety can be viewed [here](#).



What is a private water supply?

A PWS is a supply of water which is not provided by a water company.

There are many owners that do not have a public supply of mains water to their holiday home and instead rely on a private water supply.

Mostly, but not exclusively, these occur in the more remote, rural parts of the country.

The source of a private supply can be a well, borehole, spring, stream, river or lake but it can also be a storage structure or tank or a private water main which receives a bulk supply from a water company.

The supply may serve just a single property or it can be much larger, serving many properties and businesses.

Safe drinking water is essential for the health of everyone. It is well documented that private water supplies pose a risk to public health because they are quite often not designed, managed or tested in the same way as public water supplies.

Therefore, you must ensure your PWS is wholesome, which means that it does not contain any micro-organisms, parasites or substance at a concentration or value that could cause serious illness or even death in vulnerable people. You may not be able to tell whether your water is safe because the contamination does not necessarily impart an objectionable smell, taste or colour.

In order to decide what needs to be done to keep your PWS safe, it is essential to understand the risks to quality that are present.

At this time, the guidance from the local authority is that they will undertake a risk assessment every 5 years for each private water supply.

On an annual basis, a water test is undertaken and a report produced by a laboratory.

What you need to do

Arrange a visit and obtain a PWS risk assessment from your local authority and upload to the owner portal.

Organise an annual water test to be undertaken for your private water supply and upload to the owner portal. This may be done by the local authority or a private company.

Complete any actions identified to improve the water quality.

Further guidance on private water supplies in [England and Wales](#), can be viewed [here](#).

For the safety of our guests, you will need to consider potential risks of the TV and furniture tip-overs.

Once placed on appropriate stands, push the TV as far back on the furniture as possible or secure TV sets to a stable stand or wall.

Attach large furniture, such as wardrobes, dressers or bookshelves to the wall with safety straps, L-brackets or other strong attachment devices.

The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations state that for fire safety reasons, furniture and furnishings provided within a UK property for letting must comply with this legislation.

These include any of the following which contain upholstery:

- All furniture
- Beds, head-boards of beds, mattresses
- Sofa-beds, futons and other convertibles
- Children's and nursery furniture
- Garden furniture which is suitable for use in the property e.g. cane furniture
- Furniture in new caravans
- Scatter cushions and seat pads
- Pillows
- Loose and stretch covers for furniture

The Regulations do not apply to furniture manufactured prior to 1950.

The Regulations do not apply to sleeping bags, bedclothes (including duvets), loose covers for mattresses (i.e. mattress protectors), pillowcases, curtains and carpets.

Items covered within the regulations require display labelling in the shop fixed to it to show that it is fire resistance except for mattresses, bed-bases, pillows, scatter cushions, seat pads, loose covers (sold separately from the furniture) and stretch covers.

All new furniture except mattresses and bed-bases, loose and stretch covers for furniture must carry a permanent label.

What you need to do

Check how you can make large furniture and TV's safe.

Ensure that your property complies with the furniture regulations and is in a good state or repair.

If you have furniture within your property that should comply with these regulations and there is no permanent label, then it is up to you as the owner to identify these items, locate invoices and ask suppliers or manufacturers for written evidence that it complies with the current regulations. The alternative is to purchase new furnishings.

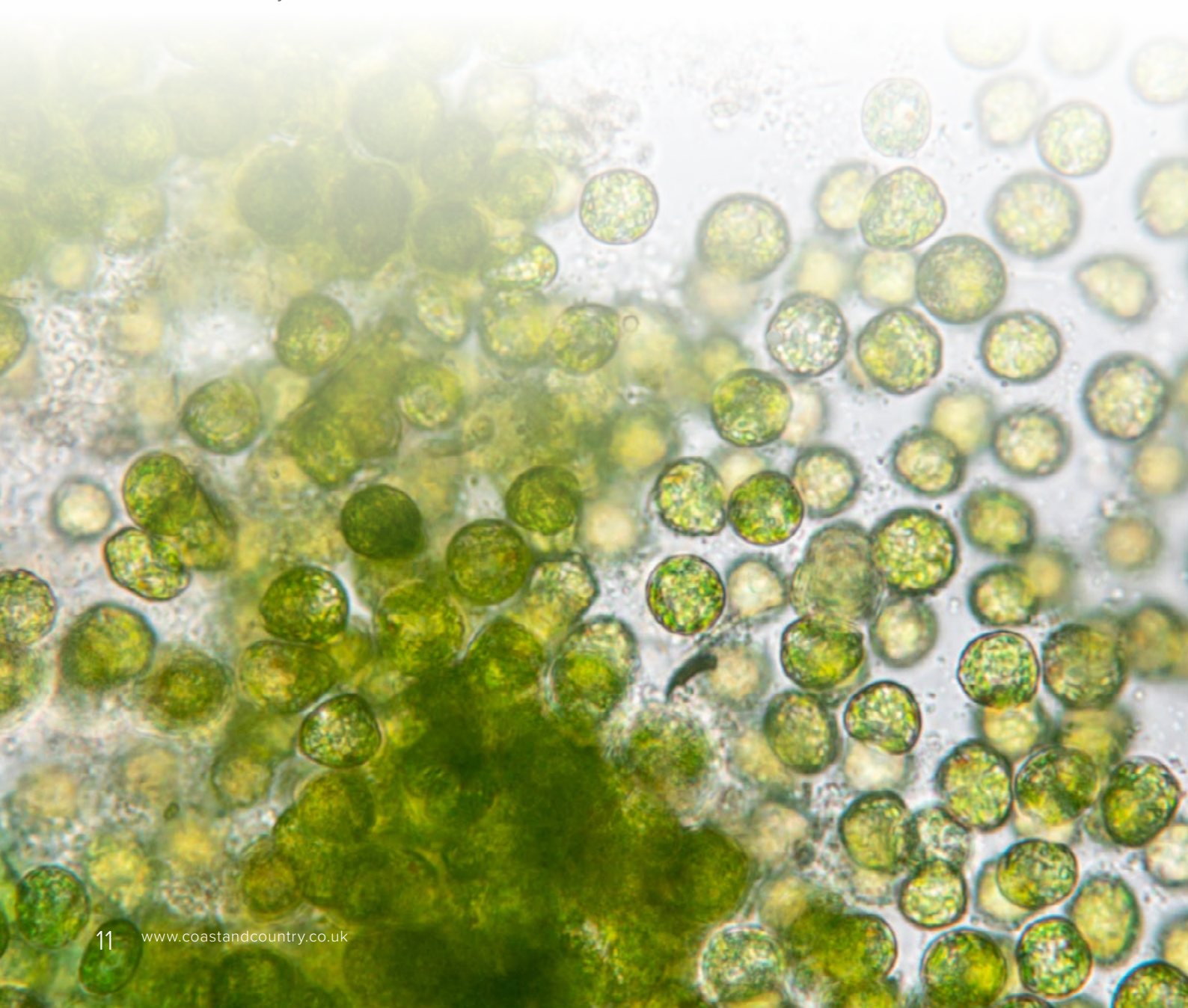
Bacteria called legionella is rare within holiday homes. The most common cause of infection is when someone breathes in tiny water droplets which contain the bacteria. Legionella bacteria thrives in warm water especially where there is a food source such as algae, sludge, limescales or rust.

The most likely locations for legionella is in garden hoses, water tanks, showers, hot tubs and swimming pools. However, if you follow good safety practices with this equipment the risk is reduced dramatically.

What you need to do

Ensure that all plumbing for your holiday home is in good working order and if your holiday home has not been used for 2 weeks or more then you will need to ensure that all of the taps are run for 2 minutes continuously before it is occupied.

Further guidance on Legionella safety can be viewed [here](#).



If your property accepts children as guests, it is very important that you consider their safety. Make sure that any equipment you provide such as stairgates, highchairs, cots or bunk beds are clean, well maintained and in good order. All equipment must meet the relevant British and European safety standards. In general, the best way to ensure you have safe equipment is to buy new from a reputable retailer.

Here are some important things you need to consider.

Cots

Cot bars should be between 50mm and 95mm apart. Larger gaps than this can trap a baby's head, arms or legs. The mattress should fit snugly with no gaps between the cot frame and the mattress. The height from the top of the mattress to the top of the cot should be at least 600mm. Cots should have no sharp edges and be well maintained. Travel cots should be kept clean and well maintained with no sign of deterioration.



Bunkbeds

The access ladder should be firmly fixed to the bed and the treads should be at least 3cm wide and 20cm apart. It's important that the mattress fits the bed securely, and that the slats underneath are no less than 7.5cm apart. The upper bunk should have guard rails on both sides, with a gap of 300mm to allow access. The upper bunk guard rails should extend at least 16cm higher than the top of the mattress. The top bunk mattresses should be no thicker than 17cm. There should be no gaps anywhere which are less than 60mm or larger than 75mm.

Importantly, do not allow any type of cord, rope, belt, scarf or anything similar to be hung from the top bunk. Also, do not place bunk beds near windows which have cord operated blinds. It is safer not to have this type of window covering in a child's bedroom. This is because children can be strangled quickly and quietly by looped blind cords.

Highchairs

Highchairs should be without wheels, or have a suitable locking device, should have at least a 3-point harness and should have a permanent label which advises the harness must always be used and that children are never to be left unattended in the chair.

Garden Trampolines

Trampolines are great fun; however, they are responsible for a large number of accidents. If you would like to provide a trampoline in the garden, please follow the ROSPA safety guidance.

Playground Equipment

Playground equipment is certainly loved by the younger visitors. Please make sure that the equipment is installed correctly, well maintained and to a suitable standard.

Further guidance how to help prevent accidents to children including [NCT](#) and [ROSPA](#) can be viewed [here](#).

Chemical accidents, especially with children can easily happen in the home.

Keep all household chemicals and cleaning products including detergent tablets for the dishwasher or washing machine out of sight and in cupboards with child-resistant catches.

Keep potentially harmful products high up and out of reach of children and never under the sink or on the floor by the toilet.

Don't store chemicals in unmarked containers or food containers.

Dispose of empty containers safely and out of children's reach.

Storing Chemicals Outdoors

Keep all chemicals like paint, white spirit, oil, anti-freeze, weed-killers and pesticides high up, out of reach and out of sight.

Fit a secure lock or padlock to the cupboard, shed or garage where they are kept.

Keep all chemicals in their original, labelled containers and do not put them into another bottle or container.



Windows

If windows are accessible above the ground floor to a child, the opening should be restricted to 100mm or less. Window restrictors should only be able to be disengaged using a special tool or key.

Unfortunately, blinds have been responsible for a number of accidents involving children. Install blinds that do not have a cord, particularly in a child's bedroom.

Do not place a child's cot, bed, playpen or highchair near a window.

Further guidance on window safety including [Jackloc](#) and [ROSPA](#) can be viewed here.

Windows and Glass Doors

Properties built under the current building regulations are more likely to have safety glass in place. You can normally identify this by a kite mark in the corner which indicates a BS standard.

Older properties may have non-safety glass present which may or may not have caused accidents within a domestic home, however when you let your property out to guests they may not be familiar with new hazards.

The best course of action is to conduct a risk assessment within the property to identify any non-safety glass and assess whether you think it would be a risk e.g. glass panels in internal doors may be a risk to children, pets or vulnerable persons. A competent glazier would be able to assist you with this.

Persons walking in to closed patio doors which are very clean can cause accidents. You may wish to consider adding manifestations (stickers at 800mm and 1500mm) to show that glass is present.

In older green houses where non safety glass is present, consider adding safety film to the glass.

Stairs and Balconies

Slips, trips and falls are the biggest cause of accidents within the home.

Handrails on stairs help to reduce the risk of accidents along with carpet, closed in steps and good lighting. Where handrails are fitted, these should be a height of between 900mm and 1000mm. On banisters and staircases any gaps should be less than 100mm to avoid young children becoming trapped.

If you have an unusual staircase, such as one which is narrow or spiral, you should let us know so we can mention it in your property description. You should also make sure each set of guests is aware when they arrive. If your property has a balcony you should make sure it's of sound construction and in good condition. The overall height of the railings should be at least 1m. Make sure there's nothing left near the balcony that children could be tempted to stand on.

If young children are allowed at your property and it has stairs then there should be secure stair gates provided, use approved safety gates at the tops and bottoms of stairs and attach them securely to the walls. Remember to read the manufacturer's instructions to make sure you have the right gate for your needs. Do not put a pressure gate at the top of stairs as there is a higher risk of tripping, which could result in a child falling down the stairs.

Swimming Pools

These can be a big asset to your property and they certainly help to bring in bookings. However, you do need to make sure you fully understand the risks associated with swimming pools and act accordingly to eliminate or reduce the risks so far as reasonably practicable.

We suggest that the first step is to read the HSG179 swimming pool document produced by the HSE. You may decide that you can complete all of the maintenance of the swimming pool or contact a local company to look after it for you. You will also need to record the procedures that you carry out.

Chemical dosing and management should only be carried out by you or a nominated person. Do not allow guests to carry out disinfection or chemical dosing. You will need to make sure that the storage of the chemicals is secure and you have chemical safety data sheets available for chemicals.

Consider the guests safety especially young persons when the swimming pool is not in use such as gates.

What you need to do

Obtain a copy and read the HSG179 swimming pool document and develop your own procedures or contact a local reputable company to help you manage your swimming pool.

Carry out regular checks on water quality, slipping hazards and chemical storage.

Keep all chemicals secure.

Display clear guidance for the guests on swimming pool rules, changes in depth and any safety signage such as no diving where the depth is under 1.5m.

Further guidance on Swimming Pool Safety can be viewed [here](#).

Hot Tubs

Hot tubs are known by a variety of names including hot spa, spa pools, whirlpool spa and portable spa. Like swimming pools, hot tubs are considered an asset to a property and can bring in the bookings, however like swimming pools you need to understand the risk associated with them and how to control them.

A hot tub is one of the most wonderful, therapeutic and lifestyle enhancing home improvements that consumers can invest in. However, it is important to ensure the water in your hot tub is clear, clean and hygienically safe, as some potentially harmful micro-organisms could otherwise cause problems if left unchecked. Such a problem is folliculitis (hot tub rash) which is often caused by infection with the bacteria *Pseudomonas Aeruginosa*. Symptoms include an itchy spot on the skin that becomes a bumpy red rash and involves infection of the hair follicles.

What you need to do

We suggest that the first step is to read the HSG282 Hot tub/spa document produced by the HSE. You may decide that you can complete all of the maintenance of the hot tub or contact a local company to look after it for you. You will also need to record the procedures that you carry out.

The hot tub needs to be emptied and refilled weekly and tested to make sure that the appropriate chemicals have been added. Signage showing best practice for the safe use of the hot tub is strongly recommended as guests activities within the hot tub can reduce the water quality rapidly e.g. body lotions.

Handrails, non-slip steps and lockable hot tub lids will ensure that access and egress into the hot tub can be done in a safe manner and children will not be tempted into the hot tub when unsupervised.

Further guidance on Hot Tub Safety can be viewed [here](#).

Saunas and Steam Rooms

Saunas and steam rooms are now found in a wide range of holiday homes. Saunas typically constructed mainly of timber, housing a sauna heater (reaching temperatures of up to 95°C) which are usually electrically operated and thermostatically controlled. Some large fires have been attributed to saunas so the risk to life, property, and business interruption resulting from such fires must be recognised. However, like swimming pools and hot tubs, you need to understand the risk associated with them and how to control them.

Further guidance on saunas and steam room safety can be viewed [here](#).

Outside space is a great asset to any property. A bit of thought and a practical approach to safety should be all you need to ensure all your guests continue to have a great time without incident.

Give attention to water features such as fountains, ponds or streams. If you have any of these on your property, make sure they're mentioned in your description and if appropriate they are fenced off or covered. Your insurer may have requirements in this regard also.

If your description says your garden is enclosed, then make sure it is. This means no gaps in the fencing and doors and gates that have latches and that stay shut.

If you provide garden furniture or a BBQ make sure it's safe, in good condition and well maintained. Be aware of hot coals coming into contact with decking.

Don't leave tools or garden machinery or tools lying around. Keep them securely locked away.

If you have water, oil or septic tanks they should be secured at all times.

Maintain paths, garden steps and patio areas to reduce the likelihood of slips, trips and falls. If there are any large drops on your property, make sure they're clearly identified and/or fenced off.

If you use oil to heat your property, then you also have the responsibility for ensuring the oil is stored safely and the structure for storing the oil, the tank along with the associated pipework is kept and maintained in good condition. You must ensure that you are compliant with the relevant oil storage legislation and building control regulations. It is your responsibility to be prepared for an accident, oil leak or spill. You should get your oil storage container inspected every year by a competent professional contractor.

If you have a septic tank at your property then you are responsible for ensuring the systems are safe and function properly, including having a secure lid on the tank. You must check the septic tank on a regular basis and ensure that they do not pose a hazard to guests in particular to children. Avoid parking any vehicles on the tanks at all times.



You will need to leave a first aid box in your holiday home. Please make sure that this is checked on a regular basis and only contains the items that are displayed in the contents. Do not add items such as headache tablets.

In the unfortunate situation where the guest informs you that they have had an accident on your premises, please let us know straight away.



As with running any business, it's important to make sure that you have public liability insurance in order to cover both yourself and your holiday property. To make sure each of our owners are protected, here at Coast & Country Cottages it's part of our agreement that you take out public liability insurance for your property.

It is important that you check that the facilities that you have are covered in your insurance policy. Take time to speak to your insurers and discuss this.

You may already have a liability insurance policy but be aware that not all liability policies include swimming pool or hot tub liability coverage. You may have to pay an additional amount to include any claims resulting from the 'attractive nuisance' that pools and hot tubs can sometimes be considered.

We will review this document on a regular basis. Please make sure that you visit the portal frequently to make sure that you have the most up to date copy.





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Part of the  **SYKES HOLIDAY COTTAGES** family

The information in this document is intended only as a guide. It contains simplified health and safety guidance based on complex and changing legislation, and does not constitute legal advice. Whilst we endeavour to keep it up to date, we cannot be held liable for errors and omissions; and compliance with the law remains your responsibility.

If you have concerns over compliance, you must seek professional advice, or contact your regulator or local authority.

Before acting on any information provided, please seek any necessary professional advice to ensure that any steps taken are appropriate.