

# Workers' accommodation

**When an employer provides living quarters for its workers, certain requirements apply to the accommodation.**

## **Requirements for ordinary accommodation**

The accommodation must always be satisfactorily constructed, fitted out and maintained. The ordinary accommodation must have:

- a bedroom with a window that can be opened
- a living room with chairs, a sofa and, as a general rule, a TV or internet. If the bedroom is large, the leisure area requirement may be met by the bedroom alone. If the bedroom is small, a separate living room is required pursuant to the regulations.
- a wardrobe or cupboard for storing clothes
- access to a bathroom and toilet. For each 4–5 workers, there must be one lockable toilet and one lockable shower room
- a utility room with a washing machine and clothes-drying facilities
- a dining room with cooking facilities, dining area, dining table and chairs
- access to required cleaning equipment

When deciding whether the living quarters are satisfactory, employers must consider the need to keep the accommodation clean and tidy, and the opportunity for privacy and dignity given the number of workers.

## **What is required for accommodation to be satisfactory?**

The regulations emphasise the following factors:

- the size, fittings and furniture
- fire safety
- satisfactory ventilation
- that the accommodation is designed for the number of people who live there
- that the accommodation is not affected by wet or dry rot, damp or the like
- that the standard of the accommodation is consistent with technological and social developments

## **Bedrooms**

### **Single room for long-term stays**

As a general rule, workers must be accommodated in single rooms. This particularly applies to long-term stays.

Bedrooms must be located so the workers are disturbed as little as possible. The room should not function as access to other rooms. Ensuring adequate opportunity for rest is important for recovering after work. This has a direct bearing on workers' health and safety at the workplace.

The regard for privacy is also important. Rest and privacy are difficult to achieve if there is no place to withdraw. There is not normally sufficient privacy if a worker only has the room to himself for parts of the day/night.

### **Double room for short stays**

Double rooms can be used for short stays. Such rooms must be sufficiently large and have an adjacent living room.

### **Dormitories for seasonal workers in the agricultural sector**

The requirement for a single or double bedroom does not apply to seasonal workers in the agricultural sector. In such a case, up to four workers can be accommodated in the same bedroom. The bedroom must be sufficiently large for the number of people who will sleep there and have an adjacent living room. The duration of such accommodation is maximum 10 weeks.

### **Fire safety**

Electrical installations, fire alarms and fire-fighting equipment must comply with current legislation. The electrical installation must be dimensioned for the number of workers and the use of electronic equipment.

There must be escape routes and emergency exits. When windows cannot be used as escape routes, leisure rooms and bedrooms must have two alternative escape routes.

### **House rules**

When several workers share accommodation, the employer and accommodated workers must draw up the house rules together.

The house rules should include information about:

- distribution of tasks
- cleanliness, infection control and tidiness
- laundry times
- cooking
- alcohol
- smoking
- quiet hours
- right to have guests

The above list is not exhaustive and must be adapted to the needs in the individual living quarters. Following a specific assessment, the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority may order that house rules be drawn up.

### **When the employer does not own the accommodation**

When an employer owns or rents accommodation and makes this available, or provides or arranges living quarters, such living quarters must meet the requirements. The requirements apply regardless of whether it is the employer or the worker who pays for the living quarters.

The rules do not apply if an employer only mediates contact with one or more landlords. If an employer assists the worker in obtaining accommodation and the tenancy agreement is between the landlord and the worker, the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority must assess whether the living quarters can be considered to have been made available by the employer. To be responsible for the accommodation, the employer must have a certain connection to the living quarters or to the landlord.

### **Infection control measures for accommodation**

The employer must assess the risk of infection in the living quarters, and implement relevant infection control measures:

## Infection control measures in the living quarters

The employer must assess the risk of infection and put in place measures. Examples of measures are that

- the employees have the necessary knowledge and equipment available (washing hands, practising coughing hygiene, using disposable tissues, etc.)
- the employers ensures that contact surfaces and equipment, especially in the shared bathroom and kitchen areas, are cleaned regularly

Employees must receive training in infection control measures in a language they understand. The measures should be included in the house rules. In the event of a major outbreak of infection, the employer must consider additional infection control measures in collaboration with local health authorities.

## Follow-up of illness

The employer should have procedures or assess measures for employees who have developed symptoms of infectious diseases. The routines of the company should state what sick employees should do.

## The right of the Labour Inspection Authority to inspect living quarters

The Labour Inspection Authority shall have free access at all times to any premises subject to the Act. This includes living quarters when provided by the employer.

If the employer is bound by a collective agreement, there may be further requirements regarding the living quarters beyond the requirements of the Act. The Labour Inspection Authority does not carry out supervision pursuant to collective agreements.

The Labour Inspection Authority supervises compliance with the requirements regarding living quarters and ensures that the living quarters are satisfactorily constructed, fitted out and maintained. In such supervision, the Labour Inspection Authority often cooperates with agencies such as the Fire Service and other municipal authorities.

## Legislation concerning living quarters

[Section 4-4 \(4\) of the Working Environment Act](#)

[Chapter 3 of the Workplace Regulations](#)

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