

# The Healthy Homes Standards Playbook

A Practical Compliance Guide for NZ Property Investors



# Closing the Quality Gap

Rental homes in Aotearoa currently face a significant quality gap compared to owner-occupied homes.

**1 in 5**

The number of New Zealand homes currently struggling with dampness.

The dual objective:  
Prevent health conditions like asthma and rheumatic fever, while protecting your property investment from long-term moisture damage.

# The Final Deadline



**July 1, 2025**

By this date, all private rental homes must fully comply with the five Healthy Homes minimum requirements. The staggered rollout is over.

# Standard 1: Dedicated Heating

The main living room must be able to reach and maintain a temperature of 18°C.



**1**

- Minimum 1.5 kW heating capacity (Use Tenancy Services tools to calculate exact room needs).

**2**

- Heaters must be fixed to the wall or floor.
- No portable heaters or open fires.

**3**

- Electric heaters must feature a built-in thermostat.

# Acceptable Solutions & Loopholes

## Acceptable Installations:

- ✓ Heat pumps, Wood burners,
- ✓ Pellet burners, Flued gas heaters.

## Unacceptable:

- ✗ Open fires, un-flued gas, small plug- plug-in electrics.

## The "Top-Up" Loophole:

If you installed heating before July 1, 2019, and it meets at least 80% of the required capacity, you do not need an entirely new system. You can add a fixed electric heater (up to 2.4 kW max) to bridge the gap.

# Standard 2: Comprehensive Insulation

Ceiling and underfloor insulation is compulsory and strictly measured by R-value or thickness.

Zones 1 & 2 (Most of North Island):

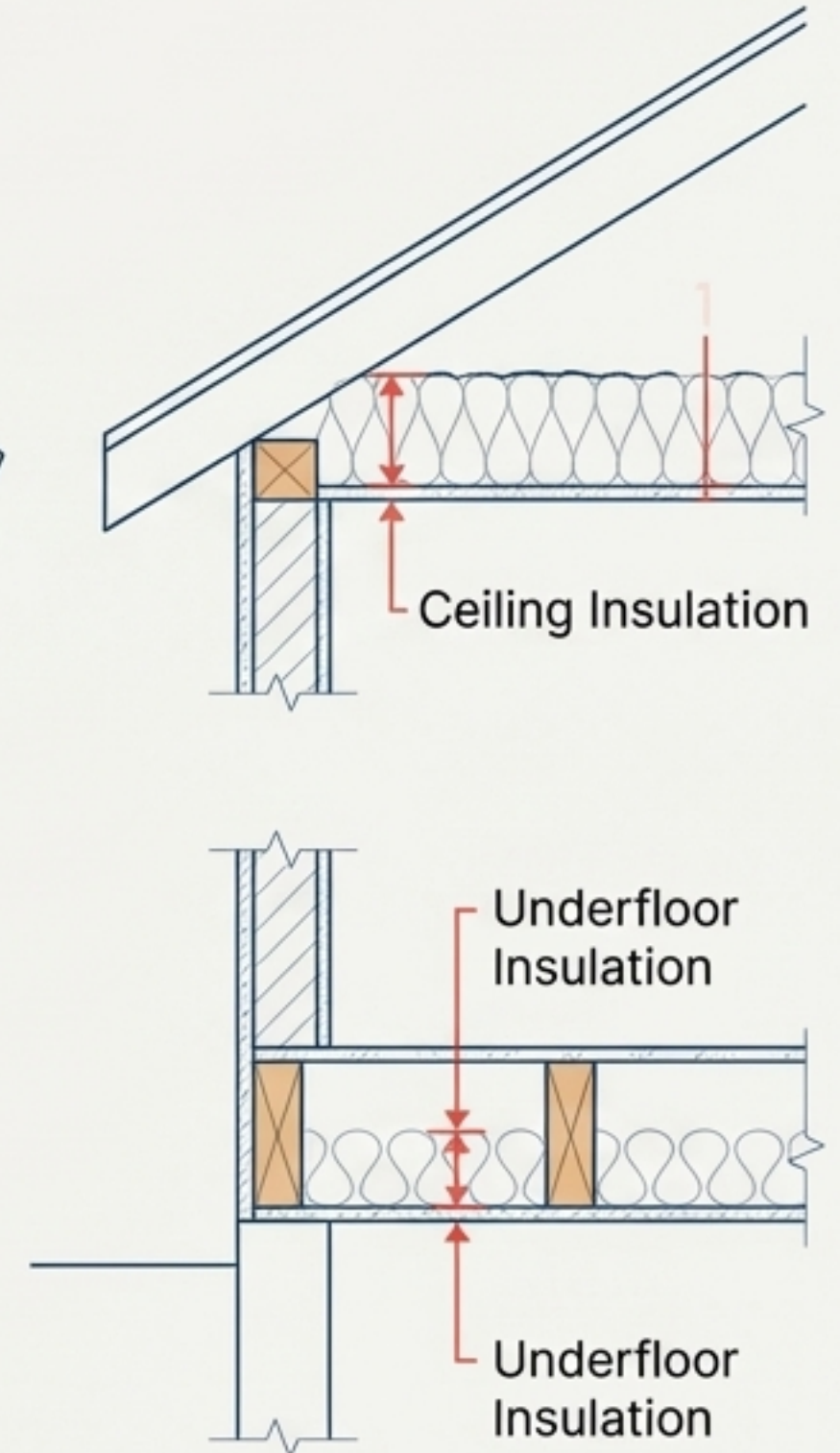
**160mm** minimum ceiling thickness.  
**100mm** underfloor.

Zone 3 (South Island & Central North Island):

**180mm** minimum ceiling thickness.  
**100mm** underfloor.

Acceptable Materials:

Fibreglass (Pink Batts), foil, and polystyrene.



# Insulation Condition and Exemptions



## Condition Checklist:

Must be free of mold, dampness, rips, gaps, vermin, and bird nests.

The **30% Degradation Rule**: Existing pre-2016 insulation over **120mm** thick is acceptable, provided it has not degraded by more than **30%** of its original installed thickness.

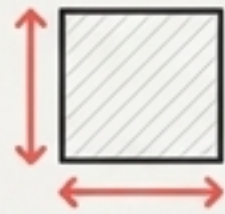


## Exemptions:

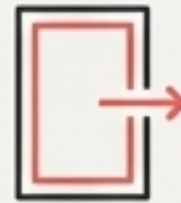
Multi-storey internal floors/ceilings, properties with unsafe or physically impracticable access, and homes with limited roof space if extra insulation exists elsewhere (based on 2007/2008 consent dates).

# Standard 3: Passive Ventilation

Living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, and bedrooms must have at least one window, door, or skylight that opens outside.



**The 5% Rule:** The size of the operable area must be at least 5% of the room's total floor area.

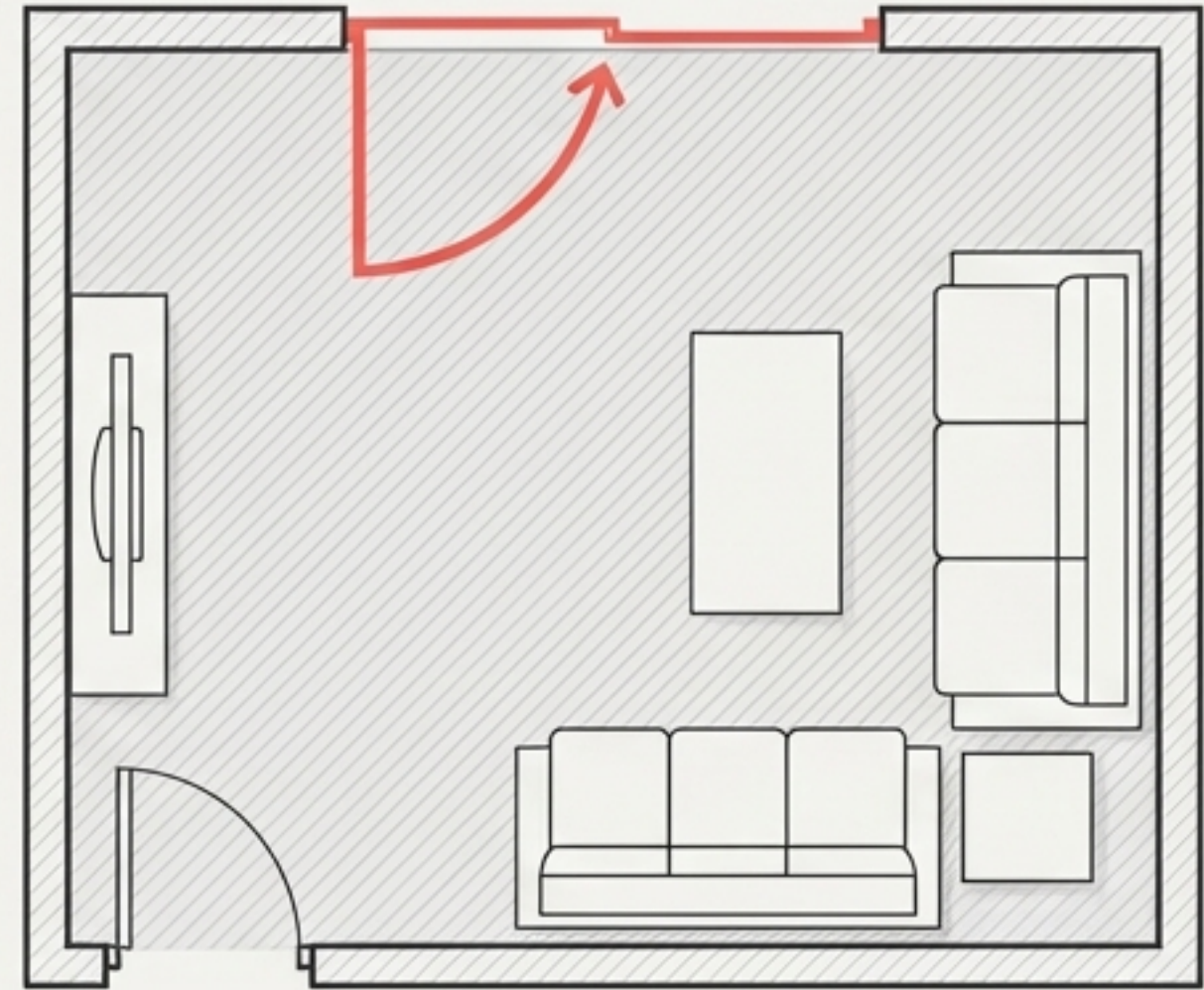


**Requirement:** Openings must be able to be fixed open.



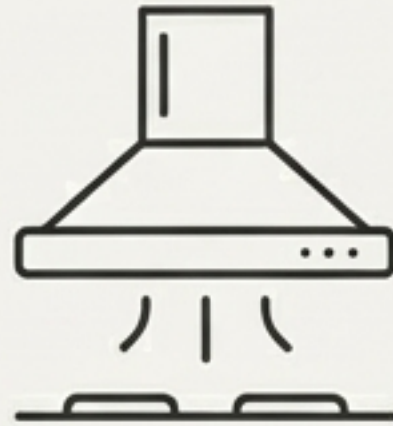
**Exemption:** Opening windows are not required in rooms that did not legally require them when originally built.

5%



# Standard 3: Mechanical Extraction

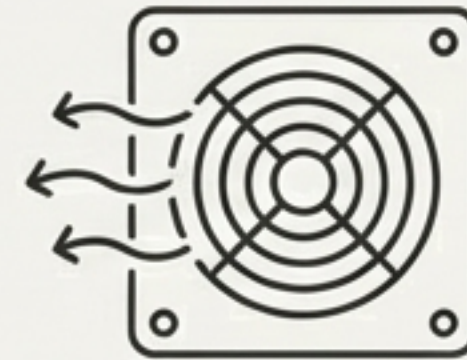
Combating dampness requires acceptable continuous mechanical ventilation or extractor fans installed in high-moisture areas.



## Kitchens (Post-2019 Installs):

Minimum diameter: **150mm**

Exhaust capacity: **50** litres per second



## Bathrooms (Post-2019 Installs):

Minimum diameter: **120mm**

Exhaust capacity: **25** litres per second

Ducting must vent outdoors and be free of tears or clogs.

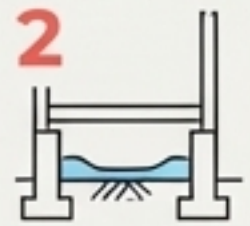
# Standard 4: Moisture Ingress & Drainage

Rental homes require efficient exterior drainage and protected underfloors.



## 1 Exterior Drainage:

Working gutters, downpipes, and drains to effectively remove storm, surface, and groundwater to an outfall.

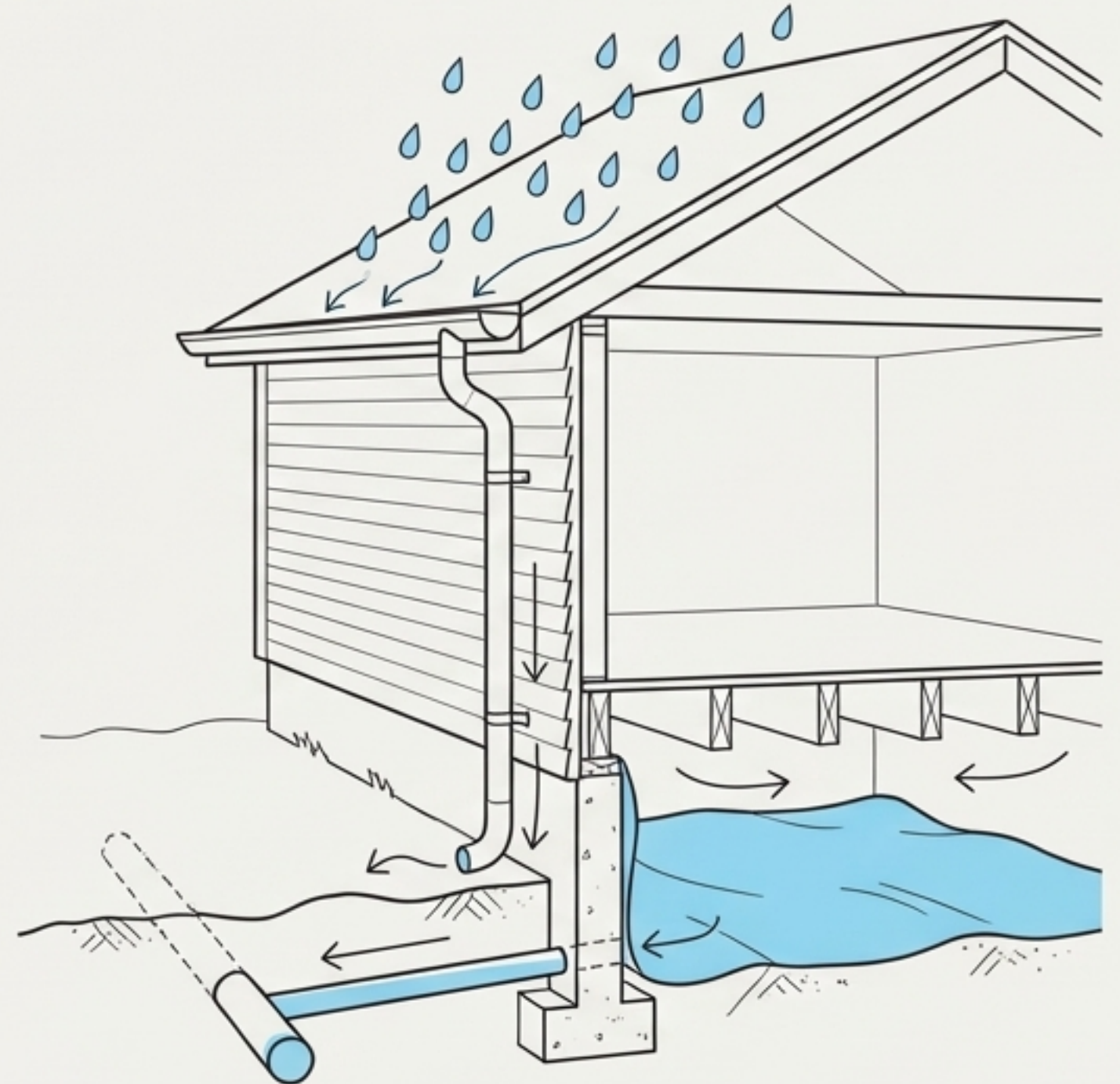


## 2 Subfloor Barriers:

Enclosed subfloors (restricted airflow crawl spaces) mandate a ground moisture barrier.



**Metric:** Typically a polythene sheet or an alternative barrier with a minimum vapour flow resistance of **50MNs/g**.



# Standard 5: Draught Stopping

Stop unreasonable heat loss by blocking noticeable draughts in walls, ceilings, windows, floors, and doors.



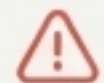
## The \$2 Coin Rule:

Any gap wider than 3mm (the edge of a \$2 coin) must be blocked.



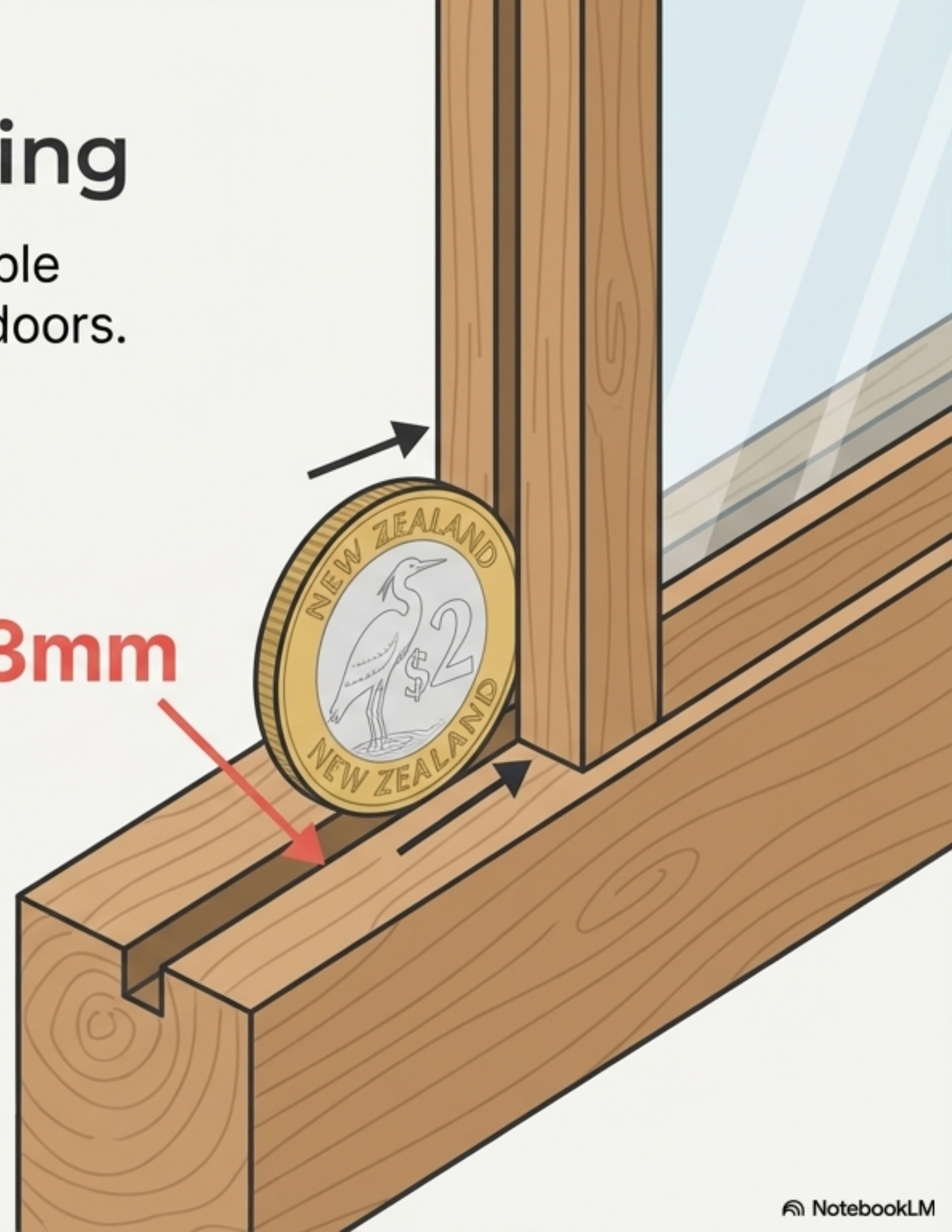
## Open Fireplaces:

Unused fireplaces must be closed off and chimneys blocked.



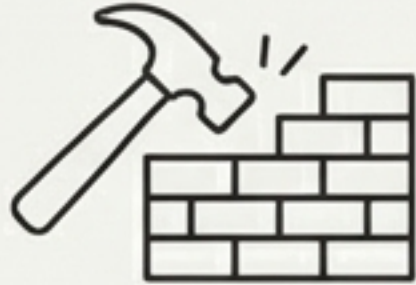
**Note:** There are absolutely no specific exemptions for the draught stopping standard. Age or condition of the house is not an excuse.

3mm

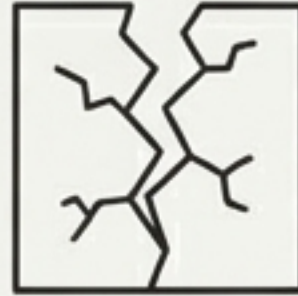


# Defining “Not Reasonably Practicable”

You are not required to fulfill a standard if an experienced professional installer cannot achieve it without:



- 1 Substantial Building Work:**  
Requiring major structural alterations.



- 2 Property Damage:**  
Causing substantial, irreversible damage to the building.



- 3 Health and Safety Risks:**  
Posing severe risks to a contractor's safety (e.g., inaccessible subfloors or dangerous roof cavities).

# Administrative Duties: The Paper Trail

You must retain all Healthy Homes records **for the duration of the tenancy**, plus **12 months** after it ends.



Keep on file:

- Heating capacity calculations
- Code compliance certificates
- Tradesperson receipts and material invoices
- Land Information Memorandums (LIM) or building reports
- Photographic evidence of changes made

# Tenancy Agreement Mandates

For any new or renewed tenancy, landlords must legally provide specific documentation attached to the tenancy agreement.



- 1. The Compliance Statement:** A signed document detailing the property's current level of compliance with all five standards.



- 2. The Insulation Agreement:** A signed statement explicitly outlining what insulation the property has, its condition, and its R-value.

# Temporary Exemptions for Major Works

Properties slated for demolition or substantial renovation have a grace period.



## The 12-Month Rule

You may be exempt from the standards for up to 12 months if building or resource consents were applied for before the tenancy began.

## The Catch

Work must commence within that 12-month period. If consents expire or are refused, landlords have 120 days to fully comply.

# The Cost of Inaction

**\$7,200**

Landlords failing to meet these obligations breach the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 and are liable for exemplary damages up to \$7,200 per breach.

---

The Process: Tenants can issue a 14-day notice to remedy. Unresolved issues are escalated to the Tenancy Tribunal, which can order immediate fixes and financial compensation.

# Your Action Plan

