

Lighting and Appliances

What to look for:

- > Is the stove and oven gas or electric. Gas is generally cheaper and more efficient than electric
- > Check the condition of any appliances. For example does the oven door seal properly, this can be checked by putting a five dollar note in the door – if it is held in place the seal is adequate
- > What type of lighting is installed? Many newer houses have several halogen or 'low voltage' downlights in parts of the house, these are often very expensive to run. Incandescent lights can be replaced with low wattage compact fluorescent lights.

Comments:

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poor average good

Garden

What to look for:

- > Trees and shrubs provide shade from hot summer sun and cool warm summer breezes. Deciduous trees to the north will allow in winter sun while protecting against summer heat, however they are the most beneficial when planted on the western side of the property.

Comments:

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poor average good

Overall energy rating of the house poor average good

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Searching for an energy efficient rental property in a cool/temperate climate



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How does the house rate on energy efficiency?

Consider the following aspects and compare the energy efficiency of houses you inspect

Orientation

What to look for:

- > Are the living areas to the northern end of the house? – this will allow you to get the most from the lower angled winter sun for light and heat

Comments:

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poor average good

Zoning and layout

What to look for:

- > Is the house open plan or well ‘zoned’? – Open plan houses usually require greater amounts of energy to heat and cool. Houses in which the bedrooms, living areas and laundry and toilet facilities can be closed off mean that heating and cooling can be restricted to a smaller area requiring less energy

Comments:

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poor average good

Windows

What to look for:

Size, type and positioning of windows is important to energy use. As a general rule:

- > larger windows on the north of the house to let in winter sun, smaller on the east, west and south to protect against the summer sun and prevent winter heat loss
- > double glazing will substantially reduce heat loss in winter (& heat gain in summer)
- > double hung and casement windows allow for better ventilation than awning windows
- > Does the property have blinds, awnings and curtains? Thick curtains with pelmets will prevent heat loss in winter, while blinds and awnings on the outside will provide protection against summer heat gain

Comments:

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poor average good

Insulation

What to look for:

- > Is the property insulated? – ask the landlord or agent. If they are unsure ask to have a look in the roof space to see if there is at least some insulation. There is unlikely to be wall or floor insulation if there is no roof insulation
- > Check for gaps around windows and doors and between floorboards. Also, are there any open fireplaces? They will be responsible for a substantial amount of heat loss unless sealed

Comments:

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poor average good

Hot water

What to look for:

- > What type of fuel does the hot water system use? Electricity is usually much more expensive to run than gas – solar hot water is the cheapest
- > Is the hot water system a storage or instantaneous type? Instantaneous systems are generally more efficient, particularly for smaller households

Comments:

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poor average good

Heating and Cooling

What to look for:

- > Does the property have a heater? – if you live in a cool climate and there is no heater this could mean you have to rely on one or more portable electric heaters, which will prove very expensive. Gas space heating is cheapest. While central heating can seem appealing, an inefficient model can be expensive to run, particularly if it cannot be ‘zoned’ and unoccupied rooms are being heated
- > Does the property have an air conditioner or evaporative cooler? – air conditioners are more expensive to run than evaporative coolers, but they are more effective in humid climates. Check the energy efficiency rating of the air conditioner
- > Does the property have ceiling fans? – ceiling fans use much less energy than air conditioners to keep people cool. Fans can also help recirculate warmed air throughout the room in cooler months.

Comments:

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poor average good