

# MIKSHA Rating System Certification Manual

**Mission for Integrated Keeping of Safe & Hygienic Accommodation**  
(Certification Standards for Long-Term Accommodation in India)

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## Founder's Note

Welcome to the **MIKSHA Rating System** manual. As the founder of this mission, I am proud to introduce a pioneering framework dedicated to improving the living conditions in India's long-term accommodations. Having witnessed the diverse quality of paying guest (PG) facilities, hostels, and co-living spaces across the country, our team recognized a pressing need for standardized guidelines. MIKSHA was conceived as a "**Mission for Integrated Keeping of Safe & Hygienic Accommodation**" to bring **accountability, safety, and quality** to accommodations that thousands of students and professionals call home.

This manual embodies our commitment to **professionalism and transparency**. It is structured akin to a government standard, ensuring credibility and rigor. The criteria herein were developed with extensive research, drawing on best practices from hospitality standards, public safety regulations, and health guidelines. We consulted **Indian regulatory norms** and examples like municipal PG guidelines, food safety regulations, and hostel standards to make the MIKSHA framework both **comprehensive and locally relevant**[1][2]. Our vision is that a MIKSHA certification becomes a **trusted seal of quality**, reassuring parents, residents, and authorities alike that a certified property meets the highest benchmarks of safety, hygiene, and fairness.

We invite property owners to adopt these standards not just to attain a certification, but to genuinely uplift the living experience of their tenants. In doing so, we collectively contribute to a safer and more comfortable urban living environment. Thank you for joining us in this mission. Together, let us set a new benchmark for long-term accommodations in India.

– [Name], Founder, MIKSHA Initiative

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## 1. Introduction

India's burgeoning urban centers host a vast number of **paying guest accommodations, student and working hostels, and co-living properties**. These establishments provide affordable housing to young professionals and students, but their quality and safety vary widely due to the **absence of uniform standards at the national level**. Recognizing this gap, the Ministry of Tourism introduced voluntary guidelines for small lodgings (like guest houses) to standardize cleanliness, fairness, and safety in unregulated accommodations[3]. Inspired by such efforts, the **MIKSHA Rating System** has been developed as a dedicated certification program for long-term accommodations.

**MIKSHA** stands for *Mission for Integrated Keeping of Safe & Hygienic Accommodation*. It is a comprehensive rating and accreditation system designed to **evaluate, score, and certify PGs, hostels, and co-living spaces** across India. The aim is twofold:

1. **To ensure a baseline of safety, hygiene, and habitability** in these accommodations, protecting tenants' welfare.
2. **To recognize and incentivize higher standards** by awarding quality seals (Silver, Gold, Platinum) that owners can proudly display, thus encouraging competition on service quality.

This manual outlines the MIKSHA certification standards in a format resembling a formal government document. It details the **100-point evaluation framework** spread across five key pillars of quality, the procedural steps for obtaining certification, and the post-certification obligations. By adhering to these standards, property owners contribute to a safer living environment and align with national missions for housing quality and public health. Authorities and stakeholders can reference this manual to **harmonize local regulations with a national benchmark**, bridging current regulatory gaps[4][5].

Ultimately, the MIKSHA certification seeks to transform long-term rental housing into an organized, transparent, and professionally managed sector.

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## 2. Objectives and Scope

**Objectives:** The primary objectives of the MIKSHA Rating System are:

- **Standardization:** Establish clear, measurable criteria for safety, hygiene, legal compliance, comfort, and tenant rights in long-term accommodations. This ensures that different properties across India can be **evaluated on a common scale**[1].
- **Quality Enhancement:** Encourage property owners to improve facilities and management practices. The scoring framework highlights areas of improvement (e.g. installing security systems, maintaining hygiene) and rewards excellence through higher tier certifications.
- **Tenant Welfare:** Protect the interests of tenants (students, working professionals, etc.) by certifying accommodations that meet **habitable living conditions, safety norms, and fair practices**. This echoes the legal rights of tenants to a safe, hygienic, and dignified living space[6][7].
- **Accountability and Transparency:** Promote transparency in how PGs/hostels are run – from clearly documented rent agreements to compliance with local laws. Certified entities are expected to uphold a code of conduct that respects tenant rights and allows for grievances to be addressed, thereby increasing **accountability** in this largely informal sector.

**Scope:** MIKSHA certification is **applicable to long-term accommodation properties** that typically offer lodging on a monthly (or longer) basis. This includes:

- **Paying Guest (PG) accommodations:** Private homes or buildings where rooms/beds are let out to paying guests, usually with some shared facilities.
- **Hostels:** Dedicated boarding facilities for students or working individuals, which may be privately owned or institution-affiliated (excluding government-run student hostels that follow separate norms, though they may use this standard voluntarily).
- **Co-Living Spaces:** Modern rental setups where residents have private or shared rooms and access to common amenities (often run by startups or companies in multiple cities).

The scope **covers both small and large properties** – from a 6-bed PG in a family home to a 100-bed private hostel. There is no upper limit on size; however, properties must meet basic eligibility (Section 3) to be considered. **Short-term accommodations like hotels, tourist guest houses, B&Bs or dormitories for transient guests are outside the scope**, as they fall under tourism/hospitality regulations. MIKSHA focuses on residences intended for **continuous occupancy of 30 days or more**.

**Geographical scope:** While MIKSHA is a national initiative, it recognizes local diversity. The standards align with **national laws and notable state/local regulations** (e.g. fire safety codes, municipal health bylaws). For example, city-specific norms such as Bangalore’s 2024 guidelines for PGs (which mandate CCTV, minimum room space, etc.)

are incorporated as benchmarks[1]. MIKSHA certification can thus complement municipal licensing: a property fulfilling MIKSHA criteria would inherently comply with most local requirements for safety and hygiene.

In summary, the MIKSHA Rating System's objective is to serve as a **unifying quality code** for long-term rental accommodations across India, raising the overall standard of living conditions in this segment. The scope is deliberately broad to encourage widespread adoption, yet precise in defining what aspects of accommodation quality are assessed. The subsequent sections detail these criteria and processes in a structured manner.

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### 3. Eligibility Criteria

Not every property or applicant may immediately qualify to undergo MIKSHA certification. The following eligibility criteria ensure that only bona fide and prepared entities enter the process:

- **3.1 Property Type & Usage:** The property must clearly fall under the categories of *Paying Guest accommodation, Hostel, or Co-living residence* as defined in Section 2. The premises should be used primarily for residential lodging of tenants. Mixed-use buildings can apply only if the lodging areas are well-defined and separable for inspection. Properties primarily operating as hotels or short-stay guest houses are **not eligible** under MIKSHA.
- **3.2 Capacity:** It is recommended (though not strictly required) that the property have a minimum of **5 residents or 5 lettable beds**. This ensures the certification is meaningful (very small homestays with just 1–2 paying guests may be better suited for other schemes). Larger hostels with hundreds of occupants are eligible, but must meet all criteria proportionally (e.g. more fire safety measures for larger buildings).
- **3.3 Operational Status:** The accommodation should be in **operation for at least 3 months** before applying. This ensures basic arrangements (staffing, maintenance routines, etc.) are in place and that there are existing residents to verify living conditions. New constructions can register interest but will be audited only after a few months of operation.
- **3.4 Legal Standing:** The applicant (owner/operator) must demonstrate that the property is **legally registered or has necessary permits** as required by local authorities. For example, cities like Bangalore require a **trade license for running a PG** and adherence to zoning by-laws[5]. At minimum, the owner should have:
  - Proof of ownership or lease of the property.
  - Any **local municipal registration** (if mandated by city/state laws for lodging houses).

- A No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the building/home owners' society (if applicable) allowing use as PG/hostel.
- **3.5 Compliance Pre-requisites:** Certain basic compliance must be in place before certification audit:
  - **Fire Safety:** For buildings above a specified size or occupancy, a Fire Department NOC is required. Presence of fire extinguishers, exit routes, etc., should be ensured (these will be scored in detail, but a complete lack of any fire safety arrangement may disqualify the application upfront).
  - **Kitchen/Food License:** If the property provides food/meals to residents (through an on-site kitchen or mess), it must have at least applied for or obtained an **FSSAI registration/license** for food service[8]. This is as per the Food Safety and Standards Act, mandatory for any food business including hostel/PG mess facilities.
  - **Building Safety:** The structure should have a valid building occupancy certificate if required (especially for new buildings), ensuring it was built as per approved plans. Severely unsafe or dilapidated buildings will not be entertained.
- **3.6 Applicant Credentials:** The applicant for certification should be the **legal entity or individual operating the accommodation**. They must commit to the MIKSHA code of ethics during application. If an external agency (like a property management company) applies on behalf of an owner, a consent letter from the owner is needed.
- **3.7 Agreement to Audit and Terms:** The applicant must agree to the MIKSHA audit process, which includes on-site inspections, interviews with residents, and documentation review. They must also agree to the post-certification terms – such as allowing random inspections during the certificate validity and abiding by the usage guidelines for the certification seal (see Section 7).

*Note:* Meeting the above eligibility criteria does **not** guarantee certification. It only qualifies a property to undergo the rigorous scoring assessment. If any mandatory legal compliance is found to be willfully lacking (e.g., operating without a required license, or violating a critical law), MIKSHA reserves the right to deny or defer certification until the issue is resolved. This ensures that MIKSHA is aligned with government regulations and does not endorse non-compliant operations.

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## 4. 100-Point Scoring Framework

MIKSHA evaluates properties on a **100-point scale** divided among **five key pillars of quality**. Each pillar represents a crucial aspect of accommodation standards, and within each pillar are specific **sub-criteria (sub-pillars)** with assigned points. To achieve certification (at any tier), a property must undergo an audit where each criterion is checked

and scored. The sum of points determines not only pass/fail, but also the tier of certification (Silver/Gold/Platinum as detailed in Section 5). All criteria are designed to be **tangible and checkable** – the auditor can observe, measure, or verify documents as evidence for each item. Below is an overview of the five pillars and their weightage:

- **Safety & Security – 20 points:** Measures to protect residents from harm and unauthorized access. (e.g. guards, CCTV, fire safety, secure entry)
- **Hygiene & Health – 20 points:** Cleanliness standards and health-related facilities. (e.g. sanitation, water quality, food safety, pest control)
- **Legal & Compliance – 20 points:** Adherence to laws and regulations. (e.g. licenses, building codes, occupancy norms)
- **Comfort & Amenities – 20 points:** Quality of living environment and conveniences provided. (e.g. space per person, furnishings, appliances, connectivity)
- **Transparency & Tenant Rights – 20 points:** Fair practices, documentation, and respect for tenant rights. (e.g. written rent agreements, privacy, grievance handling)

Each pillar is broken down into sub-pillars with individual point values. Auditors will score each sub-criterion as **Yes/No or on a scale** as defined. The points for a sub-criterion are earned if it meets the standards (partial points may be given if specified). A detailed breakdown is provided in Sections 4.1 through 4.5. All point allocations are designed such that a perfect score is 100, but properties can achieve certification with lower scores as long as minimum thresholds for tiers are met. Importantly, some **critical criteria are mandatory** – missing those could result in denial of certification regardless of the point score (these are flagged in the framework, e.g., no fire safety measures is grounds for failure even if other scores are high, due to life-safety importance).

#### 4.1 Safety & Security (20 points)

This pillar assesses how well the property safeguards its residents and their belongings. It covers physical security features, personnel, and emergency preparedness. **Safety & Security** is paramount – a property must score sufficiently in this category to be certified, reflecting the principle that no level of comfort can compensate for fundamental safety lapses. The sub-criteria under Safety & Security include:

- **4.1.1 Access Control & Entry Management (4 points):** The systems in place to **prevent unauthorized entry** and monitor access. This includes:
  - *Secure Entry Systems:* Use of **card-based or biometric entry** systems for residents, or equivalent measures (e.g. smart locks, keypad codes). Full points (4) if such a system is implemented for all main entry points; partial (2) if only partially implemented (e.g. only at night or only at one gate), and 0 if no electronic control.
  - *Visitor Log and Policies:* Even with electronic access, properties should maintain a **visitor logbook and ID check** for guests. Auditors will check if procedures exist (not separately scored, but influences the access control evaluation).

- 4.1.2 Surveillance (CCTV) (3 points):** Installation of **CCTV cameras covering key areas** of the property. To earn full points, cameras should cover all entry/exit points and common areas (corridors, lobbies) with footage retention for a reasonable period. Current best practice (and some local regulations) suggest **90 days backup for CCTV recordings**[1]. Scoring: 3 points for comprehensive coverage with at least 1 month recording backup (90 days ideal)[1]; 1–2 points for partial coverage or shorter retention; 0 for no functional CCTV system.
- 4.1.3 On-Site Security Personnel (4 points):** The presence of **security guards or wardens** to protect residents. Full 4 points if at least one trained security guard is present on-site 24×7 (with rotations)[9]. The guard’s credentials should be **verified** (police verification/background check)[10]. Partial points: 2 points if a guard is present only during daytime or only at night; 1 point if an untrained caretaker doubles as security; 0 if no personnel or reliance solely on residents for security. *(For women-only hostels/PGs, having a female warden or matron for night duty is considered best practice [11].)*
- 4.1.4 Fire Safety Measures (4 points):** Adequacy of fire prevention and emergency response infrastructure. Criteria for full 4 points include:

  - Fire Extinguishers:** At least one extinguisher per floor, functional and within valid refill date.
  - Emergency Exits:** Clear, unobstructed escape routes; for multi-storey buildings, at least one alternate staircase or exit. Exit signage and emergency lights in hallways are expected as per the National Building Code (NBC) recommendations.
  - Fire Alarm/System:** If applicable (especially for larger buildings), smoke detectors or a manual alarm system installed.
  - Fire Department NOC:** If law requires, the property has obtained a Fire clearance certificate[1].  
Scoring: 4 if all above are met. 2–3 if minor gaps (e.g., extinguishers present but no signage or alarm). 0 if major absence (no extinguishers and no exits planned – likely ineligible for certification on safety grounds).
- 4.1.5 Emergency Preparedness & First Aid (3 points):** Readiness for emergencies such as medical incidents or accidents. Full points (3) if:

  - A **First Aid kit** is readily available on the premises (with unexpired basic supplies).
  - Emergency contact numbers (police, fire, ambulance, nearest hospital) are **displayed prominently** for residents.
  - The management has a tie-up or documented **doctor-on-call or nearby hospital tie-up** for emergencies[12]. For example, as recommended for guest houses, having a nearby hospital available for emergencies is ideal[12].
  - Staff are briefed on basic emergency response (e.g. evacuation plan, CPR trained person – bonus if available, but not mandatory).

Scoring is all-or-nothing: 3 if all key items are in place, 1–2 if partially (e.g., first aid kit present but no emergency numbers displayed, or vice versa), 0 if none in place.

- **4.1.6 Lighting and Surveillance of Surroundings (2 points):** This sub-criterion examines if the **property's immediate environment is secure**, especially at night. Points are awarded for:

- *Adequate Lighting:* All common areas, hallways, entrances, and the building perimeter (outdoors) are well-lit after dusk. This reduces security risks.
- *CCTV in critical areas:* (If not covered in 4.1.2) including entrance, parking, etc., to deter intruders.

While CCTV is scored separately, its presence in key spots and lighting together create a secure environment. Full 2 points if nighttime illumination is good and no dark, unsafe corners exist. 1 point if some improvement needed (e.g., one stairway is dark).

**Evidence & Verification:** Auditors will physically inspect devices (CCTV monitors, test a fire extinguisher gauge, etc.), check logs (guard duty roster, visitor book), and may interview residents to confirm, e.g., whether the guard is indeed present round the clock. The **BBMP guideline example** underscores the importance of many of these items, having mandated CCTV, security guards, and fire clearances after safety incidents[1][9]. MIKSHA's Safety scoring aligns with such government directives to ensure any certified property is fundamentally safe for tenants.

*(Total points for Safety & Security = 20)*

## 4.2 Hygiene & Health (20 points)

This pillar covers the cleanliness of the premises, sanitation facilities, and provisions for a healthy living environment. A high standard of hygiene not only ensures comfort but prevents illness and upholds the dignity of residents. **Key sub-criteria** are:

- **4.2.1 Cleanliness of Rooms & Common Areas (5 points):** The general cleanliness observed in bedrooms, bathrooms, kitchens, hallways, and common rooms. Full 5 points if the property is **visibly clean, well-maintained, and has a regular housekeeping schedule**. Auditors will check for dust, pest signs, garbage disposal, etc. Regular cleaning should be done **daily for common areas and at least weekly for rooms**, with records if possible. If cleanliness is average or some areas (e.g. kitchen or bathrooms) are not up to the mark, 2–3 points. Major issues like piled garbage, dirty toilets, pest infestations result in 0–1 point (and likely failure on hygiene). *(Note: A minimum score (e.g. 60%) in cleanliness/hygiene is often required in hospitality approvals[13]. Similarly, MIKSHA expects a minimum standard here for certification.)*[13]
- **4.2.2 Sanitary Facilities & Restroom Hygiene (5 points):** This examines the adequacy and condition of **toilets and bathrooms**:

- *Availability:* Sufficient number of bathrooms for the residents. An **ideal ratio** is roughly **1 toilet (and 1 bath/shower) per 3–4 persons** in shared facilities, aligning with hostel norms[14]. Personal attached bathrooms (en-suite) for every room will score full points. If the ratio exceeds about 1:8, points will be deducted unless they are exceptionally well-managed.
- *Hygiene:* Bathrooms should be clean, dry, well-ventilated, with functional plumbing (no persistent leaks, working flush, no sewage odor). Availability of running water and disinfectants/soap is required.
- *Fixtures:* Western-style toilets are preferred for hygiene (if cultural norms allow), as noted in hospitality standards[15], and basic amenities like buckets/mugs or toilet paper as appropriate.  
Scoring: 5 for properties with either attached bathrooms for each room (ideal) or well-maintained shared bathrooms meeting at least the above ratio and cleanliness expectations. 3–4 if minor issues (e.g., a bit old infrastructure but clean, or slightly high sharing ratio but still manageable). 0–2 if insufficient bathrooms or very unclean conditions.
- **4.2.3 Water Supply & Quality (4 points):** Safe and sufficient water is critical for health. Criteria:
  - **24×7 Water Supply:** The property should ensure round-the-clock availability of water for all purposes (through mains or storage tanks). No frequent outages that leave tenants without water.
  - **Drinking Water:** There must be provision of **safe drinking water** – either **RO/UV treated water** on site or supply of branded bottled water[12][16]. All kitchens must use treated water for cooking[16].
  - **Quantity:** At least **135 liters per person per day** of water should be available, as exemplified by BBMP guidelines[8]. This ensures enough for bathing, cleaning, etc., in a hostel/PG setup.  
Scoring: 4 if continuous water supply is maintained and drinking water is filtered (auditor will test taps and inspect purifiers). 2–3 if minor problems (e.g., water at certain hours but stored adequately, or drinking water arrangement exists but of questionable quality). 0–1 if water shortages or only tap water without filtration for drinking (serious issue).
- **4.2.4 Food Safety & Kitchen Hygiene (3 points):** Applicable if the accommodation provides food (meals) to residents, whether included in rent or as a paid service. Points are awarded based on:
  - **FSSAI Compliance:** The kitchen or mess should have a **Food Safety registration or license** as required by FSSAI for the scale of operation[8]. Auditors will check the license certificate or registration number.
  - **Kitchen Hygiene:** The cooking area, utensils, and food storage must be clean and hygienic. Food preparation practices should follow basic safety – e.g., covered

dustbins, regular pest control in kitchen, clean refrigerator if provided, proper food storage to avoid contamination.

- **Staff Hygiene:** Cooks/servers should maintain personal hygiene (clean attire, possibly gloves/hairnets). Health check-ups for kitchen staff (as per FSSAI norms) are a plus.
- **Meals Quality (Informal):** While not a formal criterion, auditors may take note of residents' feedback on food quality and cleanliness as an indicator.  
Scoring: 3 if the property clearly complies with food safety requirements (FSSAI license seen) and maintains a tidy kitchen/dining area. 1–2 if minor issues (license pending but applied, or clean kitchen but license not known). 0 if meals are provided but conditions are unhygienic or no food safety practices in place (this also violates law, hence critical). *(If the property does not provide any food, these points may be marked N/A and not counted in total, or the pillar total will be adjusted accordingly. However, many PGs include at least some meals, so this criterion often applies.)*
- **4.2.5 Waste Management & Pest Control (3 points):** How the property manages waste and prevents pest infestations:
  - **Garbage Disposal:** Daily removal of waste from rooms and common areas. Availability of dustbins (with lids) on each floor and in kitchen. **Segregation of wet and dry waste** is encouraged and aligned with Swachh Bharat and local municipal rules[17]. Full points if segregation is practiced and waste is disposed through municipal collection or authorized means[17].
  - **Pest Control:** Regular pest control treatment (at least quarterly) to keep premises free of rodents, cockroaches, mosquitoes, etc.[18]. No visible signs of infestation during audit (auditor checks corners, under beds, etc.).
  - **Clean Surroundings:** No stagnant water (mosquito breeding) in or around property, no open garbage dumps adjacent.  
Scoring: 3 for properties with proper bins, evidence of routine waste pickup, and no pest issues (perhaps invoices of pest control or resident testimony). 1–2 if some garbage management is there but pests or occasional lapses noted. 0 for serious issues like trash buildup or obvious infestation (flies, rodent droppings).
- **4.2.6 Ventilation and Air Quality (optional bonus, 0–2 points):** While not strictly hygiene, good ventilation prevents mold and ensures healthy air, especially in high-occupancy rooms. Points here reward:
  - Each room has windows or mechanical ventilation (exhaust fans in bathrooms/kitchen). Natural light and airflow are present in living areas.
  - No persistent dampness or mold in walls/ceilings.
  - If ACs are used, filters are cleaned regularly (for air quality).  
Auditors will observe room ventilation and may ask occupants. This sub-criterion

can add up to 2 bonus points to the Hygiene pillar for exceptional conditions (or be considered under Comfort otherwise).

**Evidence & Verification:** Auditors will inspect facilities (bathrooms, kitchen, water tanks, etc.), possibly conduct simple tests (e.g. TDS of water if needed), and review any cleanliness logs. They will also rely on **resident feedback** – e.g., asking tenants if bathrooms are cleaned regularly or if they face issues with water or pests[19]. The Hygiene & Health criteria align with basic rights of tenants to a clean and safe environment[6]. Many elements (safe water, pest control, clean kitchens) are also found in official guidelines for hospitality[20], ensuring MIKSHA-certified properties meet public health expectations.

*(Total points for Hygiene & Health = 20)*

### 4.3 Legal & Compliance (20 points)

This pillar verifies that the property and its operations conform to relevant laws, regulations, and standards. Rather than imposing new laws, MIKSHA's role is to **check compliance** and encourage documentation, thereby bringing PGs/hostels into the formal fold. Sub-criteria include:

- **4.3.1 Municipal Registration / Trade License (4 points):** The property should hold any **license or registration mandated by the local authority** for running a lodging or PG business. For example, in Bengaluru, PGs must obtain a trade license from the city corporation (BBMP) and adhere to its conditions[21]. In other cities, registration with the local police or authority might be required. Full 4 points if the owner produces a valid license/registration certificate (and it is current). 2 points if not required in that area or application in process (with proof). 0 if required but not obtained (a serious compliance gap). Auditors will look for a **displayed license** on premises or paperwork[21].
- **4.3.2 Fire Department Clearance (3 points):** If the building meets criteria that require a Fire NOC (usually for buildings above a certain height or occupancy load), the property must have a **Fire Clearance Certificate** from the local fire service. Even if not formally required (e.g., small building), compliance with basic fire safety guidelines is expected (as covered in 4.1.4). Full 3 points for a valid NOC or written verification from Fire Dept. If not applicable by law due to small size, these points can be granted by default *provided* the fire safety measures are in place. 0 if it was required and not obtained.
- **4.3.3 Building & Zoning Regulations (3 points):** Ensures the property itself is not in violation of building codes or zoning laws:
- The area is legally allowed to have a hostel/PG (some cities restrict PGs in certain residential zones or require wider roads)[5]. Auditors will note the road width or area type; if clearly illegal (e.g., commercial activity in a prohibited area), it raises a red flag.

- Building structure is approved (no unauthorized floors beyond sanction). For instance, running a hostel in an 8-floor building where only 2 floors were allowed is unsafe and illegal[22].
- **Occupancy norms:** Adequate space per person is provided in line with local building bye-laws (many regulations suggest ~50–70 sq ft per person minimum in dormitory settings)[23][24]. MIKSHA explicitly includes the 70 sq ft per person guideline as a scored item under Comfort & Amenities (4.4.1), but here we ensure it's also not violating any local law.  
Scoring: 3 if no evident violations (proper approvals, acceptable location). 1–2 if minor issues (e.g., slightly narrow road but no complaints, or an extra makeshift room added internally). 0 if clearly illegal or dangerous construction (which may also lead to failing certification).
- **4.3.4 Documentation & Record-Keeping (4 points):** The property should maintain key records as part of legal compliance and good practice:
  - **Tenant Records:** Copies of tenant IDs (Aadhaar, passport, etc.) and police verification for tenants if required by local law[25]. Many cities mandate that landlords submit tenant information to the police; even if not mandatory, maintaining a file of tenant IDs is a best practice for security. Full points if tenant registers/ID files are maintained.
  - **Staff Records:** Basic records of staff employed, with ID and background verification (especially for security guards and any staff with access to rooms).
  - **Rental Agreements and Receipts:** Copies of the rent/PG agreements and rent receipts issued (overlaps with Transparency pillar, but here the focus is on whether they are maintained and could be produced for audit).
  - **Incident Logs:** If applicable, any log of incidents/complaints and actions taken (shows compliance with responding to issues).  
Full 4 points if records are systematically kept and updated. 2–3 if some records are there but incomplete (e.g., tenant IDs yes, but no agreements filed). 0 if record-keeping is essentially absent.
- **4.3.5 Regulatory Health & Safety Standards (3 points):** Conformity with specific health/safety regulations not covered above, for example:
  - **FSSAI License:** (If providing food) – although scored in Hygiene, legally this is also a compliance item. We ensure here that if required by turnover/scale, the correct level of FSSAI license (Basic/State/Central) is obtained[26][27].
  - **Lift License:** If the building has an elevator, has it been inspected and licensed per the local elevator safety rules. Auditor will check for a current lift safety certificate displayed inside the lift (common requirement by Public Works or Labour Dept).
  - **Electrical Safety:** For larger establishments, an electrical safety inspection certificate (to prevent fire hazards) might be needed. This is not common in PGs, but

any glaring electrical issues (loose wiring, overloaded circuits) will count against safety compliance.

- **Environmental or Other Licenses:** E.g., borewell permission if using groundwater, diesel generator emissions compliance if a genset is used, etc. These are situational; full points if all relevant ones are in order or not applicable. Scoring: 3 if all relevant miscellaneous compliances are met (or none applicable). 1–2 if minor lapses (e.g., lift present but last inspection lapsed by a month). 0 if significant license missing (like serving food to dozens without FSSAI registration – which is a legal breach).
- **4.3.6 Insurance and Liability (Optional, 2 points):** While not mandated by law in most cases, having insurance demonstrates responsibility. Up to 2 bonus points if the property has:
  - **Property Insurance:** covering fire, earthquake, etc., for the building.
  - **Public Liability Insurance:** covering injuries or accidents to tenants (rare in this sector, but commendable if present).
  - If not present, no penalty (this is a bonus category to encourage future adoption as the sector matures).

**Evidence & Verification:** The auditor will review documents on-site: trade licenses, NOCs, ID logs, etc. Originals or copies should be produced. The presence of displayed licenses (like a certificate on the notice board) is considered good practice[21]. Compliance is also cross-verified with observations (e.g., does the building layout match what an approval would allow, is the road obviously too narrow for a commercial activity, etc.). A property that meets the Legal & Compliance criteria is essentially one that **operates above board**, respecting the law – which is crucial for credibility if this certification is presented to government bodies. Moreover, many compliance items overlap with safety and health, reinforcing those pillars (for instance, legal space norms ensure less crowding, which improves hygiene and comfort).

*(Total points for Legal & Compliance = 20)*

#### **4.4 Comfort & Amenities (20 points)**

This pillar addresses the comfort of residents and the amenities provided for a pleasant living experience. While safety and hygiene form the foundation, comfort features often differentiate a basic lodging from a quality one. MIKSHA rewards properties that go beyond bare minimums to offer convenience and a homely environment. Sub-criteria:

- **4.4.1 Space & Occupancy Density (4 points):** Adequate living space per resident is a primary comfort factor. Scoring considers:
- **Personal Space:** Each resident should have reasonable room area. MIKSHA follows a guideline of **~70 sq ft per person** as an ideal minimum (echoing the BBMP

mandate)[23][1]. For example, a double-sharing room should be ~140 sq ft to score full points.

- Rooms/dorms that are too cramped (e.g., 4 people in 120 sq ft) lose points. Full 4 points if all sleeping rooms meet or exceed 70 sq ft per person on average. 2–3 points if slightly crowded but around 50+ sq ft per person. 0–1 if extremely packed (violating that norm heavily).
- **Storage Space:** Additionally, each resident should have some personal storage (a locker, cupboard or closet space). Full points require that a lockable storage unit or cupboard of sufficient size is provided per person. Partial if only open shelves or limited storage.
- **4.4.2 Furniture & Fixtures (3 points):** Basic furnishings for comfort:
  - **Bed and Mattress:** Each resident has an individual bed (twin size or bigger) with a decent mattress. Dormitory bunk beds are acceptable if sturdy and safe. Points deducted if people are made to share beds or sleep on mats on the floor (unless culturally normative and by choice).
  - **Seating and Table:** Each room should have at least a chair and small table/desk per occupant, or a shared study table in multi-bed rooms, to allow studying or working.
  - **Fan/Cooling & Ventilation:** At minimum, a working ceiling or pedestal fan per room. In hotter regions or higher-end accommodations, an **air-conditioning unit** might be provided – this is separately scored below (4.4.3) as an amenity, but basic cooling/fan is expected for full points here. Likewise, in colder regions, heating arrangements or blankets.
  - **Curtains/Privacy:** Windows should have opaque curtains or blinds for privacy and light control[15]. If multiple sharing one room, some partition or curtain for privacy (for female residents especially) is a plus. Full 3 points if rooms are adequately furnished (bed, mattress, storage, fan, etc., all present and in usable condition). 1–2 if some items missing or poor quality (e.g., worn-out mattress, no table). 0 if very bare accommodations (e.g., just floor bedding).
- **4.4.3 Amenities & Appliances (5 points):** Modern amenities provided for convenience:
  - **Air Conditioning:** If rooms or common areas have air-conditioners, and they are functional, award 1 point. Not mandatory, but given the climate in many Indian cities, AC availability is a premium amenity. If no AC but climate is mild or fans suffice, no penalty (this is bonus-like).
  - **Wi-Fi / Internet:** Internet connectivity is essential for students and professionals. Full 1 point if high-speed Wi-Fi is provided covering all rooms (auditor may test signal). If not, 0 (lack of Wi-Fi is a significant drawback in urban PGs).

- **Laundry Facilities:** Availability of a **washing machine** (shared) or laundry service. 1 point if at least one washing machine for residents' use (or a reliable laundry pickup service arranged).
- **Kitchen/Pantry Access:** If residents can do light cooking or have a shared pantry with a **refrigerator** and microwave/kettle, etc., that's a comfort. 1 point if a fridge is accessible and some kitchen facility (even if just to reheat food or make tea). Many co-living spaces provide a shared kitchen. If the PG provides all meals but no access, that's okay (no point, but not negative). If no meals and no kitchen, that's a problem for residents.
- **Common Area & Recreation:** Existence of a furnished common living room, TV, indoor games, or other recreational space. 1 point for any notable common area amenity (e.g., TV lounge, reading room, gym corner, rooftop seating).
- **Other Appliances:** e.g., water coolers, geysers (water heaters) in bathrooms for hot water, etc. These can be considered under this criterion – a property that provides hot water 24/7 (via geysers or solar heaters) would certainly earn the comfort points.

Scoring: Additive for each amenity roughly as listed (each ~1 point, up to 5). This means properties offering a full range of appliances (AC, Wi-Fi, washing machine, refrigerator/kitchen access, plus maybe geysers or a lounge) can get full 5. More basic ones might score 2–3.

- **4.4.4 Accessibility and Convenience (3 points):** This looks at how convenient the location and building are for daily life:
  - **Lift/Elevator Access:** If the accommodation is above 2nd floor or the building has more than 3 floors, having a functional **lift** is a significant amenity. 1 point for a working lift (if building height merits one). If building is low-rise (2-3 floors) and no lift, it's neutral. If high-rise without lift, it's a deficiency (could even deduct a point).
  - **Parking:** Availability of parking space for residents' vehicles (two-wheelers or cars). Given many young professionals have scooters/bikes, a dedicated or safe parking area is an amenity. 1 point if at least safe two-wheeler parking is available on premises or in a secure area. Car parking earns a point especially if relevant to tenant profile. If no parking and residents must park on street, no points (but not a failure unless parking is a serious problem/unsafe).
  - **Proximity to Essential Services:** The location's proximity to **markets, public transport, and healthcare**. While this is outside the property's control, it affects tenant comfort. Scoring (up to 1 point): if a grocery market and pharmacy are within walking distance (say 5–10 minutes), public transport stop nearby (<500m), and a hospital or clinic reachable quickly (<2 km). If most of these are true, 1 point for convenient location. If the PG is very isolated with none of these around, 0. *(This criterion is lighter-weight and meant to encourage location consideration – an accommodation near bus/metro and shops offers a better experience.)*

- **4.4.5 Additional Comfort Features (Bonus, 1–3 points):** Any extra measures that enhance comfort, which are not standard in all PGs, for instance:
- **24×7 Power Backup:** In areas with power outages, having a generator or inverter backup for electricity (especially to keep fans and lights on) is a valued feature. (+1 bonus)
- **Water Heater availability:** If not already counted, hot water provision in bathrooms (via geysers or centralized heater). (+1)
- **Airy/Green Environment:** If the property has open space, a garden, balcony access, or good natural light/ventilation making it more livable. (+1 for exceptional cases like a nice terrace garden or courtyard that residents can use).
- **Accessibility for Differently-Abled:** Rare in PGs, but if provisions like ramps, grab bars, or a ground-floor room for disabled tenants are available, that can be a bonus point for inclusivity.

The auditor can award up to 3 discretionary points here for notable comfort enhancements beyond the basics.

**Evidence & Verification:** The auditor will physically observe and test amenities: measure rooms, count beds, check Wi-Fi, look at appliances, ride the lift, etc. Tenant feedback will also inform comfort scoring – e.g., do they find the place comfortable, any chronic issues like “rooms get too hot”, “water is often cold”, etc. Many items in this pillar connect to known quality markers; for instance, tourism guidelines stipulate minimum room sizes and a percentage of rooms with AC[28], and student hostel norms emphasize furniture and ventilation[11]. MIKSHA’s comfort standards ensure that a certified property offers a **decent quality of life** and not just bare shelter.

*(Total points for Comfort & Amenities = 20)*

## 4.5 Transparency & Tenant Rights (20 points)

The final pillar evaluates how the property management deals with tenants in terms of fairness, information, and recourse. This is crucial for treating residents not just as customers but as individuals with rights, and it aligns the certification with the broader goal of formalizing rental practices. Sub-criteria:

- **4.5.1 Written Rental Agreement (4 points):** There must be a **written agreement or contract** for each tenant, clearly stating the terms of stay[29]. The agreement should include key elements such as rent amount, security deposit, duration, house rules, and notice period[30]. As per legal best practice, it should ideally be a registered document if duration exceeds 11 months, but at minimum a signed paper. Full 4 points if sample agreements are provided and tenants confirm they signed one. 2 points if only informal agreements (e.g., an email or form) exist. 0 if no written agreement at all (which is a legal grey area and often leads to disputes).  
*Note: The **Model Tenancy Act (2021)** makes written agreements mandatory and*

even caps certain terms[31] – MIKSHA endorses this by requiring proper agreements.

- **4.5.2 Fair Rent, Deposit, and Charges (4 points):** This checks if the financial dealings are transparent and reasonable:
- **Security Deposit:** The amount of deposit and refund policy. According to the Model Tenancy Act and prevalent practice, deposit for residential tenancies should not exceed **2 months' rent**[32] (some local practices vary, but exorbitant deposits are discouraged). Full points if deposit is within a fair range (typically 1–3 months' rent)[33] and the refund terms are clearly stated (in the agreement) and followed. If deposits are unreasonably high (e.g., 6+ months without local justification) or tenants routinely struggle to get refunds, points deducted.
- **Rent Receipts and Hikes:** Does the owner issue **rent receipts** or acknowledgment each month? (Important for tenant's proof and tax purposes.) Are rent increases, if any, done with proper notice as per agreement/law (no mid-term arbitrary hikes)[34]? Full points if rent handling is transparent – receipts given and any revisions communicated per contract.
- **Inclusive Charges:** Clarity on which utilities or services are included in rent and which are extra (electricity, Wi-Fi, meals, etc.). Tenants should know upfront about any additional fees (laundry, AC usage, etc.). If many hidden or surprise charges surface later, that's non-transparent.  
Scoring: 4 if the property's rent/deposit practices are in line with **legal standards and tenants confirm fairness** (e.g., deposit refunded promptly, maybe within a month of vacating as advised[35]). 2–3 if minor issues (e.g., receipts not given but no disputes, or deposit slightly high but still refunded). 0–1 if tenants commonly face deposit loss or arbitrary charges (serious red flag for certification).
- **4.5.3 Respect for Privacy & Freedom (3 points):** Tenants' **right to privacy and normal life** should be respected, as emphasized by tenant rights advocates[7]. Criteria include:
  - **Room Privacy:** Management/owners should not enter a tenant's room without permission except for emergency or agreed maintenance. (Auditor may ask residents if their rooms are respected or if there have been incidents of invasion of privacy.)
  - **Visitation Rules:** Any guest policy should be reasonable (e.g., visitors allowed during certain hours in common areas). Rigid "no visitors ever" or gender-discriminatory rules might be common in some PGs, but MIKSHA encourages a balanced approach. At least, family members visiting should be allowed in a dignified manner.
  - **Personal Autonomy:** The tenants should have freedom to come and go, within any safety or community norms. Unreasonably restrictive curfews (especially for adult residents) would be frowned upon unless justified for safety. If a curfew exists

(common in women's hostels for security), it should be clearly stated and not arbitrarily changed. No practice of locking residents in or out.

- **No Harassment:** Management should not harass or intimidate tenants; no confiscation of ID documents, no arbitrary eviction without notice (addressed in 4.5.4).

Scoring: 3 if tenants report no major issues – they feel their space is their own, rules are reasonable, and they have keys to their rooms etc. 1–2 if some restrictive rules exist but not violating basic rights (e.g., curfew at 11 pm, but otherwise respectful). 0 if reports of intrusive or authoritarian practices (entry without consent, overly punitive rules).

- **4.5.4 Eviction & Grievance Policy (4 points):** How disputes and terminations are handled:

- **Eviction Notice:** The agreement or policy should specify a **notice period (commonly 30 days)** for either party to terminate the stay[36]. Full points if a clear notice period is in place and generally honored. Landlords cannot evict without valid reason or notice arbitrarily[37]; doing so would fail this criterion.

- **Grievance Mechanism:** The property should have a way for tenants to **raise complaints** or issues and get them resolved. Ideally, a designated person (manager/warden) whom tenants can approach, or a logbook for complaints. If the property is part of a larger chain or the MIKSHA program, tenants should be informed how to escalate issues (e.g., a helpline or email for MIKSHA if standards are not met post-certification).

- **Response to Complaints:** Check if past complaints (like repair requests, interpersonal issues, etc.) were addressed in a timely and fair manner. If there is a **grievance escalation** process (e.g., first to owner, then to some higher authority or external mediator), that's a sign of maturity.

- **No Retaliation:** Tenants should be able to voice concerns without fear of retaliation from the owner (this is more qualitative to judge, but any indication of retaliatory eviction or harassment for complaints is a red flag).

Scoring: 4 for clear policies and functional grievance handling. 2–3 if informal handling exists (e.g., tenants just call the owner) but no formal process, yet issues do get fixed. 0–1 if tenants have nowhere to turn or faced unfair eviction attempts. MIKSHA may check if any legal disputes or police complaints have arisen from the property's past tenant interactions as part of due diligence.

- **4.5.5 Transparency in Operations (3 points):** This catches miscellaneous aspects of openness:

- **Rule Communication:** House rules (regarding guests, quiet hours, smoking/drinking policy, etc.) should be clearly communicated (on paper or displayed). Tenants must be made aware of all do's and don'ts at move-in, not informed ad-hoc.

- **Charges Transparency:** (Partly covered in 4.5.2) – all fees (laundry, AC usage if metered, etc.) should be documented to avoid “surprise” charges.
- **Updates/Notices:** If there are any changes in terms (e.g., a new security procedure, or construction activity), management communicates via noticeboards or group messages. A proactive communication culture is a plus.
- **Tenant Feedback:** Does management seek feedback from residents (even informally) to improve services? Not mandatory, but some progressive co-living operators conduct surveys – this would be noted positively.  
Scoring: 3 for highly transparent operations with documented rules and open communication. 1–2 if average (basic rules given, nothing egregious hidden). 0 if we find evidence of misinformation or deliberate lack of disclosure (e.g., advertising AC rooms but then charging separately without prior notice, etc.).

**Evidence & Verification:** This pillar’s evaluation is **heavily dependent on tenant interviews and document checks**. Auditors will speak with several residents privately to gauge if the management honors agreements, returns deposits, respects privacy, etc. Documents like the rental agreement are examined for clauses (e.g., check if the notice period and deposit terms are stated, matching what tenants say). The importance of these factors is underscored by tenant rights outlined in legal guides – e.g., the right to a written agreement[29], right to get deposit back[38], right to privacy[7], and the ability to seek redress[39]. A MIKSHA-certified property should exemplify respect for these rights, thereby giving assurance to any prospective tenant and to authorities that the establishment operates ethically and lawfully in its dealings.

*(Total points for Transparency & Tenant Rights = 20)*

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## 5. Certification Tiers (Silver, Gold, Platinum)

Based on the total points scored out of 100 during the audit, the property will qualify for one of three certification tiers or fail to certify. The tiers reflect the level of excellence:

- **Platinum Certification: “Platinum MIKSHA Certified”** is the highest rating. It is awarded to properties scoring **≥90 points** out of 100. Platinum indicates exceptional standards – the property not only meets all core requirements but excels in many areas, offering superior safety measures, outstanding hygiene, premium amenities, and exemplary tenant-friendly practices. These are model accommodations often exceeding what regulations require.
- **Gold Certification: “Gold MIKSHA Certified”** is awarded for scores approximately in the **75–89 point** range. Gold indicates the property is **very good** on almost all counts, substantially above minimum standards. It may have minor areas for improvement but no significant deficiencies. Residents of a Gold-certified

PG/hostel can expect a **high quality of living**, with strong safety and comfort, and adherence to all important norms.

- **Silver Certification: “Silver MIKSHA Certified”** corresponds to scores roughly **60–74 points**. Silver signifies that the property **meets all essential requirements** of safety, hygiene, and legality, though it might be basic in some comforts or have a few non-critical issues. It’s a mark of **adequacy and reliability** – the place is safe, clean, and fair, even if not luxurious. Silver is intentionally set as the entry threshold for certification; anything below would not be certified.
- **Not Certified:** If a property scores below the Silver band (i.e., **<60%**), it does not receive any certification. The audit report will highlight the shortcomings. The property can address those issues and reapply for a fresh audit when ready. Key reasons for not achieving certification often include failing to meet one or more critical criteria (e.g., fire safety absence, very poor hygiene, or tenant rights violations) even if the point total might be near the cutoff. MIKSHA may enforce **mandatory compliance** on certain life-safety and legal points irrespective of totals. For example, a property scoring 65 overall but lacking any fire extinguishers might still be denied certification until that is fixed, as life safety is non-negotiable.

**Point Band Adjustment:** The point bands above (60/75/90) are general guidelines. MIKSHA’s governing body may adjust these cutoffs or require **minimum sub-scores** in each pillar for awarding a certificate. For instance, it could be mandated that a property must score at least 50% in each of the five pillars in addition to the overall score, to ensure balanced performance (so that, say, a property isn’t extremely clean but utterly non-compliant legally). If such sub-requirements exist, they will be clearly communicated. As a rule of thumb, however, any property reaching an overall 60+ will typically have met minimums in each area due to the way the criteria are structured.

**Tier Validity:** The certification tier is valid for the duration of the certification (see Section 7 for validity period). If a property is re-audited for renewal or voluntarily, it may **move up or down** tiers depending on improvements or lapses. The tier will be reflected on the certificate and any public listings of certified properties. This stratification provides an incentive for continuous improvement – for example, a Silver property might invest in upgrades to achieve Gold in the next audit cycle.

Each tier entitles the property to specific **badges and usage rights** (detailed in Section 7) – e.g., a Platinum-certified hostel can display a Platinum Seal. While higher tiers are prestigious, even a Silver certification is a mark of trust, indicating compliance with all fundamental standards of MIKSHA and by extension, of government expectations for safe and hygienic accommodation.

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## 6. Certification Process

The journey to MIKSHA certification involves several stages, designed to be transparent and fair. Below is a step-by-step outline of the process from application to certification, akin to a standard operating procedure:

### 6.1 Application Submission:

Eligible property owners/management (see Section 3 for criteria) begin by submitting an **application form** to the MIKSHA Council. The application typically includes:

- Basic property details (location, type, capacity, current facilities).
- Self-assessment against the MIKSHA criteria (optional but encouraged).
- Required documents (proof of legal compliance like licenses, etc. as listed in eligibility).
- Application fee (if any) as prescribed.

Upon receiving the application, the MIKSHA team conducts a preliminary **scrutiny**. If information is incomplete or eligibility isn't met, the application may be put on hold or rejected with reasons communicated. If all seems in order, the application is accepted and moves to the next stage.

### 6.2 Scheduling of Audit:

After acceptance, an **audit team** is assigned. The team usually consists of 1–3 trained auditors (experts in safety, hygiene, and administration). The audit is scheduled in consultation with the applicant, ideally within 2–4 weeks of application.

The owner/applicant is briefed on audit scope – they are asked to keep relevant documents ready and inform residents about the audit (so they are not alarmed by inspectors, and also so that residents can be available to talk if needed). The audit team may include a local government nominee or an independent observer for quality assurance, especially if the program is in partnership with municipal bodies or ministries.

### 6.3 On-Site Inspection (Audit):

The core of the process is the on-site audit, typically a half-day exercise (depending on property size). It involves:

- **Entrance Meeting:** Auditors meet the property manager/owner to outline the day's plan. They may ask general questions first.
- **Facilities Tour:** Auditors inspect all areas – sample rooms, all common facilities, terrace, kitchen, fire exits, etc. They carry a checklist aligned with the 100-point criteria. During the tour they observe and tick off compliance (e.g., checking CCTV feeds, testing water taps, looking at toilet cleanliness, measuring room sizes or counting beds).
- **Document Verification:** At some stage, auditors review documents on-site: licenses, agreement formats, maintenance logs, etc. They may take photographs or copies as evidence (with permission).
- **Resident Interviews:** A crucial component – auditors will speak to a random selection of residents (tenants) privately. This is to cross-verify management's claims and get honest feedback on issues like security, cleanliness, and treatment by the landlord. Auditors ensure confidentiality of responses so that residents can speak freely (e.g., without the

owner in the room).

- **Management Interview:** The auditors also interview the owner/manager in detail about processes – how do they handle complaints, how often cleaning happens, etc. This conversation can reveal the management’s attitude and awareness of standards.

- **Exit Briefing:** After gathering evidence, the audit team has an internal discussion, then a brief exit meeting with the management. Critical deficiencies, if any, may be pointed out on the spot especially if they are deal-breakers (e.g., “we found no fire equipment, which must be addressed”). The team won’t give a final score immediately, as findings need analysis, but they might give a general sense (like “you are likely in Silver range, pending report”). They also clarify any follow-up documents needed.

Throughout the audit, the team uses the **scoring checklist** to mark points for each sub-criterion. Notes and evidence are recorded. MIKSHA follows an objective scoring method but also allows auditor judgement for borderline cases or bonus points as per the manual.

#### **6.4 Scoring and Evaluation:**

Post-audit, the team compiles a detailed **Audit Report**. This includes:

- Scores for each of the 5 pillars and sub-criteria, with comments.
- Non-compliances or issues found (with evidence like photos or resident quotes if needed).
- Strengths of the property (good practices).
- The provisional total score and recommended certification tier (or non-certification).

The report is then peer-reviewed by a MIKSHA Certification Committee to ensure consistency (especially if it’s one of the first cases or a borderline score). The committee may adjust scores if something was overlooked or if evidence doesn’t support a particular score. In some cases, they might request a **follow-up visit** or clarification from the audit team.

Once finalized, the committee approves the result. If the property has passed ( $\geq 60$  points and all critical criteria met), the certification is granted at the appropriate tier. If not, a failure/refusal is issued with reasons.

#### **6.5 Certification Decision & Communication:**

The applicant is formally notified of the outcome:

- **If Certified:** They receive a congratulatory letter and the **Scorecard** detailing performance in each area. The letter will specify their tier (Silver/Gold/Platinum) and the validity period of the certification. They will also be provided with instructions for obtaining the certificate and the usage guidelines for MIKSHA’s logo/seal. Key highlights from the audit may be shared, and sometimes a summary might be made public (e.g., listing on MIKSHA website of certified properties).
- **If Not Certified:** They receive a letter/report explaining why the certification was denied. Specific problem areas are highlighted (e.g., “score in Safety pillar was below acceptable, lacking CCTV and guard”). The letter will encourage them to rectify issues and reapply after a minimum period (perhaps 3 months) or once compliance is achieved. There is also an **appeals process** (see Section 9) if they believe the assessment was unfair.

## 6.6 Improvement Period (if applicable):

For properties that just missed the mark or had remediable issues, MIKSHA may offer a short window (e.g., 30–60 days) to fix critical lapses without needing a full re-application. For instance, if everything was good except lack of a fire extinguisher, the owner can install one and provide proof; a targeted re-check might then grant certification. However, major shortfalls will require a fresh audit.

## 6.7 Certification Package:

Certified properties will receive a **Certification Kit** including:

- An official **Certificate** (printed and/or digital) signed by the MIKSHA authority, with the property name, tier, score, date of issue and expiry.
- A **MIKSHA Certification Seal/Badge** corresponding to the tier (digital image files and guidelines for usage in marketing, and a physical plaque or sticker if provided).
- A brief **press release or announcement template** that the property can use to publicize their achievement, if they wish. (This helps spread awareness of the certification.)

The process from application to certification typically might take 4–6 weeks, assuming no major delays. MIKSHA strives to keep it time-bound so that owners can plan improvements and marketing accordingly. It also ensures that certifications are timely relative to the actual conditions (a prolonged process might mean conditions change in between).

Throughout, the emphasis is on **professionalism, fairness, and thoroughness** – much like ISO or star hotel certifications. Where possible, MIKSHA coordinates with government bodies – for example, if a city has an inspection regime for PGs, a MIKSHA audit could be done jointly to avoid duplication. The ultimate goal is a streamlined yet rigorous process that yields a reliable certification outcome.

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## 7. Certification Validity and Usage of Seal

Achieving MIKSHA certification is not a one-time affair; it comes with responsibilities to maintain standards. This section details how long a certification lasts, how the certified status can be displayed, and the rules surrounding its use:

### 7.1 Validity Period:

A MIKSHA certification is valid for a period of **2 years (24 months)** from the date of issue, by default. The validity period is printed on the certificate (e.g., “Valid from Jan 2026 to Dec 2027”). We choose 2 years considering that conditions can change – regular re-evaluation ensures standards are upheld.

### 7.2 Renewal Audits:

To continue being certified after expiry, a property must undergo a **renewal audit** before the validity lapses. MIKSHA will typically send reminders 3 months before expiry. Renewal involves a similar inspection, though if the property has a track record of good compliance, the audit might be slightly streamlined. If there have been no major complaints and the

owner provides an affidavit of continued compliance, some criteria might be spot-checked rather than fully redone. However, at least every 4 years a full audit is done even for stellar properties. Renewal audits focus on changes since last time (e.g., any renovations, increase in capacity, or new amenities). Passing the renewal will extend certification for another term. If a property fails a renewal audit, its certification expires and it must cease using MIKSHA seals until issues are fixed and a new certificate issued.

### **7.3 Use of Certification Badge/Seal:**

Certified properties are granted the rights to use the **MIKSHA certification badge** corresponding to their tier. The badge is a designed logo (for Silver, Gold, Platinum) that might include the MIKSHA emblem and the tier name. Usage guidelines:

- **Display on Premises:** The property should display the certification in a prominent location – e.g., a plaque at reception or entry gate. MIKSHA may provide a standardized metal plaque or sticker. This helps tenants and visitors know the place is certified. *(Think of how hotels display star ratings at the entrance.)*

- **Digital and Print Media:** The property can use the badge in marketing – on their website, brochures, social media, and listing platforms – to highlight their certified status. However, it must always mention the tier and preferably the year (e.g., “MIKSHA Gold Certified 2025–27”).

- **Integrity of the Seal:** The design of the badge must not be altered. It must be used in entirety and not mixed with other logos in a misleading way. The guidelines will specify colors, minimum size, etc., to maintain consistency.

- **Scope of Use:** The certification is property-specific. If a company runs multiple hostels, they can only advertise the certification in relation to the specific branch that was audited. They cannot generalize it to un-audited properties.

### **7.4 Reference to Government Endorsement:**

While MIKSHA is designed with government standards in mind, unless officially partnered or endorsed by a government body, the property should not misrepresent the certification as a “government license”. The correct phrasing is “MIKSHA Certified” (not “government approved” unless such an arrangement exists).

### **7.5 Maintenance of Standards:**

During the validity period, the owner is **obligated to maintain or improve** the standards that were certified. Certification is not a one-off award; it assumes continued compliance. If there are significant changes – e.g., an increase in capacity, renovations, changes in management – that could affect the certification, the owner should inform MIKSHA. Some changes might trigger a partial re-audit (for instance, adding a new floor of rooms may require checking safety again).

### **7.6 Marketing and Communication:**

Certified properties will be listed in MIKSHA’s official registry (which may be public on a website), often with their score and tier. MIKSHA and partner agencies might promote these certified hostels/PGs as part of raising awareness. Owners are encouraged to participate in promotional activities (case studies, testimonials) to highlight success

stories. The intention is to create a positive feedback loop – good publicity for the property and increased credibility for the certification program among consumers.

### **7.7 Expiry and Post-Expiry Use:**

Once the certification validity expires (and if not renewed), the property **must cease using the MIKSHA title and logo**. Any plaques or badges should be removed or marked as expired. Continued use of an expired certification is considered misuse. MIKSHA keeps an eye on expired certificates – if, for example, a property still advertises as “MIKSHA certified” after expiry without renewal, a notice will be sent. The integrity of the program relies on up-to-date validity, similar to how expired safety certificates or ISO certificates should not be displayed.

In summary, the certification validity and usage rules ensure that **MIKSHA remains a current and trustworthy indicator**. The seal is a privilege that comes with the duty of ongoing compliance. By following these guidelines, property owners help maintain the credibility of their certification and the program as a whole, giving confidence to tenants and oversight bodies alike that the **MIKSHA seal truly reflects present conditions**.

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## **8. Revocation and Re-Audit Policies**

While we hope every certified property consistently upholds standards, MIKSHA has clear policies to address situations where standards slip or rules are violated. Revocation is the mechanism to **withdraw certification** if needed, and re-audit may be required to reinstate it. Below are the scenarios and procedures:

### **8.1 Grounds for Revocation:**

A MIKSHA certification can be suspended or revoked before its expiry if:

- **Serious Lapse in Standards:** There is evidence that the property no longer meets critical certification criteria. For example, if a certified hostel’s fire safety measures break down (fire alarm not working, exits blocked) or a hygiene crisis occurs (e.g., a severe pest infestation or outbreak of illness due to poor sanitation), it’s a serious concern.
- **Verified Complaints:** If multiple independent **complaints from tenants or authorities** indicate that conditions have deteriorated or that the certification was misrepresentative. e.g., tenants report that CCTV and security, once present, have been removed, or that deposit refunds are not happening as promised.
- **Violation of Certification Terms:** Misuse of the MIKSHA logo (as discussed in Section 7), or misleading claims (such as using the certification to cover another property or altering the tier representation). Also, refusal to allow a scheduled surprise audit or providing falsified data during audits can lead to revocation.
- **Legal Non-Compliance Emerges:** If the property gets into legal trouble – say a license is cancelled by authorities, or a serious law violation (like illegal construction or a criminal incident due to negligence) occurs – the certification may be put on hold or withdrawn to dissociate from non-compliant operations.

## 8.2 Revocation Process:

Revocation is not done arbitrarily; there is a process:

- **Investigation:** Upon receiving a complaint or noticing a lapse (through news or authorities), MIKSHA will initiate a preliminary investigation. This might involve a site visit by an auditor or asking the owner for an explanation. For instance, if tenants complain of locked fire exits, an inspector might visit unannounced to verify.
- **Notice of Non-Compliance:** If the investigation finds merit, MIKSHA issues a **notice to the property owner**, detailing the findings and giving a chance to respond or fix issues. Depending on severity, a time frame (e.g., 15 days) is given to take corrective action. Immediate hazards (like no security after a violent incident) may require immediate action (e.g., hiring a guard the next day).
- **Suspension:** During the notice period, the certification may be put in “Suspended” status, meaning the property should not actively advertise the certification until issues are resolved. This is a temporary hold.
- **Follow-up Audit:** After the given time, a follow-up check is conducted. If the issues are resolved satisfactorily, the certification is reinstated (suspension lifted). If not, or if the owner fails to respond, then revocation proceeds.
- **Revocation Decision:** A formal revocation letter is issued, stating that the certification is revoked, effective immediately. MIKSHA updates its records and website to reflect that the property is no longer certified. The owner is instructed to remove any certification displays.

## 8.3 Consequences of Revocation:

- The property loses the right to use the MIKSHA certificate and logo. Continuing to display it would be a violation potentially subject to legal action (since it becomes a case of misrepresentation/fraud).
- Typically, there is a **cooling-off period** after revocation during which the property cannot reapply (maybe 6 months) unless MIKSHA is convinced the issues have been fully rectified. This is to ensure they just don't game the system by quick rebranding.
- Revocation might be communicated to relevant authorities if the issue intersects with public safety or law (for example, if it was revoked due to structural safety issues, MIKSHA might inform the municipal authority or fire department for their action).

## 8.4 Voluntary Withdrawal:

Sometimes an owner might voluntarily opt out of certification (e.g., if they are closing down the hostel or renovating extensively). In such cases, they can surrender the certificate. This is not negative and is not termed revocation (as it's not due to failure). However, once withdrawn, the owner must undergo a fresh audit to get certified again in future. We include this for completeness, though revocation usually refers to enforced withdrawal.

## 8.5 Re-Audit After Revocation:

If a property whose certification was revoked wishes to regain it, they must go through the process from scratch after the specified wait period. They should clearly address the previous issues before reapplying. The new audit will be especially stringent on those aspects. There is no “automatic” reinstatement – trust has to be earned again via a full assessment.

### **8.6 Transparency of Revocations:**

For the credibility of the certification program, MIKSHA maintains transparency about its actions. If a high-profile property's certificate is revoked, MIKSHA may publish that information (so that stakeholders know the status). This also serves as a cautionary tale to other certified properties that lapses have consequences.

### **8.7 Coordination with Authorities:**

Given that MIKSHA aims to work alongside urban local bodies and accreditation boards, any revocation due to critical safety/hygiene issues might be communicated to those bodies. For instance, if a PG's certificate is revoked because of fire safety non-compliance, the fire department or municipal corporation could be alerted since that indicates a broader legal violation too. This is in line with public interest.

In summary, revocation is the enforcement mechanism to ensure that **certification is not a one-time box to tick** – it must be continuously earned. MIKSHA's approach is corrective rather than punitive: give chances to improve, but if standards aren't upheld, the privilege of certification is removed. This ensures that the **MIKSHA seal remains trustworthy**, and properties bearing it are genuinely maintaining the standards they were verified for.

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## **9. Grievance Redressal and Appeals**

To uphold fairness and accountability, MIKSHA provides mechanisms for both property owners and tenants/consumers to raise grievances or appeal decisions. This two-way process ensures the certification system itself remains responsive and credible.

### **9.1 Grievances by Property Owners (Applicants/Certificate Holders):**

Owners or managers might have complaints about the certification process or outcomes. Common scenarios: disagreement with an audit finding, delays in processing, or issues with an auditor's conduct. MIKSHA has an **appeals process**:

- **Appeal of Audit Result:** If an owner believes the certification decision (score or tier) was unjust – for example, they feel certain criteria were judged incorrectly or the score was miscomputed – they can file a written appeal within a stipulated time (say, 2 weeks of receiving the result).
- The appeal should clearly mention the contested points and any evidence or clarification from the owner's side.
- A separate **Appeals Committee** (different from the original auditors) will review the case. This may involve a re-check of documentation or even a repeat site visit by independent auditors.
- The Appeals Committee will make a final decision to uphold or modify the result. If an error is found (e.g., a mis-scored item), they will correct the score and tier accordingly. If the appeal is not substantiated, the original decision stands. This decision is then communicated as final.
- **Complaint about Process or Personnel:** If the owner has a grievance like an auditor behaved unprofessionally or asked for undue favors (any kind of malpractice), they should

report immediately to MIKSHA headquarters. Such complaints are taken seriously: an inquiry will be done, and if found true, appropriate actions (ranging from auditor retraining to disqualification) will be taken. The result of the audit might also be reviewed for bias if such an issue arose.

- MIKSHA ensures that appealing or complaining will not result in any retaliation in future audits – the process is impartial. The appeals mechanism is meant to catch honest mistakes or correct subjective bias, not to negotiate standards; thus factual evidence is key in any appeal.

## **9.2 Grievances by Tenants/Consumers:**

Equally important, MIKSHA provides a channel for **tenants or the public** to voice concerns about certified properties. After all, the certification's reputation hinges on consumer trust. Scenarios include: a tenant in a certified PG finds that conditions are not as per certification or their rights are violated, or a neighbor reports a certified hostel causing nuisance, etc. Mechanisms:

- **Complaint Hotline/Email:** MIKSHA will publicize an email and/or phone line for anyone to report issues related to certified accommodations. Complaints can be anonymous (though details help investigation).

- **Handling of Tenant Complaints:** When a complaint comes in, MIKSHA logs it and does a preliminary review. If it's a minor issue or misunderstanding, they may forward it to the property management for a response. If it's serious (e.g., "There's no security guard here despite them being certified for having one"), MIKSHA may deploy an inspector or ask the property for an explanation.

- **Protection of Tenants:** If a tenant fears retaliation (since their PG owner might guess who complained), MIKSHA keeps identities confidential. If needed, they might coordinate with local authorities for protection (for example, in cases of harassment or illegal eviction threats).

- **Action on Valid Complaints:** Validated complaints feed into the **Revocation/Suspension process** (Section 8). For instance, if tenants collectively complain that hygiene has dropped drastically, MIKSHA might do a surprise audit. If confirmed, a notice is issued to the owner to fix it or face suspension. In essence, tenant complaints are an early warning system that can trigger re-audits.

## **9.3 Dispute Resolution:**

If disputes arise (either during appeals or complaint resolution) that cannot be settled through internal processes, MIKSHA may refer to an **external arbitration panel** or relevant government body. For example, if a PG owner legally challenges a revocation, the matter could go to an arbitrator or court as per the agreement in application terms. MIKSHA will abide by any legal directives. However, typically the internal mechanism suffices, as MIKSHA is not a governmental penal authority, but rather a certification provider – the worst it does is deny or remove certification, not levy fines or such (aside from extreme cases where fraud might be prosecuted).

## **9.4 Feedback Loop:**

All grievances and their resolutions are documented. The learnings feed back into

improving standards and processes. For instance, if many complaints arise about deposit refunds even in certified properties, MIKSHA may tighten that criterion or provide more owner education on it. If appeals often succeed on a particular point, maybe that criterion was ambiguous and needs clarity in the manual. The system thus evolves.

In summary, robust grievance and appeal procedures fortify the integrity of the MIKSHA Rating System. They ensure **transparency and fairness** for property owners undergoing certification and provide a **safety valve for tenants** to report non-compliance. This way, MIKSHA not only certifies but continuously monitors and engages with the community it serves, embodying a responsive and responsible standards body.

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## 10. References to Indian Standards

*(Informative Section — This manual aligns with various national and local standards. Below are key reference points and source standards that guided the criteria:)*

- **Food Safety Standards:** Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) Act & Regulations – mandates licensing for any food-serving establishment. PGs/Hostels with kitchens must comply (e.g., register as Food Business Operators)[8]. This ensures hygiene in meal provision.
- **Hostel Norms (Education Sector):** AICTE and UGC hostel guidelines for colleges (e.g., 1 toilet per 8 students, 24×7 security with wardens for women’s hostels) informed our safety and facility ratios[40][41]. These norms emphasize basic living standards and have been adapted to the PG context.
- **National Building Code (NBC) 2016:** Provided benchmarks for fire safety (extinguishers, alarms, exit widths), structural safety, and occupant load (floor space per person in dormitories). MIKSHA’s safety criteria reflect NBC recommendations for buildings of relevant occupancy.
- **Ministry of Tourism – HRACC Guidelines:** The Hotel & Restaurant Approval & Classification Committee’s *Guidelines for Approval of Guest Houses (2009)* were referenced for hygiene and facilities expectations in budget accommodations (e.g., minimum room/bathroom sizes, tie-up with hospitals, RO water, garbage segregation, etc.)[42][43]. While PGs are not tourist accommodations, the spirit of providing clean, fair, hygienic facilities is common.
- **Municipal Regulations for PGs:** Notably, the 2024 **BBMP Guidelines for Paying Guest Accommodations, Bengaluru** influenced many criteria: CCTV with 90-day recording, min. 70 sq.ft per resident, 135 L water/day, mandatory security guard, and trade licensing[1][9]. Other cities’ regulations (if any) would similarly align, and MIKSHA embeds these best practices.
- **Housing Rental Laws:** The **Model Tenancy Act, 2021** (Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs) and various state rent control acts provided guidance on fair rental practices – e.g., capping security deposits to 2 months’ rent and requiring written

agreements[32][44]. MIKSHA's Transparency pillar upholds these principles, bridging the gap where informal PG sector often ignores them.

- **Public Health Codes:** Local public health/by-law requirements (such as those by Municipal Corporations on waste management, sanitation, pest control, water quality standards) were taken into account to ensure certified properties meet civic health expectations.
- **Swachh Bharat & Swasth Bharat Initiatives:** The national emphasis on cleanliness and health under these missions underscores criteria like segregated waste disposal, toilets for all, and hygienic living conditions. MIKSHA contributes to these missions by certifying compliant accommodations.
- **Human Rights & Safety Charters:** Broader documents like the National Policy for Safety of Women (relevant to women's hostels), and guidelines from the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (for any minor students in hostels) inspire provisions like secure environments, female wardens, etc.

*(End of Manual)*

**This certification manual is intended to serve as a professional benchmark document.**

It can be presented to urban development ministries, municipal authorities, or accreditation boards as a comprehensive standard for long-term rental accommodations. By adhering to MIKSHA standards, all stakeholders – property owners, residents, and regulators – can work together to ensure that every PG, hostel, or co-living space in India is **safe, hygienic, comfortable, and respectful of tenants' rights**, transforming the rental housing landscape for the better.

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