

# Your guide to Home Safety

## Putting People 1<sup>st</sup>

**This document provides you with information on how to ensure your home is safe for you and your family.**

## Insurance Responsibilities

Accidents unfortunately do happen and it is important that you have contents insurance to cover any damage to your home. There are two types of insurance which should be in place for your home:

### Building Insurance

As your landlord, it is our responsibility to provide this insurance. This covers the cost of the major repair work to your home should there be structural damage. Examples would be because of storm damage, a fire, or damage caused through a flood or escape of water.

### Contents Insurance

It is your responsibility to insure your personal contents should they be damaged. We would strongly recommend that you take out appropriate insurance.

You should note that we will not be liable for the cost for damage of the replacement of any personal items damaged or lost because of any incidents which occur in your home.

For example, if there is a water leak into your home and this causes damage to your furniture, clothing, carpets or appliances, we would not be liable for any of these. There are various options for insurance and we can provide further information if you contact us.

## Gas Safety

It is vital that you give access to our gas contractor to carry out an annual gas servicing. We are required by law to carry this out once a year **no later than 12 months from the previous inspection.**

This is extremely important not only to make sure that we comply with the law but also to safeguard the health and safety of you and your neighbours.

You will receive notice from us and our gas contractor that your annual servicing date is due to enable you to make a suitable appointment. As much as possible we will try and arrange a convenient time with you.

If you repeatedly fail to allow us access to carry out this safety check and it is approaching the anniversary date of the service, we will have no option but to consider gaining entry to your home to comply with our legal responsibilities.

If your gas meter is located outside your home, we may not force access. However, we will cap the gas supply to your home until we can return to carry out the safety check.

We would also remind you that if you have a pre-pay gas and / or electricity meter, both of these must be in credit to allow the safety check to be completed.

### **Carbon Monoxide Detectors (CO)**

We provide one CO detector in each home which will be located near to the gas boiler.

When your annual gas safety inspection is carried out the gas engineer will test your CO detector and if faulty it will be replaced.

We would recommend that you test your CO detector frequently using its 'test' button. Please contact us for advice and immediately if you feel you have an issue with your detector.

### **Smoke Detectors**

We will ensure that all smoke detectors are checked when your annual gas safety inspection is carried out. As with your CO detector, we would recommend testing your smoke detectors frequently. Please contact us for advice and immediately if you feel you have an issue with your detectors.

### **Gas Leaks**

If you smell gas you should:

- ✓ Switch off any working gas appliances
- ✓ Put out cigarettes and any sources of naked flames (candles, do not use matches etc.)
- ✓ Don't plug in and switch on / use any appliances or lights, electrical switches, door bells or use mobile phones.
- ✓ Open all doors and windows to ventilate your home and keep them open until the leak is fixed.
- ✓ Switch off your gas boiler
- ✓ Turn off the gas supply at your meter
- ✓ Phone the National Grid Emergency Service on 0800 111 999 at any time day or night.
- ✓ If you live in a close, please open the main door to allow ventilation.

### **Carbon Monoxide Poisoning**

Carbon monoxide poisoning can be caused by faulty gas appliances. Signs of carbon monoxide poisoning are not always obvious, although symptoms such as drowsiness, headaches, and tiredness can occur. It is important that you remember the following:

- Never use a gas appliance if you think it is not working properly
- Some signs to look for include yellow or orange flames, soot or stains around the appliance or pilot lights which frequently blow out
- Never cover an appliance or block the vents
- Never block or cover outside flues
- Never block or cover ventilation grilles (window/wall)
- If you have any doubts about the safety of your gas appliances contact us without delay

## Electricity

It is illegal and very dangerous to tamper with the electricity supply to your home or the electric meter. You should never work on the electrics in your home and you should always report faults to us.

Where you have requested to carry out an alteration that requires work on your electrics you must obtain our written permission before these works proceed and we will insist that a qualified electrician carries out the works. There may also be a requirement to provide a copy of certificates which must be signed by the electrician.

We carry out regular electrical safety checks in our properties, usually every five years. It is very important that when you are advised that your electrical safety check is due that you arrange a suitable time for this to be carried out. This is very important in order to safeguard the health and safety of you and your neighbours.

The test will take approximately 2 hours and the electrician will require access to all sockets in your home and to the consumer unit at your electricity meter. Please ensure that on the day of the test that you have topped up your meter as the test cannot be completed if there is no electricity in the house.

During the inspection, the electrical contractor will:

- ✓ Check for potential electrical shock risks
- ✓ Check for electrical fire hazards
- ✓ Make sure your electrical circuits and equipment are not overloaded
- ✓ Make sure all the wiring is safe
- ✓ Test all electrical appliances.

If the inspection report highlights any urgent problems, we will fix them as soon as possible.

### Electrical Appliances & Supply

All our properties are fitted with Consumer Control Units (what used to be called a fuse box ), usually fitted close to the electricity meter.

Instead of fuses your unit is fitted with MCBs (Miniature Circuit Breakers) and ELCBs (Earth Leakage Circuit Breakers). MCB's are similar to fuses but easier to operate. ELCBs are new devices designed to protect you against faulty equipment and electrical shocks.

### What to Do When Your Power Has Gone Off

One of the common causes of losing power in your home is where an appliance is faulty. As a safety precaution your consumer unit will 'trip'

#### **Situation 1: You have just plugged in an appliance and all the power has gone off:**

- ✓ Unplug appliance.
- ✓ Reset ECLB and MCB (turn all switches to on).
- ✓ Power should come on again.
- ✓ Have your appliance checked by an electrician.
- ✓ If the power does not come on again go to situation 2

## Situation 2: Your power has gone off but you do not know why:

- ✓ Switch everything off (plugs, lights, cooker, water heater).
- ✓ Reset ELCB (and MCB) if required.
- ✓ Switch lights on one at a time.
- ✓ Switch plugs on one at a time.

If a light or appliance is faulty the power will go off again when this item is switched on, so switch off the appliance, reset ECLB (and MCB) if required. The power should come on again. If further problems occur please contact us.

### Electrical Safety Tips

- ✓ Switch off all appliances when not in use;
- ✓ Never take an electrical appliance into the bathroom;
- ✓ Ensure you have the correct rated fuse on plugs for your appliances in case you have to change them;
- ✓ Check flexes for wear and tear and do not run them under carpets

## Fire Safety

You can reduce the risk of fire in your home by:

- ✓ Always make sure you put out all candles
- ✓ Keep matches out of reach of children
- ✓ Unplug all appliances when you are not using them
- ✓ Put out all cigarettes and empty ashtrays into something that will not burn
- ✓ Close all doors in your home at night. If a fire starts this will help to prevent it from spreading.

### Keeping Common Areas Clear

A fire may not necessarily be in your home. If you live in a flat and you have a common stair it is important that you keep it clear because it is your only means of escape in the event of a fire. Even a small bag of rubbish can create enough smoke to fill a whole stairwell. Items left in a common stair may be deliberately set on fire.

## Window Safety

- ✓ Teach children to play away from windows
- ✓ Keep windows closed and locked when not in use
- ✓ Keep furniture or anything a child can climb away from windows
- ✓ Always supervise children and ask about window safety when your child visits other homes

If you find that any of your window locks or stays are broken or you are concerned that a window can be easily fully opened, please contact us.

## Door Safety

Certain types of doors, particularly at common entrances to blocks of flats, are fitted with self-closing security doors. These are designed to ensure the doors remain closed when not in use. These doors should never be wedged open. The security of your home is at risk if controlled entrance doors are left open. As self-closing doors are potentially dangerous, young children should be discouraged from playing around them. Never attempt to adjust the self-closing mechanism. Please report any faulty or broken doors to us immediately.

## Frost Protection

During extreme cold weather, you can avoid frost damage and burst pipes by taking the following precautions:

- ✓ Keep your heating switched on as long as you can. If you have a thermostat for your heating system set it to at least 10°C.
- ✓ Let us know if you are going away. We' can offer advice and assistance in relation to draining down your plumbing system, if necessary. Leave a door key with a neighbour or relative and tell us how we can contact the person who has the key should an emergency occur.

### Burst Pipes

**If you find a burst pipe in your home:**

- ✓ Immediately turn off the water supply to your home from the stop valve
- ✓ Turn on all taps to drain the system
- ✓ Do not attempt to turn off any light switches or sockets if they come into contact with water, instead turn of your electricity at the consumer unit.
- ✓ Turn off the central heating system
- ✓ Collect water in your bath for washing and WC flushing
- ✓ Warn neighbours who may suffer damage
- ✓ Call us immediately for assistance

## Legionella – Reduce Your Risk

The risk of contracting legionella in the domestic home is minimal and most protection from legionella has to be undertaken by people actually living in the home and using the water systems. There are some simple steps that you must take to help protect you and those in your home:

1. You have to turn your shower on and run it for a few minutes at least once a week, preferably more often than this, to flush out stale water.
2. You have to make sure that you dismantle, scrub and de-scale your showerheads and shower hoses at least once every three months or earlier if scaling is evident. This is easily done by removing the shower hose and head and leaving it soaking for half an hour in white vinegar then scrubbing off any deposits. You should then rinse it in warm water to wash off the vinegar.
3. If you have a spa type bath you have to make sure you clean it with appropriate approved chemicals at least once weekly.



4. You should make sure that you run water through all the hot and cold water taps throughout your home on at least a weekly basis.
5. If you have an electric hot water tank you should make sure that you are fully heating the water in it and then using the water immediately after at least 2-3 times per week. Temperatures above 60°C will kill Legionella bacteria so make sure that the temperature of the hot water in your boiler/cylinder is set at a minimum of 60°C. Beware of burns and scalding and take extra care if you have children. Legionella can survive in low temperatures, but thrive at temperatures between 20°C and 45°C.

These are very simple steps to help protect you in your home and minimise any exposure risk. These precautions are even more important if you are over 50 years of age or suffer from ill health. If you would like more advice on this matter please contact us.

## Asbestos Management

Asbestos is a material made up of strong fibres which are resistant to both heat and chemicals. These qualities made asbestos a popular material in the building trade but due to health concerns was banned and has not been used since the 1980s.

Asbestos is most likely to be found in properties built / improved between the 1950s and early 1980s. It is therefore very unlikely that these will be any present in your home. It is not a danger unless disturbed.

### Where is asbestos found?

Asbestos is found in a variety of products, some of the most common being:

- ✓ Floor tiles (vinyl or thermoplastic tiles)
- ✓ Wall and ceiling boards
- ✓ Artex (textured) ceiling finishes
- ✓ Sprayed coatings to steelwork
- ✓ Lagging around pipework and hot water cylinders
- ✓ Water tanks
- ✓ Inside electrical distribution boards and fuses
- ✓ Bath panels
- ✓ Corrugated cement roofing sheets
- ✓ Artificial slate roofs
- ✓ Gutters and downpipes

### What do we do about asbestos?

We have carried out a high number of asbestos checks on our properties and hold an asbestos register of the results. All test results have shown no asbestos. Prior to any repair or major upgrade works this register is checked by our staff and contractors. If no information is held an asbestos check will be carried out before any work is allowed to proceed.

## When is asbestos dangerous?

The presence of asbestos in your home does not necessarily pose a risk and as mentioned previously it is very unlikely that asbestos will be present in your home.

If it is sealed (encapsulated) and is in good condition then it will not be a problem unless the sealant is damaged – asbestos is only dangerous when fibres are released into the air. The most common disturbance of asbestos results from DIY. In order to ensure your safety when carrying out any DIY, please follow the guidelines below:

- ⊘ DO NOT drill a hole through any asbestos boards or suspected asbestos-containing materials.
- ⊘ DO NOT cut or break off any parts of asbestos products or suspected asbestos-containing materials
- ⊘ DO NOT rub down asbestos panels or Artex with sandpaper or suspected asbestos-containing materials
- ⊘ DO NOT use wallpaper scrapers on asbestos products or suspected asbestos-containing materials
- ⊘ DO NOT remove asbestos or suspected asbestos-containing materials or panels to gain access to services such as concealed pipework.

**If you are unsure if a product contains asbestos please do not carry out any works until you have contacted us for advice.**

**Further information regarding asbestos can be found at Health & Safety Executive [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)**

## Please let us know what you think

We always welcome feedback from our customers. If you would like any further information about safety in your home or any other matter, please simply contact us by:

- ✓ telephoning 0141 944 3891 to speak to a member of our team.
- ✓ texting us on 0741 834 7038 and a member of our team will call you back.
- ✓ emailing us at [mail@pineview.org.uk](mailto:mail@pineview.org.uk)
- ✓ use our Contact Us form on our website [www.pineview.org.uk/contact-us/](http://www.pineview.org.uk/contact-us/)
- ✓ find us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/pineviewhousing](http://www.facebook.com/pineviewhousing) or
- ✓ writing to us at Pineview Housing Association, 5 Rozelle Avenue, Glasgow G15 7QR.



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