

Preparing your home for the winter

As the cold weather starts to set in, we want to ensure that your home is prepared, and everything is working as it should. Please read through the following information to check that the items listed are working and for some helpful information to prepare your home.

Heating and hot water

Since the nights are drawing in and the temperatures are dropping, you will likely start to make use of your heating system if you aren't already. It's best to carry out a check to ensure that everything is working as it should, even if you aren't looking to have your heating on at present.

Check that the pilot light is on and re-light it if necessary (instructions on how to do this will be in the boiler manual, or on the side of the boiler itself).

Your boiler is annually serviced by a Gas Safety registered engineer so this should give you peace of mind.

Make the most of your heating timer to ensure that you have heating during the times you need it most. Remember, setting your heating to the highest possible temperature will not help to heat the space any quicker, we would advise setting to an optimum room temperature such as 21 degrees Celsius.

The heating should automatically enter standby mode when it reaches this temperature and re-engage as and when it needs to.

If you are going away or will be absent from the property for a while, please ensure you leave the heating system on but use either the holiday setting to program your preferred constant temperature or select the frost protection setting on your thermostat, this will protect the property and will start the heating system if the property temperature drops below 5 degrees Celsius.

Test all your radiators to check they are working properly. Ensure that the control valves on the side of the radiators are open/turned on, to allow them to heat up when the heating is on.

Please ensure the radiators are heating up evenly at both the top and bottom of the radiator.

If the radiators aren't heating, please try and bleed the radiators to remove any trapped air. It is important when bleeding radiators to check your boiler pressure afterwards to ensure it is operating at the correct pressure.

If you are experiencing any issues with your heating and or hot water, please contact your Property Manager immediately.

Extractor fans

To manage the levels of moisture in your home, it is important to continue to ventilate your home by periodically opening windows and to ensure that the kitchen, bathroom and en-suite extractor fans are used and operational.

It is natural to want to dry clothes indoors during the colder months since they will dry quicker. It's important to understand proper condensation management when doing so as high humidity from drying clothes can cause damp/mould growth if the room isn't adequately ventilated.

The key bit of information here is to reduce humidity at all times since this will make spaces feel colder, increase condensation and cause mould growth.

If you think there is an issue with your extractor fans not working, please contact your Property Manager immediately.

Check your windows and doors

Make sure that any windows that have been opened during the warmer months are closed securely as these may have been left open for cool air circulation.

Your property should have trickle vents toward the top which allow air to circulate. Please leave these open to help air circulate and reduce condensation build up.

Air with high moisture levels will feel much colder than air with low moisture content so reducing humidity is very important.

For important more information on ventilating your home please see our guide to living in a new home.

Check your pipe insulation

Your home may have insulated piping around the boiler to prevent the loss of heating and to stop them freezing and bursting. Please check that these remain in place and are in good condition. Your boiler may be housed within a unit and may not require any further insulation.

As the cold weather sets in the water in your pipes may freeze causing them to burst. Not only could this cause a lot of expensive damage but it may mean you have to move out whilst the repairs are undertaken.

Locate your stopcock

Knowing the location of your stopcock will enable you to turn the cold-water system off and limit further damage. This is especially important in case of burst pipes which are most likely to occur during freezing temperatures.

The stopcock is usually located under your kitchen sink and normally looks like a tap/lever but if you're in doubt, please check your home user guide or with your Property Manager.

Outside water tap

Ahead of the temperatures reaching freezing, please turn off the stopcock for the outside water tap (located under your kitchen sink) and once switched off, open the tap outside to drain any remaining water in the system. This will prevent the water in the tap freezing and causing any damage or leaks.

Gardens

In autumn and winter the winds can pick up and we therefore ask that you look at any furniture you have in the garden that can be packed away and secure lighter items that could become airborne in strong winds.

Roof and external lighting

From time to time, keep an eye out on any tiles on your roof which look as if they're loose or missing and report this immediately.

Having loose or missing tiles will likely cause leaks into your property.



Please do not attempt to investigate or repair these yourself as works will require a professional working at height.

You may have external lights on your property, if you do, keep checking these are in working order and replace bulbs as and when required.

Guttering

Please keep an eye on the condition of your guttering and the build-up of leaf debris. These will need to be periodically professionally cleared to ensure the gutters are working as they should to effectively drain away and not overflow.

Pavements, paths and driveways

Please take care during wet weather and freezing temperatures on your paths, driveways and pavements and prepare for clearing these areas to prevent slips and obstructions.

Waste management

Winter is a time when vermin are looking for warmer spaces so it's important that you ensure all waste is properly disposed of. Otherwise, this will act as a food source bringing vermin into your home.

Undertake shed maintenance

Some of our properties come with sheds. If you happen to have one, make sure your shed is secure, especially if you have expensive items held there such as power tools or lawn mowers.

Your landlord is not responsible for any losses and your contents insurance is unlikely to cover any losses when your personal items are not secure.

Home security and insurance

Crime rates increase in the winter months so it's best practice to ensure all locks on doors and windows are secure.

Consider taking out contents insurance for your personal items as your landlord's building insurance will not cover them.

We hope that you have found the above information useful but should you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact your Property Manager.