ABOUT YOUR HANDBOOK

This is your handbook and it gives you information about your repairs service. It tells you what we need to know so that we can sort out your repair, what repairs you must do, and how to do some of these yourself. If you’ve got any questions, please let us know. We can put this book on CD or get it to you in large print. If your first language isn’t English and you want to talk to us in your own language, please give us a call.

WARNING – CHECK IDENTITY CARDS!
Before you let anyone into your home you should ask to see their identity card. If you aren’t sure, make sure they stay outside your home and phone our repairs hotline on 01536 464642.

BEFORE YOU LET US KNOW ABOUT YOUR REPAIR
• We need you to check the type of repair you need. Please look at the list at the side of each page and find your type of repair. There are pictures which will help you tell us about your repair. By giving us as much information as you can, you can help us get your repair done quickly.

• When the tradesman visits your home make sure there’s someone at home who’s over 16 years old.

WHEN YOU’RE READY
• Contact us. See details in Getting in touch on page 4. If it’s an emergency, see Emergencies – what to do on page 3.
• Have this handbook with you when you talk to us and a pen and paper ready to write down any information we give you.
• Let us know if you have hearing problems or if you take time to get to the door when someone visits you.

HOME CONTENTS INSURANCE
It’s a good idea to have home contents insurance. This covers you against damage to your personal items like carpets and furniture, including fire or flood damage. It also covers some items if they’re stolen and any accidental damage to your home.
You’re free to find your own insurance or we can give you a leaflet about the Council’s insurance scheme which you can pay weekly and currently costs less than £1.50 per week.
EMERGENCIES – WHAT TO DO

GAS (SMELL, LEAK OR FUMES)
• Call the national gas emergency service provider immediately on 0800 111999. Use a phone outside your home; using one inside, even a mobile, could spark an explosion.

• Turn off the gas and open windows. Turn the handle at the meter to the flat (horizontal) position.

• Don’t smoke or switch anything electrical on or off until the problem’s fixed.

SMOKE, FUMES OR YOUR SMOKE DETECTOR ALARM SOUNDS
• If you can smell or see smoke call 999 immediately.

• If there’s no sign of smoke or fire check whether the alarm’s gone off because of something else. See Handy Hints on page 45.

ELECTRICITY
• Turn the mains switch on the consumer unit (fuse box) to OFF.

• If you have a power cut, call the emergency number given in your phone book.

• Write down the number here:

WATER
• Turn the mains stoptap to the right (clockwise). If you have no water supply coming into your home, phone your local water supplier.

• Write down the number here:

If you can smell or see smoke call 999 immediately.

Make a note of where your gas meter, electricity consumer unit and mains water stoptap are. See Where is it in my home? on page 49.
GETTING IN TOUCH

Phone our repairs hotline
(office hours only)
01536 464646

Emergency Out of Hours
01536 400088

Email us
(do not use email for emergency or urgent repairs)
repairs.online@corby.gov.uk

Visit us or write to us
At the One Stop Shop, Corby Cube, Parkland Gateway,
George Street, Corby, NN17 1QG.
We’re open 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

Fill in a form on our website
www.corby.gov.uk
WHO DOES WHAT?

WHAT WE LOOK AFTER:
Outside your home. We repair and look after the building and outside parts of your home such as gutters and roof tiles. We also look after water pipes up to your boundary.

Inside your home. We look after water or gas pipes, wiring, heating and hot water systems, drainage, power and light fittings and any items that we've put into your home. See What you must do on page 9.

Your garden. We look after all fences, walls and gates that we own. We also look after any paved areas and paths we’ve put in.

Shared areas. We’ll carry out all repairs to these areas.

SAFETY:
We must do a gas safety check once a year in your home to make sure everything’s safe.

You must, by law, let us into your home to do the safety checks. If you don’t let us in we’ll take you to court and you’ll have to pay the costs for this.

You must make sure that your own gas appliances are serviced once a year.

You must make sure that air vents don’t get blocked.

An electrical periodic inspection and test is due every 5 to 10 years depending on circumstances. Access will be necessary to ensure your safety.

WHAT IF I CAN’T DO REPAIRS?
You must take care of the inside of your home and do some of the repairs. See What you must do on page 8. If you feel you can’t do these and you have no-one who can help you, we may be able to help you so let us know.

DO I HAVE TO PAY FOR ANY REPAIRS?
If you, or someone in your home, damages anything you must make sure you get it repaired properly. You might be able to get the money back on your home contents insurance. See Home Contents Insurance on page 2. If we have to do the repair to make you and your family safe you will have to pay for this. See Damage and costs on page 8.
YOUR REPAIRS

BEFORE YOU CALL:
- Look at the list at the side of the page and find the pages that deal with your type of repair.

WHEN YOU CONTACT US LET US KNOW:
- Your name, address and phone numbers.
- Details of what needs repairing.
- If there’s anything we should know like if you have difficulties hearing or you need time to answer the door.

WE’LL PUT THE REPAIR ON OUR COMPUTER:
- We’ll put your repair on our computer.
- We’ll tell you how soon we’ll deal with it.

WE DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR REPAIR:
- We’ll get an order out to a tradesman or arrange for someone to visit your home and look at what needs to be done.

WE’LL MAKE SURE IT GETS DONE:
- We will give you either a morning (8.30am – 12.30pm) or afternoon (12 noon to 5.00pm) access slot for repairs.
- If we have an up to date contact number you will receive confirmation and reminder text messages regarding your repair.

WHEN YOU TELL US ABOUT A REPAIR
- Please don’t make your repair problem sound urgent if it isn’t.
- Tradesmen work from 8.30am to 5.00pm. At any other times, including public holidays, we’ll only send out our tradesman if it is an emergency.

WHEN WORK IS GOING TO BE DONE IN YOUR HOME
- We’ll tell you if you need to move or cover any furniture or if you need to lift any floor covering before the tradesman visits. Please let us know if you’re having problems sorting this out.
- Someone needs to be at home when our tradesman visits your home because they might need to talk to you about the work.
- There must be an adult at home all the time. Our tradesmen will not work in homes if there is no-one over 16 years old.
- Please don’t smoke when the tradesman visits. If you do they can stop working in your home.
- Make sure that our tradesmen can get on with the work safely. If you don’t, they may not do the repair.
- In very bad weather we’ll always make things safe. If more work is needed we might have to come back another time to finish it.
THINGS YOU MUST DO

- Get new keys cut or put on new door locks when keys are lost or broken or when you get locked out.
- Tighten up loose handles on kitchen units.
- Fit chains or any extra locks.
- Make changes to doors when you have new carpets fitted.
- Put up curtain rails.
- Put in new light bulbs and fluorescent tubes (except kitchen and bathroom lights with closed covers).
- Put trip switches back on.
- Put up TV aerials (unless it’s a shared aerial).
- Put in TV aerial sockets.
- Test and clean any smoke detectors or carbon monoxide detectors we’ve put in.
- Try to clear blocked sinks, baths, toilets and shower trays.
- Get new plugs and chains for baths and sinks.
- Clean and get rid of scale from your shower head, basin and bath taps.
- Fit wastes and pipe work for washing machines, dishwashers and vents for tumble driers if they are not already there.

- Put up new clothes lines or rotary driers but not in a shared area.
- Look after any garden paths, fences or other garden items like decking that you’ve put in yourself.
- Get rid of leaves and rubbish in drainage gully grids.
- Keep fan vents and window vents clear.
- Tenants must provide a Gas Safe registered engineers Gas Safety Report Form for any gas work or service carried out on their own appliance. This includes any gas cooker installation.
WHAT YOU MUST DO

THINGS YOU MUST DO ARE:

• Allow us into your home to do repairs, safety checks and inspections.
• Be considerate and respectful towards our staff and contractors.
• Decorate the inside of your home well, including filling small cracks or holes in walls.
• Tell us as soon as you notice a repair and try to stop it getting worse.
• Look after your fixtures or appliances like your heating and lighting.
• Try to stop condensation.
• Try to stop blocked pipes or drains.
• Try to make sure pipes don’t freeze or burst in bad weather.
• Repair any damage you, members of your family or your visitors cause.
• Make sure a fire doesn’t happen in your home.

DAMAGE AND COSTS

If you or anyone in your home, including members of your family, visitors or pets, cause damage to your home, you must get it repaired properly. If we have to do the repair to make sure you and your family are safe, you will have to pay for this.

CHANGES YOU’VE MADE

You can make changes to your home but we must agree in writing first. You are responsible for any repairs to these changes.
HOW LONG IT TAKES

When you tell us about your repair we'll tell you how soon we'll do it. This will be taken from the date you contact us. You can see on page 48 how quickly we deal with different kinds of repairs.

EMERGENCY

We aim to get someone to your home as soon as possible and to make everything safe within 24 hours. These repairs take away danger or stop serious damage to your home, like burst water pipes, no water supply, making the property secure or, in some cases, getting the heating back on or minor electrical problems. This includes most repairs under the Right to Repair. We'll let you know when we'll do any more work that's needed.

You can call us about emergencies at any time of day or night but if our tradesman calls and no one's home we will charge you for this.

URGENT

We aim to finish the work within 10 days. This is for work to get your sink or toilet working. Also for any other urgent work, ie to stop damage to your home or to stop serious problems that could affect your health, safety or security.

ROUTINE REPAIRS

We aim to finish the repair within 35 days. This is for work where the problem isn't dangerous and isn't a problem straight away but still needs to be done quite soon.

When you tell us about your repair we’ll decide how soon we’ll get it done. See Emergency, Urgent and Routine on page 48.

Sometimes we might need to visit you to decide what work needs to be done.

For emergency repairs we’ll get to you as soon as possible. For urgent and routine repairs we’ll agree a morning (8.30am to 12.30pm) or an afternoon (12.00 noon – 5.00pm) when the tradesman will call.

You must have some urgent repairs done within set times under the Right to Repair regulations. These are health and safety repairs that would be a problem if they weren’t sorted out on time.

If you can’t be in during our working hours maybe a friend or neighbour could wait in for you. They must be at least 16 years old. If you can’t keep to an agreed date or time please let us know straight away. If you’re not in when we come we’ll leave a card asking you to contact us to arrange another time to visit.

If you’re not in when we come back we will cancel your repair.
WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US

We want to make our services better. Please let us know if you have any comments, compliments or complaints.

OUR TRADESMEN MUST:

• Give you respect and always behave professionally.
• Say who they are and show you their identity card before coming in.
• Tell you what they’re going to do and what this will mean for you.
• Protect things in your home from damage, dust and paint.
• Make sure what they’re working with isn’t dangerous.
• Let you know how the work is going.
• Clear the rubbish from your home and make sure electricity, water and gas are put back on after the work’s been done.
• Close doors and gates when they leave.
• Explain how any new things they’ve put in work.

OUR TRADESMEN MUSTN’T:

• Smoke or play radios in or around your home.
• Use mobile phones for personal calls when they’re doing your work.

• Be left to work in your home with children if no adult is present.
• Get money, services or gifts from tenants as a thank you for work.
• Keep keys to your home.
• Take their lunch break in your home.
• Use bad language.

THEY MUST ASK YOU IF THEY CAN:

• Use your phone.
• Use your toilet.
• Go into other rooms in your home.
• Use your electricity.

We’ll listen and deal with repairs in an efficient and helpful way.

Most repairs are done by our own tradesmen but we sometimes use other contractors.

When your repair is finished you will be given the opportunity to complete a short questionnaire asking for your feedback on the work that has been carried out.

We use your comments and survey information to help us improve the overall service.
We do regular checks to make sure that work is done well. We do this by choosing some repairs and visiting those properties to look at the work that's been done. Please let us know straight away if you're not happy with anything we’ve done. We’ll try to sort it out as soon as we can.

If you’re still not happy and want to complain, you need to see Complaints in your Tenants’ Handbook.
BATHS AND BASINS

WHAT YOU MUST DO:

• Try to clear blocked baths, basins, sinks and shower trays.
• Get new plugs and chains for baths, basins and sinks.
• Clean and get rid of scale from showerheads.
• Repair anything you’ve put in yourself, like a shower or extra tiles.

ADVICE:

• For water leaks or tap problems see Pipes and Taps on page 31 and Drains and wastes on page 17.
• A blocked waste pipe is not an emergency. You must try to clear it yourself before you call us. See Handy Hints on page 41. We’ll charge you for clearing blockages caused by things like toys or hair.
• If you, a member of your family, a visitor or a pet cause damage and we have to repair it you will have to pay for this.
• If we need to put in new bathroom items which are part of a matching set, they’ll always be white, including any tiles.

WE NEED TO KNOW:

• What the problem is, such as: basin loose or broken; waste pipe leaking or blocked; wall tiles cracked or broken.
• If a bath panel, is it at the side or the end? Is it made of plastic or plywood?
• If a bath, is it plastic or metal?
• If a sink top, is it an inset top or does the metal cover the whole base unit?
• If tiles, are they above the sink, worktop, basin or bath? How many are damaged?
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## DOORS AND LOCKS

- Door and Frame
  - Glass
  - Letterplate
  - Panel or Glass
  - Frame
  - Facing
  - Doorstop or Bead
  - Skirting
  - Cill or Threshold

- Door Hinges
  - Flush Hinge
  - Butt Hinge

- Stormguard Cill

- Multi-point lock (espagnolette)

- Cylinder Rim Nightlatch
  - (Yale/Union)

- Mortice Latch

- Cylinder Mortice Lock
  - (snib inside)
WHAT YOU MUST DO:
- Get new keys cut or put on new locks when keys are lost or broken, or when you get locked out.
- Fit chains or any extra locks. See Advice below.
- Make changes to doors, for example when you have new carpets or flooring.

ADVICE:
- If you, a member of your family, a visitor or a pet cause damage and we have to repair it you will have to pay for this.
- If you’re worried about the security of your home, let us know. In some cases we may be able to put on extra locks.
- If someone’s broken in and damaged anything you should let the police know and get a crime reference number as you may be able to claim on your contents insurance. If you have no insurance you may be re-charged for the cost of the repair.
- If the police force entry to your property with a warrant you will have to pay for any damage they cause.

WE NEED TO KNOW:
- What the problem is, such as: lock stiff; lock or handle broken; door sticking, not closing properly or damaged?
- Which door it is: front, back or side? Is it a shared entrance? What type of lock or latch has it got? Can you still lock the door?
- What it is made of: wood, plastic (upvc) or composite?
- If glass, what type it is: plain, frosted or wired? Is it double glazed?
- What type of lock it is: mortice, cylinder mortice, rim lock, multi-point or cylinder rim nightlatch (Yale or Union)?
**WHAT YOU MUST DO:**

- Try to clear blocked baths, basins, sinks, toilets or shower trays.
- Clear blockages or repair leaks from washing machines or dishwashers.
- Keep drainage gully grids clean and get rid of leaves and rubbish.
- Clean waste pipes and drains from time to time to stop them getting blocked.

**ADVICE:**

- A blocked waste pipe is *not* an emergency repair. You must try to clear it yourself before calling us. See Handy hints on page 41.
- A blocked toilet is *only* an emergency repair if you have no other toilet.
- Keep your waste pipes and drains clear by flushing them from time to time with hot water. See Handy Hints on page 41.
- Don’t pour fat or oil down sinks, toilets or outside drains.
- If a blockage is caused by things like nappies, air fresheners, condoms or tampons you will have to pay for clearing it.

**WE NEED TO KNOW:**

- What the problem is, such as: waste pipe or trap blocked or leaking; drain smelling or blocked, gully blocked or grid missing?
- If a waste pipe, which is it: bath, basin, sink, shower or toilet?
- If a waste pipe is blocked: is more than one fitting blocked, or if you live in a flat are any other flats having a problem?
- If the drain is blocked: is it overflowing?
- If a drainage gully grid: is it round or square? What's it made of: metal or plastic?
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Drains and Wastes

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Smoke Detector
Test Button
Fuses
Mains Switch

Fuse Box
Test Button
Mains Switch

Consumer Unit
Trip Switches
RCD

Extractor Fan
Starter
Diffuser

Fluorescent Strip Light
Batten Lampholders

Pendant Lampholders

Bulkhead Light
Light with Closed Cover

Light

Cooker Control

Double Socket
Single Socket
Fused Switch
Spur Outlet
Double Switch
Single Switch

Sockets
Switches

Repairs Handbook
**ELECTRICS**

**WHAT YOU MUST DO:**
- Put trip switches back on and turn off your electricity if you need to. See Handy Hints on page 43.
- Put in new light bulbs and fluorescent tubes (except in kitchen and bathroom lights with closed covers) and put in TV aerial sockets.
- Test and clean any smoke or carbon monoxide detectors we've put in. See Handy Hints on page 45.

**ADVICE:**
- Don't touch bare wires.
- Don't touch sockets or switches with wet hands. Also, if water is leaking onto anything electrical or any electrical fitting, don't use or touch any switches connected to it. Let us know straight away.
- Make sure you know where the trip switches are and make sure you know how to put them on and off. See Handy Hints on page 43.
- Don't take off, change or add any electrical fitting without our permission.
- If you've caused any damage or you call us out when you haven't put enough credit in your meter, you will have to pay for this.

**WE NEED TO KNOW:**
- What the problem is, such as: no lights or power in part of, or the whole property; light or light switch isn't working; socket loose or broken?
- Are other homes having the same problem?
- What type of fitting or socket is it?
- Has it caused any other problems to you or others?
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Stairs and Wooden Floor

Types of Stairs

Solid Floor (concrete)

Floor (chipboard)
## FLOORS AND STAIRS

### WHAT YOU MUST DO:
- Look after floor coverings we have supplied.
- Look after any floor covering you’ve put down.

### ADVICE:
- We’ll put down dust sheets so that your furniture and carpets don’t get dirty when we work. If we tell you that you need to lift your floor covering you should do this before the tradesman arrives.
- If you put carpets down it’s a good idea to use gripper rods. This makes it easier for you to lift them for repairs. If you stick floor covering down and it needs to be lifted to carry out a repair or essential work, such as new central heating, the Council will not be responsible for any damage caused when you lift it.
- If you, a member of your family, a visitor or a pet damage anything and we have to repair it, you will have to pay for this.

### WE NEED TO KNOW:
- **What the problem is, such as:** floorboard or skirting loose or damaged; stair tread or riser broken; handrail or banister loose or broken.
- **What is the floor made of:** floorboards, chipboard or concrete?
- **What type of floor covering is it, for example:** quarry tiles (what colour?), vinyl tiles or slip resistant flooring? Is it in a shared area?
- **How many boards, panels or tiles need to be looked at?**
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Hand Latch
Automatic Latch
Sneck
Barrel Bolt

Garden Catches

‘T’ Hinge
Hook and Band Hinge
Hook Hinge

Wooden Gate

Hinges

Chain Link
Ranch Style
Knee Rail

Metal Gate

Arris Rail

Palisade
Close Boarded
Post and Wire
Privacy Panel
GARDENS

WHAT YOU MUST DO:
• Look after any sheds you’ve put up or which have been left in your garden.
• Look after any fences not put up by us.
• Look after any garden paths not put in by us, and other garden items like decking, unless they’re in shared areas.
• Put up new clothes lines or rotary driers, unless in a shared area.

ADVICE:
• If someone’s broken in or damaged anything, you should tell the police and get a crime reference number, as you may be able to claim on your contents insurance. If you have no insurance you may be re-charged for the repair.
• Don’t grow anything near or next to your outside walls. This can cause problems with the brickwork and make your house damp.
• If you, a member of your family, a visitor or a pet damage anything and we have to repair it you will have to pay for this.

WE NEED TO KNOW:
• What the problem is, such as: fence loose or broken; gate not opening or closing properly; gate catch missing, path uneven or cracked?
• If a fence, what type is it, for example: close boarded, palisade, post and wire or other type? How much is affected?
• If a gate: is it wooden or metal? If wooden, is it close boarded or palisade type?
• If a post: is it wooden, metal or concrete?
• If a path, which path is it? What is it made of, for example: slabs, concrete or tarmac?
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Drainage Gully Grids

Gutter Profiles

Half-round
Deep-flow
Square
Ogee
GUTTERS

WHAT YOU MUST DO:
• Clear all rubbish and leaves from your drainage gully grids.

ADVICE:
• We need to put up scaffolding for some repairs.
• In bad weather tradesmen can’t work high up on ladders, scaffolding or on the roof because it is not safe.
• If you, a member of your family, a visitor or a pet damage anything and we have to repair it you will have to pay for this.

WE NEED TO KNOW:
• What the problem is, such as: gutter or down pipe loose, broken, leaking or blocked; bracket, joint or shoe loose or broken?
• Which gutter or down pipe is it: front, back or side?
• What is the gutter or down pipe made of: metal, plastic or concrete?
• Has it caused any other problems?
• Are any other homes having the same problem?
• What shape is the gutter: half-round, deep-flow or square? What colour is it?
• If a drainage gully grid: is it round or square? What is it made of: metal or plastic?
• How many floors does your building have?
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HEATING

WHAT YOU MUST DO:

• If you smell gas contact The National Gas Emergency Provider immediately on 0800 111 999. See Emergencies on page 3.

• Get your own things like heaters and cookers fitted and looked after by trained engineers.

• Keep your home properly heated to stop pipes from freezing or bursting in cold weather. Let in fresh air to try to stop condensation.

ADVICE:

• If your heating isn’t working at all and it’s winter, we’ll come out on the day you call us if you are elderly, vulnerable or have children under 2 years of age. For all other tenants we aim to be out as soon as possible but it may take between 24 and 48 hours. If we haven’t been able to fix it by the end of the day, we’ll give you an electric fan heater to use until your heating is fixed properly, unless you have other heating.

• If a radiator is leaking or loose because you’ve been decorating you will have to pay for this.

• If you have a pre-paid meter try to not let it run out as you may have problems relighting your boiler.

WE NEED TO KNOW:

• What the problem is, such as: central heating not working; no hot water; radiator leaking or not getting warm, fire or heater not working?

• What type of heating is it: gas, electric or solid fuel? Does it have a boiler?

• Do you have any other heating or ways to heat your water, like an electric immersion heater or solar panels?

• If a radiator: is it warm at the bottom and cold at the top?
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## KITCHENS

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**Worktops**

- Jointed Worktop
- Mitred Worktop

**Hinges**

- Flush Hinge
- Butt Hinge

**Doors**

- Door Knob
- ‘D’ Handle

**Pipes**

- Drainer
- Tiled Splashback
- Sink Top

**Additional Components**

- Handle
- Plinth
- Pull Strip
- Shelf
- Drawer Front
- Drawer Runner
- Door Hinge
- End Panel
- Adjuster Feet
- Edging Strip

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**WHAT YOU MUST DO:**

- Put in your own washing machine, dishwasher or tumble drier, and any wastes, pipes and vents if they're not already there. See [Advice](#) below.
- Clear your washing machine or dishwasher pipes if they are blocked.
- Repair any kitchen cupboards you’ve put in.
- Tighten up loose handles on kitchen cupboards.

**ADVICE:**

- If we have to put in new kitchen cupboards or other things like a worktop, drawer or door, we’ll try to match the colour if we can.
- If you put in a washing machine, dishwasher or tumble dryer, you must look after any water supply, waste or vent connections that you have fitted to them.
- If you, a member of your family, a visitor or a pet damage anything and we have to repair it, you will have to pay for this.

**WE NEED TO KNOW:**

- **What the problem is, such as:** wall or floor cupboard loose or broken; worktop loose or broken; cupboard door or drawer broken; cupboard hinge or catch broken.
- **What type of cupboard is it:** wall or floor? Is it a tall one or a corner cupboard? Is it a single or a double cupboard?
- **If wall tiles, what shape, size and colour are they?**
- **If a door hinge,** does it open right back against the cupboard or only half way?
PIPES AND TAPS

WHAT YOU MUST DO:

• Try to make sure pipes don’t freeze or burst in cold weather, especially if you’re away from home. See Advice below.

• Fit all pipes for your washing machine and/or dishwasher, if they’re not already there.

ADVICE:

• You should know where your stoptap is so that you can turn the water off in an emergency.

• If water is leaking onto anything electrical, don’t touch it. Turn off the electricity at your consumer unit (or fuse board). See Handy Hints on page 43.

• If water leaks from your washing machine or dishwasher, we’ll charge you for repairing any damage. You may be able to get this money back on your Home Contents Insurance. See Home Contents Insurance on page 2.

• If you’re away from home and the weather is cold, you should leave your heating on low. This stops water freezing in pipes.

WE NEED TO KNOW:

• What the problem is, such as: no water; hot water coming out cold; pipe leaking or burst; overflow running; tap dripping.

• If water is leaking into your property: is it coming from the flat above? What’s the address? Are there any other problems?

• If no water: do your neighbours have water?
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**ROOFS**

**WHAT YOU MUST DO:**

- Seek our permission to put up TV aerials and satellite dishes. If you live in a flat you will also need planning permission to install a satellite dish.
- Look after any aerial or satellite dish you put up. See Advice below.

**ADVICE:**

- We may need to put up scaffolding but when the weather’s bad tradesmen can’t work high up.
- If anything electrical is getting wet because the roof is leaking, don’t use any of these switches and let us know straight away.
- If you want to put up an aerial or satellite dish we must agree in writing first. You might also need to get planning permission.

**WE NEED TO KNOW:**

- **What the problem is, such as:** roof leaking; tiles or slates loose or broken; chimney pot fallen or loose; chimney stack crumbling? (We only expect you to tell us about what you can see from the ground.)
- **What type of roof covering is it, for example:** slate, tiles, corrugated sheeting, flat felting, asphalt or fibreglass fitted covering?
- **If tiles, what type are they, for example:** flat, ridge, interlocking, hip or verge? What colour are they?
- **How many floors does your home have?**
- **Is the chimney shared with another home?**
- **What's the address?**
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TOILET CISTERN

Close-coupled
Flush Panel
Low-level Cisterns
Standard
High-level Cistern
TOILETS

WHAT YOU MUST DO:
• Try to clear blocked toilets. See Handy Hints on page 41.

ADVICE:
• A blocked toilet is only an emergency repair if you have no other toilet.
• If your cistern doesn’t flush, this isn’t an emergency. You should pour water into it until it’s fixed.
• We’ll charge you for clearing blockages caused by things like nappies, wet wipes, air fresheners, condoms or tampons.
• Please clean and clear your toilet from time to time using cleaning products. Always do what it says on the label.
• If you, a member of your family, a visitor or a pet damage anything and we have to repair it, you will have to pay for this.
• If we put in, for example, a new toilet which is part of a matching set, it will always be white regardless of the colour of the other items of the suite. We will not replace the whole suite just because one item is a different colour.

WE NEED TO KNOW:
• What the problem is, such as: toilet blocked; overflow running; cistern leaking; pan cracked or leaking; flush handle or chain loose or broken.
• What type of cistern is it: high level or low level? If low level is it a flush panel, close coupled or standard type? Does it have an overflow pipe?
• What type of handle is it: lever handle, push down knob or chain?
• If your toilet’s blocked and you live in a block of flats, are any other flats having problems?
WALLS AND CEILINGS

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WALLS AND CEILINGS

WHAT YOU MUST DO:

- Fill small cracks and holes.
- Make sure water doesn’t stay around because this might turn into damp and mould.
- Keep air vents and extractor fan vents clear and use the fan (if you have one).

ADVICE:

- If you fix things to the wall you must take them down and fill in all the holes if you move out.
- If you want to put a satellite dish on your outside wall you must get our agreement in writing first. You may need to get planning permission as well.
- If you, a member of your family, a visitor or a pet damage anything and we have to repair it, you will have to pay for this.
- Don’t grow anything near, up or next to your outside walls. This can cause problems with the brickwork and make your home damp.

WE NEED TO KNOW:

- What the problem is, such as: plaster loose, crumbling or bulging; condensation or mould on walls or ceiling; outside cladding falling off.
- Is there any damage caused by water leaking?
- If an inside wall, what is it made of: plasterboard or brick?
- If an outside wall, what is it made of: brick, tiling or concrete blocks? Does it have a covering? If so what type is it: rough cast, cladding boards or timber boards.
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WINDOWS

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UPVC Window (with casement or multi-point fastener)

Pivot Window
Sliding Sash
Top-hung

Lockable UPVC Handle
Casement Fastener

Release Tab
Child Restrictor
Multi-point Fastener

Cill
Friction Hinge

Trickle Vent
Side-hung Casement
Locking Handle

Casement Window
WINDOWS

WHAT YOU MUST DO:
• Keep window trickle vents clear and use them to stop condensation.

ADVICE:
• If there’s been vandalism or a break in, you should let the police know and get a crime reference number as you may be able to claim on your contents insurance. If you have no insurance you may be re-charged for the cost of the repair.
• If you, a member of your family, a visitor or a pet cause damage and we have to repair it, you will have to pay for this.

WE NEED TO KNOW:
• What the problem is, such as: glass cracked or broken; frame loose or jammed; stay or fastener broken?
• What type of frame is it: wooden or plastic (upvc)?
• What style of window is it: casement, sliding sash, pivot or top hung?
• If glass, what type is it, for example: plain or frosted? Is it double glazed?
• If a fastener, what type is it, for example: multi-point, casement or other type?
• If a child restrictor, where is it: on the bottom of the frame, the side of the frame, or on the window itself?
• Has it caused any other problems?
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**CLEARING A BLOCKED WASTE**

- Resetting a Trip Switch
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**Unblocking a Basin or Sink**
- Plunger

**Unblocking a Toilet**
- Plunger
- Brush

**‘P’ Trap**
- Compression Joint
- Unscrew here to clean

**Bottle Trap**
- Bottle
- Unscrew here to clean
CLEARING A BLOCKED WASTE

GENERAL ADVICE:

• Blocked basins and sinks are usually caused by waste in the trap: fat, tea leaves, hair, cooking oil, etc.

• If water is slow draining away we advise you to clear wastepipes and traps with a cleaning product. Always follow the instructions carefully. Don’t use caustic soda because it breaks down the plastic of the pipes.

• The trap always holds water which stops smells coming up the drain but waste can build up in the trap and become stuck.

• If more than one fitting (bath, basin, sink or shower) is blocked, the blockage may be in the soil stack or main drain. This will need to be cleared by us.

• Blocked toilets are usually caused by unusual objects: nappies, toys, wet wipes or toilet fresheners. You must not use toilets to get rid of rubbish.

WHAT TO DO

You will need:

• A bowl or bucket.

• A jug or cup to use as a scoop.

• A cloth.

• A plunger – for the toilet you can use a toilet brush.

• Rubber gloves.

TO UNBLOCK A BATH, BASIN OR SINK:

• Scoop out most of the water.

• Hold the cloth tightly over the overflow opening.

• Put the plunger over the plug hole and pump it up and down quickly.

TO UNBLOCK A TOILET:

• If the pan is already full, take out some of the water using a scoop, for example a jug or cup, and put it into a bucket.

• Push the brush or plunger to the bottom of the pan.

• Pump it up and down quickly about 10 times. This should shift the blockage.

• Flush the toilet to see whether the blockage has gone.

You may need to do this more than once before the toilet flushes normally. If you still have problems, you should contact us.

After you have finished, wash your hands and everything you have used thoroughly.
If your lights or power go off, it means your trip switches are working properly. You can find out what caused the problem and sort it out quite easily.

**Resetting a Trip Switch**

About Your Smoke Detector

Preventing Burst Pipes
GENERAL ADVICE:
• Modern electric circuits are fitted with circuit breakers called trip switches. If there’s a problem with your electrics, a switch is tripped and the circuit is broken.
• All of the fuses or trip switches are located in the consumer unit or fuse box. Some consumer units have buttons rather than switches.
• A trip switch or button usually operates because:
  • There are too many appliances on a circuit and it’s overloaded.
  • An appliance is faulty or hasn’t been used properly, for example a kettle has been over-filled or a toaster not cleaned.
  • Water has leaked into a circuit or spilt onto a plug.
  • A light bulb has blown.
  • There’s a problem with your immersion heater.
  • Always have a torch handy if you have a power cut.
  • If there’s a problem with one of your electrical appliances, leave it unplugged and get a qualified electrician or service engineer to check it.
  • If there’s a problem with your wall or ceiling light, keep it switched off (put some tape over the switch) and let us know straight away.
  • Make sure your hands are dry when you touch electrical fittings.

TO RESET A TRIP SWITCH:
This advice is only for modern consumer units. If you have an older ‘fuse box’ type with rewirable cartridges, don’t touch it and contact us immediately.
• Open the lid on the consumer unit so that you can get to the trip switches/buttons.
• Check which switches/buttons have tripped to the OFF position and which rooms (circuits) have problems.
• Put these switches/buttons back to the ON position.

If the trip goes again, it’s probably being caused by a problem with one of your appliances or lights. You need to find out which circuit it is and which appliance on that circuit is causing the problem:
• Check all the rooms and check which set of lights or sockets is not working
• Unplug all appliances on that problem circuit and switch off the immersion heater
• Switch the ‘tripped’ switch to the ON position (press in if it’s a button)
• Plug in the appliances or switch on each light one at a time until the trip goes again. Don’t use adapters or multiplug extensions when testing appliances.
• If the trip switch goes after you have done this contact us.
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Any property that has been re-wired since 2007 will have smoke alarms that are connected to the main electricity wiring. All our other properties will have battery operated smoke alarms but these will gradually be phased out.
ABOUT YOUR SMOKE DETECTOR

IF THE ALARM GOES OFF:
• Take your family to where it’s easy to escape in case there’s a fire.
• Check all rooms for signs of smoke.
• Feel around each door before opening it. If there’s any sign of heat, smoke or noise, don’t open the door.

IF A FIRE HAS BROKEN OUT:
• Don’t try to put it out yourself. Smoke and fumes can kill in minutes.
• Get everyone out of the house and call the fire service (999) unless you live in a scheme where there is a ‘stay put’ procedure.
• Don’t go back for any reason.

IF THERE IS NO SIGN OF SMOKE OR FIRE
Something may have made the alarm go off by mistake and you may need to reset it. This can happen if:
• A heater or clothes drier is too near it.
• Someone smokes a cigarette or pipe near it or a spray is used near it.
• There’s too much steam or fumes from cooking; roasting meat or burnt toast.
• There are strong draughts from nearby doors or windows.
• Some insects have flown close to it.
• The battery (if any) is low.

If you can’t find out why it’s gone off, contact the repairs team. Never disconnect the alarm. This will put you and your family at risk.

TO RESET THE ALARM:
• If it has a HUSH button, press the button. The alarm will stop for 10 seconds, but it then beeps every 40 seconds. If the problem doesn’t clear after 10 minutes the alarm will keep going
• If there is no HUSH button, turn off the electricity supply at the consumer unit for at least 15 minutes, then switch the electricity back on.

TO TEST YOUR ALARM:
• Press and hold the test button for a few seconds. The alarm should sound.
• If the alarm doesn’t sound, try cleaning it and test again.
• If the alarm still doesn’t sound, contact repairs.

TO CLEAN YOUR ALARM:
• Use the nozzle of your vacuum cleaner to get rid of any dust from the vents.
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PREVENTING BURST PIPES

Stoptap

Gate Valve
PREVENTING BURST PIPES

GENERAL ADVICE:

- Find out where the mains stoptap is and write it down on page 49 of this book.

- Know where the gate valves for the hot and cold water tanks are. They are usually by the hot water and cold water tanks.

- Make sure you can easily turn all the stoptaps and valves. If they are stiff, try applying some WD40 or oil to loosen them. If you’re unsuccessful don’t force the tap but contact us.

- In very cold weather you should take action to prevent a freeze up. If you can, it’s a good idea to leave the heating on all the time on a very low heat.

WHAT TO DO:

If you’re going away for several weeks:

- You should turn off your water supply at the stoptap, turn off your heating or hot water system and turn off your gas supply at the mains. You should also let us know who to contact if there’s a problem while you’re away.

- However, if you go away during cold weather, it’s best to leave everything on and set the heating for an hour each evening on a low temperature. Note, we can drain down the whole system for you but there will be a charge.

FROZEN PIPES:

- Contact us immediately and turn off the water at the main stoptap.

- It’s probably best to leave the pipes frozen but you may try to thaw them using a hot water bottle. **Do not use a blow lamp.**

- If the hot water system is frozen don’t light the boiler (or if it’s already on, turn it off) and turn off any water heaters.

BURST PIPES:

- Contact us immediately and turn off the water at the main stoptap.

- Turn off any water heaters.

- Turn on all taps to drain water from the system. This may take about 15 minutes.

- When the water stops running, turn all the taps off.

- If electrics are getting wet, don’t touch. Turn off electricity at the consumer unit/fuse box.

- If water leaks and makes the ceiling bulge, place a bucket under the bulge in case water leaks through.
**PRIORITY 1 (Emergency or Make Safe Repairs)**

Any repair problem which puts the health, safety or security of you or anyone else at urgent risk or which causes problems to the building.

**Some emergency repairs might be:**
- No water in your home
- Flooding
- Severe storm damage
- No electricity in your home
- Major problems with your electricity
- Unsafe electricity fittings
- Breaches of security to outside doors and windows
- Burst water main
- Blocked flue
- Blocked mains drains, soilpipe
- Blocked WC (if your home only has one WC)
- Loss of heating or hot water for the elderly/ vulnerable
- Offensive or racist graffiti

**PRIORITY 2 (Urgent Repairs)**

Some urgent repairs might be:
- Small plumbing leaks or problems
- Problems with your toilet cistern
- Heating or hot water problems (particularly in the summer)
- Small electrical faults
- Roof leaks
- Blocked gutters
- Security of internal doors and windows
- Door entry phone not working
- Damage to stair treads or hand rails/banisters
- Overflows that cannot be controlled or stopped

**PRIORITY 3 (Routine Repairs)**

Some routine repairs might be:
- General carpentry repairs
- Repairs to outside walls, fences and paths
- Clearing of gutters and downpipes
- Repairs to kitchen fittings
- Repairs to plaster work
- Easing of windows and doors
- External painting

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During the winter months some external repairs, like fencing, may be put on hold until the weather improves.
WHERE IS IT IN YOUR HOME?

Note down where your gas meter, electricity consumer unit and mains water stoptap are.

Gas meter:

Consumer unit (fuse box):

Mains water stoptap:

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS:

National Grid (if you smell gas) 0800 111 999

Repairs hotline (8.30am to 5.00pm) 01536 464646

Repairs (emergency out of hours) 01536 400088