



TENANT HEALTH & SAFETY HANDBOOK

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Introduction

This handbook has been designed to give you information about the actions the Association will take to ensure your home and neighbourhood is a safe place to live. We have also included lots of hints and advice on general home safety which we hope you find both informative and useful.

As a housing provider, the Association must meet and maintain all regulatory standards and requirements to ensure our homes are safe. We do this through routine inspection programmes and by undertaking maintenance works as required (e.g. annual gas safety checks and servicing).

The Association's work is monitored and audited by independent bodies. We also report our performance to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). You can read more about the Association's performance on their website at <https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/>.

Please take some time to read through your handbook. If you have any suggestions on how this handbook can be improved, please provide feedback by contacting a member of our Housing Services staff on 0141 950 9052 or via email at housing@yokerha.org.uk.



Fire Safety

Fire safety in the home - What the Association will do:

- All individual homes have the required levels of smoke and heat alarms installed, appropriate to both the home and the needs of the tenant.
- We will test your smoke and heat detectors when carrying out your annual gas safety check.
- We will test your smoke and heat detectors when carrying out the five-yearly Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) for your property.
- We will carry out regular inspections to common areas to ensure that landings and stairwells are kept clear from obstruction and fire hazards.
- We will test and service fire prevention / suppression equipment fitted within our properties at regular intervals. Such equipment includes sprinkler systems, dry risers and Automatic Opening Vents (AOVs).



Fire safety in the home - What you should do:

- Do not leave chip / food pans unattended.
- Hoover and clean smoke detectors to keep these free from dust.
- Be careful not to overload electrical sockets.
- Use chargers for devices (e.g. mobile phones, laptops etc) supplied by the manufacturer of the device. Cheap replacements increase the risk of fire.
- Unplug chargers when not in use - always unplug them overnight.
- Never leave phones or tablets / laptops on top of a pillow or cushion when they are being charged. This can cause the device to overheat and poses a fire risk.
- Close living room and kitchen doors at night. In the event of a fire this will help to contain smoke and flames giving you more time to escape or call for help.
- Keep matches, candles and lighters out of reach of children.
- Keep portable heaters away from curtains and furniture. Only use portable heaters with a safety cut out device which will turn them off should they fall over.
- Never use portable Calor-gas type heaters. These are NOT permitted in the Association's properties.
- Ensure your furniture is fire retardant, and keep combustibles away from any heat source.
- Arrange for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to carry out a Home Fire Safety Visit. Referral forms can be obtained from the Association's office.



Fire Safety

Fire safety if you live in a tenement or property with a communal stair

If you live in a block with a shared stairwell or other communal areas, there are a few other things you need to think about:



- Keep communal stairs, landings and close cupboards clear of all belongings. It is a legal requirement to keep communal areas clear in accordance with Section 93 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.
- Report issues of fly tipping to Glasgow City Council. Tell your housing officer of any unauthorised storage within communal areas.
- Keep communal doors closed and do not wedge them open as this could affect the security of the block and allow fire to spread more easily. Report issues with door entry systems or any other communal issues promptly.
- If your property is fitted with Automatic Opening Vents (AOVs), do not tamper with or disarm these.
- Keep bin stores tidy and take excess rubbish, unwanted household items to the recycling centre or tip.

Looking after your smoke and heat detectors:

- **Do NOT remove smoke detectors from your property – they are there for your safety and can save your life.**
- Test your smoke and heat detectors weekly by pressing the test button to make sure these are working correctly.
- If your alarm bleeps intermittently, this may indicate a fault with the battery or the alarm unit. You should report intermittent beeping to the Association immediately. A continuous beeping is an activation that requires immediate action to stay safe.
- Never disconnect any detectors that sound by mistake. Report the matter to the Association.
- Vacuum the grill area of the smoke and heat detectors every 12 months.
- Never cover smoke or heat detectors.
- Report issues with any of your detectors to the Association as soon as possible.

What's your plan if a fire occurs in your home?

- Even with care, fires can happen. Fires can spread quickly so you need to have a plan of how you would get out of your home, and make sure that everyone who lives with you, as well as any visitors, are aware of the plan. You should check your escape route regularly to make sure that it's clear.
- You can find an example of a fire escape plan on the Scottish Fire and Rescue web page at: firescotland.gov.uk/at-home/escape-plan/



Fire Safety

If a fire breaks out in your home:

- Close the door of the room where the fire is.
- If possible, get everyone out of the house. If you live in a flat with access to a communal stairwell, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service advise a “stay put” policy if the fire is not in your home as you may get trapped in the stairwell.
- If you need to break a window, the safest way is to break the glass in the bottom corner.
- Call 999 - don't assume that someone else has.
- Warn your neighbours and do **NOT** go back into the property.





Gas Safety

Gas safety in the home - What we will do:

By law, landlords must make sure that all their gas appliances, flues and pipework are safely maintained and checked once a year. This is to ensure your home is safe to live in.

Unless gas appliances are serviced regularly, they can become dangerous and can kill.



- The Association must carry out a service before the anniversary date expires on the previous certificate.
- The Association will arrange for an approved gas contractor to carry out a gas safety check each year. We will take all reasonable steps to get in touch with the tenant to arrange this. These checks are essential for tenant safety and required by law. If we are unable to arrange a suitable appointment time with the tenant, we will implement our forced entry procedures.
- If additional works are identified during the safety check the Association will arrange an appointment to have the repairs carried out.
- Engineers will leave a copy of the gas servicing certificate with the tenants to confirm their boiler has been serviced - please keep this safe. Further copies of gas safety certificates can be requested from the Association.
- We will carry out gas safety checks on all empty homes, and cap the gas if this is required.
- All Association contractors carrying out works in our properties are Gas Safe registered and qualified to do the work.

Gas Safety Checks

- It is important that you keep the appointment given for the annual safety check and service given by the Association. If you can't, please contact the Association to rearrange a suitable appointment.
- If you have a prepayment meter please make sure you have enough credit available on your electric and gas meters to allow our gas engineers to complete the gas safety check.
- Ensure you have cleared the area surrounding your boiler to enable the contractor easy access to the boiler.



Gas Safety

Staying gas safe - Your appliances

If you live in a flat, the law requires that any new gas cooker has a flame supervision device fitted to shut off the supply of gas and prevent an explosion or a fire in the event that the flame is extinguished. Any new gas cooker you have fitted must be fitted by a Gas Safe qualified engineer.

Tenants are not permitted to install gas fires in their property. Any works to the gas system must be approved in writing by the Association before they are carried out.

If you suspect any problems with your gas appliance, please call the repairs line on 0141 950 9051.



Gas Cookers

All gas cookers must be fitted with a stability bracket. At each annual service a gas engineer will check that they have been fitted correctly.

The gas inspection will look at all gas appliances in your home to check they are working correctly. We shall repair any appliance that we own such as boilers or fires. If there is a problem with an appliance that belongs to you, we will not carry out any repairs. Our contractor may fix a warning label to your appliance to warn you that it's not safe to use. It is illegal to remove this label and use the appliance until it has been made safe to use.

You are responsible for arranging any repairs that are necessary to your own appliance.

If you think you have a Gas Leak

- Open all doors and windows.
- Do not use any electrical items or switches.
- If any gas appliances have been left on, turn them off
- If the pilot light is still on and your gas appliances are all off, there may be a leak.
- Turn off the gas at the gas meter.
- Call Scottish Gas Network (SGN) immediately on 0800 111 999.



Carbon Monoxide

What is Carbon Monoxide?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas that can make you seriously ill if you breathe it in. Carbon monoxide can be made by fires and appliances that burn gas, wood, oil or coal. Carbon monoxide gas is colourless and does not smell, so you cannot tell if it is around you.



Carbon Monoxide - What we will do:

- We will ensure homes with gas heating appliances are fitted with a carbon monoxide detector and appropriate ventilation.
- We will test your carbon monoxide detector during your annual gas service visit.
- We will test your carbon monoxide detector when carrying out the five-yearly Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) for your property.
- We will respond to reports of a carbon monoxide alarm activation as an emergency and if required replace the detector. Depending on the situation, a member of staff or contractor may attend the property to carry out an inspection to assess the fault.

What you can do to keep yourself safe:

- **Do NOT remove carbon monoxide detectors from your property – they are there for your safety and can save your life.**
- Report issues or activations promptly.
- Do not cover vents, they are there to ensure effective ventilation to prevent build-up of fumes.
- If your alarm beeps intermittently, this may indicate a fault with the battery or the alarm unit. You should report intermittent beeping to the Association immediately. A continuous beeping is an activation that requires immediate action to stay safe.
- If your alarm beeps intermittently, this may indicate a fault with the battery or the alarm unit. You should report intermittent beeping to the Association immediately.
- Contact the Association as soon as possible if you experience any issues with your carbon monoxide detector.
- If your alarm activates, switch off all gas appliances immediately and open all windows to ventilate, leave the property and move to a well-ventilated area, report the matter to Scottish Gas Network (SGN) on 0800 111 999 and seek medical assistance.



Carbon Monoxide

If your carbon monoxide alarm activates:

- Switch off gas appliances immediately.
- Open all windows to ventilate.
- Leave the property.
- Call Scottish Gas Network (SGN) 0800 111 999.
- Seek medical assistance.
- Report the matter to the Association.





Electrical Safety

What The Association is doing to keep you safe:

- Every 5 years we carry out an electrical safety check of your home and promptly undertake any works identified during the check.
- Every 5 years we carry out communal electrical safety checks for all blocks and promptly undertake any works identified during the check.
- We carry out a electrical safety check for all void properties and ensure that any required works completed prior to the property being let.
- We maintain a register of all electrical checks carried out to ensure the effective management and monitoring of the electrical safety process.
- We ensure that any contractor carrying out works in the Association's homes are properly qualified to carry out the works required.



We need to carry out regular electrical checks (EICR) and tests because electrical installations deteriorate due to issues such as damage, wear and tear, corrosion, excessive electrical loading, ageing and environmental influences.

Electricity is a major cause of fire. Electricity can also cause injury such as electric shock, burns and falls.

What you can do to keep yourself safe:

- Give access for all electrical safety checks.
- Ensure your main electrical board is clear of belongings and easily accessible at all times.
- Do not overload power circuits with multiple extension cables.
- Do not attempt to carry out any electrical works yourself.
- Switch off chargers and electrical items when not in use and check for overheating.



Mould and Damp

Did you know?

- Through breathing alone, a family of four can add moisture to the air that is the equivalent to 30 to 40 litres (53 to 70 pints) of water a week.
- Drying clothes indoors can add 10 to 15 litres (18 to 26 pints) of water a week.
- Showering, cooking, bathing and washing can add 15 to 20 litres (26 to 35 pints) of water a week.

Types of Damp

Penetrating damp

This is caused by rainwater penetrating through the external structure and is usually recognisable by a damp patch or discolouration on the internal wall, or flaking paint or wallpaper. Some examples of common causes and signs to look out for are broken or blocked gutters or downpipes, or damaged roofs. Mould may begin to grow.



Rising damp

This is less common than penetrating damp as most homes have damp proof coursing (DPC) to prevent rising damp occurring. However this can fail or be breached due to debris in the cavity, or the external ground level being raised above the DPC level. Signs of rising damp are similar to those of penetrating damp, but it usually only affects basement and ground floor rooms.

Both penetrating damp and rising damp will require remedial works to be carried out.



Mould and Damp

Defective Plumbing

This usually relates to issues such as leaking pipes, wastes or overflows. Plumbing defects usually look and feel damp to the touch and remain damp whatever the weather conditions.



Condensation

This is created by high levels of moisture in the air. Condensation is the most likely cause of any damp problems occurring in the home, and appears as pinpoint black spots.

Tips for keeping your home free of damp and mould:

- Dry clothes outside if you can. If drying inside, put them in the bathroom with the door closed and window open or extractor fan switched on. Any tumble drier vents should go outside (unless it's self-condensing dryer).
- Keep furniture away from walls, particularly external walls to allow air to circulate around them. Allow room behind wardrobes and cupboards for the circulation of air.
- Keep lids on pans when cooking, and don't allow kettles to boil for longer than you need to. When bathing or cooking, use any extractor fans you have and open windows to remove the excess moisture from the air.
- Keep the doors closed to stop moisture travelling through your home. Very cold rooms encourage mould to grow. It's recommended that you don't allow the temperature in your home to fall below 14°C.
- Use trickle vents if you have them and dry your windows.

You should report any signs of water ingress, mould, dampness or condensation as soon as possible so that issue can be addressed and rectified.



Water Safety

There are several water-borne bacteria / diseases, but the most well known is Legionnaires' disease (legionella) which is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia, caused by infected water droplets / mist. This disease can affect anybody, but mainly affects those who are more vulnerable because of age, illness, immunosuppression or smoking. It can be present in stagnant water taps or unused pipework, water tanks and shower heads. Breathing in small droplets of contaminated water is how the legionella bacteria infect your lungs.



What the Association is doing to keep you safe:

- Carry out cyclical water inspections to communal water tanks where required. This may require access to your property to access the communal tank. Any resulting works found during these checks will be undertaken promptly.
- During the empty homes process we will clean and disinfect shower hoses and shower heads. We will also replace shower curtains (if fitted) prior to a property being allocated.
- Ensure that any contractors undertaking works in the Association's properties are properly trained / qualified to undertake the work required.
- The cold water supply to all our properties is provided directly from the mains and therefore no cold water is stored within tanks. This means that the chance of legionella is kept to a minimum.
- The hot water supply to most of our properties is supplied through high efficient combi boilers that do not require water to be stored. This means that the chance of legionella is kept to a minimum.

What you can do to keep yourself safe:

- Ensure you run water through all your taps and showerheads regularly. Do not allow water to stagnate e.g. when water outlets are not in regular use.
- Unscrew your showerhead and hose regularly and immerse in disinfectant for a couple of minutes.
- If you are away from your home for more than 48 hours, upon your return, run all taps and water outlets at a high temperature for at least 2 minutes.
- When you get back from a longer holiday or break, you should run water through all your taps and showerheads for at least 5 minutes and immerse your shower head in disinfectant for 10 minutes.



Asbestos Safety

Asbestos is a strong, durable, non-inflammable fibre widely used for reinforcing many materials in buildings prior to 1999. It was also a good insulator, so it was used extensively to protect building structures from fire and excessive heat. Because of its many uses, materials containing asbestos can be found in all types of buildings, especially those built between 1950 and 1999 and was widely used in the construction and refurbishment of homes.



If asbestos remains mixed, bound or sealed with other materials and not disturbed it does not pose a safety risk. However, if asbestos is disturbed and fibres are released, long-term serious health risks can occur as a result of people breathing in air that contains asbestos fibres.

What the Association is doing to keep you safe:

- We have carried out surveys of our stock to identify, monitor and maintain asbestos in these areas.
- Where major works are required we assess the asbestos information we have for the property and where required carry out a further asbestos survey to ensure as far as possible asbestos is identified and taken into account when planning.
- Where day to day repairs are required we provide the Association's contractors with the associated asbestos information for that property.
- We ensure that contractors are suitably qualified to undertake work relating to asbestos.
- We maintain a register of all asbestos identified and assumed and where removals have taken place to ensure the effective management and monitoring of the asbestos safety process.
- If your home is known to have, or is at risk of having asbestos, we will let you know, and will tell you what you need to do to either ensure asbestos is not disturbed or have it removed.

What you can do to keep yourself safe:

Contact us before undertaking DIY work which would disturb the fabric of the building. Standard decorative works, such as scraping wallpaper or painting, is perfectly safe. You must however call us in advance of carrying out any work if you plan to:

- Remove, sand, drill or scrape any artex coatings to surfaces.
- Drill (other than minor work, for example to put up a picture frame or a hook).

If you think you may have found asbestos in your home, you should report the matter to us without delay. Please ensure the material is not disturbed.



Safety in Communal Areas

Communal safety is important to reduce unwanted access to the block. Communal areas (internal and external) should also be kept free from hazards which could cause injury, fire or create an obstruction in the event of an emergency.

The Association's staff carry out regular estate management inspections to the common parts of our properties. If you have any health and safety concerns, please report them to a member of Housing Services staff as soon as possible.



What the Association will do to keep you safe:

- Where blocks are fitted with door entry systems these will be maintained to ensure they are in good working order.
- Carry out visual inspections of the blocks to identify and remove hazards.
- Provide a bin store for household day to day rubbish.
- Provide a bulk pull-through service to ensure that bulk items which pose a fire or safety hazard are removed from the Association's properties.

What you can do to keep yourself safe:

- Only 'buzz in' people you know or are expecting where a door entry system is fitted to avoid unwanted access to the block.
- Keep communal passageways, landings free from obstruction to avoid trip and fire hazards.
- Keep communal electrical cupboards or other areas clear at all times (e.g. under stairs clear).
- Report issues of fly tipping to Glasgow City Council 0141 287 1058. Unauthorised storage, issues with door entry systems and any other communal issues should be reported to the Association promptly.
- Keep communal doors closed and do not wedge them open as this could compromise the security of the block and / or allow fire to spread more easily.
- Keep bin stores tidy and take excess rubbish or unwanted household items to the recycling centre or refuse disposal facility.