

TENANT HANDBOOK

A Guide to Your New Home

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Welcome to your new home!

We try our best to make sure that everything goes smoothly however, if you do experience any problems or maintenance issues please let us know.

Management of your Property

Your Landlord has instructed Atkinson McLeod to manage your rental property on their behalf. Should you have any queries in relation to the property after signing your tenancy agreement you should contact the Property Management team directly and not the lettings consultant who arranged your tenancy. The Property Management team can be contacted at the following details:

E-mail: propertymanagement@atkinsonmcleod.com

Address for Service of Notices

Notices or other written requests may be sent or served on the Landlord by email to:

propertymanagement@atkinsonmcleod.com

or by post to:

Atkinson McLeod Limited, 45 Westferry Road, London E14 8JH

Need To Report a Repair?

Please email:

propertymanagement@atkinsonmcleod.com

The Property Management Department is available from 9.30am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

Please take time to read through this handbook before calling. If you do have an emergency, there is an emergency guide and a number of helpful tips inside to assist you.



Your Responsibilities as a Tenant

Your landlord is responsible for repairs and maintenance of the exterior and the structure of the property, as well as the plumbing, wiring and central heating. During a tenancy, tenants are expected to act in a 'tenant like manner' which basically that means that you should do all the little things you would take care of in the property if you were a homeowner. This would include carrying out minor repairs as they arise and covers things such as re-pressurising your boiler, unblocking drains, tightening screws, changing fuses and filters, and giving access to contractors for repairs and maintenance.

As a tenant you must:

- report any repairs needed in a timely manner
- make sure your home is well ventilated (to help avoid condensation and damp)
- do minor maintenance (such as check smoke alarms are working, change light bulbs and fuses)
- dispose of your rubbish properly
- You must not damage internal decorations, furniture and equipment. You'll have to pay for anything you've broken or damaged.

Joint tenancies

A Joint and Several Tenancy is created where two or more adults reside in a property who have signed a single agreement for the same period of time. Living with other people as joint tenants means each person has full use of the property and equal rights under the tenancy. You are all responsible for the whole rent, even if someone moves out. If one person stops paying the rent you will have to cover their share.

Appointing a Lead Tenant

You will all have to agree to appoint one person to act as the lead tenant. This lead tenant will be responsible for all communication relating to the tenancy including repairs, deposit and any general enquiries you might have.



Useful Information

Inventory / Schedule of Condition

If your Landlord has elected for us to arrange for an Inventory to be compiled, a copy will be supplied to you within the first few days of your tenancy. Please check this document thoroughly and submit any comments to the Property Management Department within ten working days of receipt. This document will be used to calculate any deductions from your deposit at the end of the tenancy (allowing for fair wear and tear).

Utilities

To ensure continuous supply of utility services you must contact the relevant utility providers and local authority to set up accounts as soon as you move in to the property. Under the terms of your agreement, it is your responsibility to obtain meter readings both at the commencement and termination of your tenancy. You must provide these readings to the relevant utility providers and request that services are transferred into your name. Bills for your landlord's attention should be sent c/o Atkinson Mcleod, 45 Westferry Road, London E14 8JH.

In order to determine who your utility providers are please contact:

Council Tax

Please contact your local council to register for council tax

<https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

Gas - 0870 608 1524

<https://www.findmysupplier.energy/webapp/index.html>

Electricity - 0845 601 4516

<https://www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/internet/en/help-and-advice/who-is-my-supplier/>

Water

<https://www.water.org.uk/advice-for-customers/find-your-supplier/>

Communal Utilities

Some newer developments have communal utility systems in place for mains water, heating and hot water or heating and cooling systems.

In these cases, you are responsible for bill payments for the duration of your tenancy. You may be required to set up an account directly with the provider but in some cases, utilities will be billed via your Landlord. If unsure, please ask the on-site porter or building manager in the first instance.



Telephone, Television & Internet

If you wish to set up telephone, internet or television services you may arrange this with the provider of your choice, and you do not need to request permission to do so.

All related costs including set-up, installation and maintenance of these services remains your responsibility throughout the tenancy. You will need to ensure services are disconnected and all installations and fittings are removed prior to the end of your tenancy otherwise, you may be held liable for any related costs including removal, making good and decoration.

Television License

If there is a television in the property, whether it be yours or your Landlord's, you will be responsible for obtaining a television license.

Leaving the property vacant

If you intend to leave the property for any significant time during the tenancy (28 days or longer), you should check the terms of your tenancy, advise Atkinson Mcleod and make arrangements for the property to be checked on a regular basis so as not to invalidate the landlord's insurance policy. You may wish to leave contact details in case of emergency. (Please also see section 'Frost Precaution')

Insurance

You should insure your own personal belongings and contents as these will not be covered under the landlord's insurance policy.

Post

Any post that you receive apart from your landlords should be returned to sender. Landlord mail can be forwarded to Atkinson Mcleod, 45 Westferry Road, London E14 8JH.



Day to Day Property Care

You are responsible for the care of the property you are renting. If you have any problems which you do not think are your responsibility you have a duty to advise Atkinson McLeod of these as soon as possible. You are responsible for minor repairs such as re-pressurising your boiler, unblocking drains, tightening screws, changing fuses and filters etc.

Inspections

Your Landlord and/or Atkinson McLeod may wish to inspect the property from time to time. We will give you 24-48 hours' notice of when we intend to visit (except in case of emergency). If you are absent from the property during the day you must ensure that we are able to gain access to all parts of the property.

Payment of Rent

Your rent is payable by standing to the account below – it is advisable to set up your standing order to leave your account up 2-4 days before your rental due date to allow enough time for funds to clear. It is your responsibility to check that the standing order is set up correctly prior to the first rental payment debiting your account.

IBAN Code	GB35MIDL40061511399713
BIC Code	MIDLGB 22
Account Number	11399713
Sort Code	40-06-15
Account Name	Atkinson McLeod Client Account
Bank	HSBC Bank
Branch Title	Sloane Square



SAFETY REGULATIONS

Gas Safety Regulations

Under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998, landlords' are required to make sure gas appliances, fittings and flues provided for tenants are safe.

Your Landlord is responsible for ensuring an annual gas safety check is carried out within 12 months of the installation of a new appliance or flue and annually thereafter by a Gas Safe Registered engineer. If the annual inspection becomes due during the term of your tenancy, Atkinson Mcleod or your Landlord will arrange for a Gas Safe Engineer to attend the property and carry out an inspection under these regulations. The regulations were brought in to protect you from carbon monoxide poisoning and it is imperative that you allow access to the engineer to carry out this very important safety check.

Should you suspect a gas leak at any time, ring the National Gas Emergency Helpline on 0800 111 999
Do Not Wait

Should you suspect a carbon monoxide leak at any time, ring the National Gas Emergency Helpline on 0800 111 999
Do Not Wait

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Regulations

The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 require landlords to have:

1. At least one smoke alarm installed on every storey of their rental property which is used as living accommodation, and
2. A carbon monoxide alarm in any room used as living accommodation where solid fuel is used (Gas is not a solid fuel and so there is no requirement to fit one near a gas boiler).

During the tenancy it is your responsibility to test all alarms regularly to make sure they are in working order. Testing monthly is generally considered an appropriate frequency for smoke alarms. If you find you're your alarm(s) are not in working order during the tenancy you will need to replace batteries when necessary. Please ensure any faulty alarms are reported immediately to the Property Management Department.



REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

Need to Report a Repair?

Please email: propertymanagement@atkinsonmcleod.com

In order for us to maintain a fast and efficient service, please report all repairs and maintenance to the Property Management Department promptly, providing detailed information and including photos and/or videos where possible.

The following information is essential in order to increase the speed with which we can resolve any maintenance problems.

- Address of property
- Your full name and contact information
- Description of problem (as detailed as possible)
- Make, model and serial number of appliance (where applicable)

If the appliance is under guarantee/warranty, we will need to instruct the manufacturers own recommended service engineer in order not to invalidate the guarantee/warranty.

Contractors sometimes carry spare parts, but it may sometimes be necessary to order parts, take additional quotes or wait for authorisation to proceed which may result in delays to repairs being carried out.

If, for any reason, your contractor does not call at the appointment time, please inform the Property Management Department immediately.

All maintenance must be reported to the Property Management Department. This is the only place to report maintenance issues. Please understand that at busy times we may be unable to respond to all enquiries immediately and reports will be dealt with in order of priority.

Access for Repairs

You may need to be available to grant access to contractors during normal office hours. We are unable to schedule appointments on your behalf and in most cases contractors will contact you directly to arrange an appointment time.

Where management keys are available and where practical, some contractors will be able to collect keys from Atkinson Mcleod without the need for you being present.

We cannot always stipulate specific appointment times and contractors may at times be delayed owing to circumstances outside of their control.

Who do we use to maintain our portfolio?

We only use contractors who have been vetted and approved by Atkinson Mcleod. This ensures good quality workmanship for both you and your Landlord, it also means that you have the security of knowing that only trusted contractors with the correct qualifications and insurances will have access to your home.



How long will repairs take?

Please allow reasonable response times for maintenance issues and be aware that you may be liable for call out charges or maintenance costs if you miss contractor appointments or repairs are found to be caused by misuse or wilful or accident damage by your or your guests.

Costly Repairs

For all repairs we will require your Landlord's permission to proceed however, in the case of large projects or costly works, a minimum of three quotes will usually be required before a contractor can be instructed to commence works. In these cases we ask for your cooperation and patience. Whilst we act in our tenants best interests at all times, your landlord is ultimately our client and we have a duty of care to obtain permission before disbursements from their account can be made to contractors.

All emergency repairs will be prioritised and carried out as swiftly as possible.



EMERGENCIES

Emergency Repairs & Maintenance

We recognise that in some rare and particular circumstances it may be necessary for you to call a contractor outside of normal office hours. As this will potentially involve extra expenses for our client/your landlord, we have a duty to ensure that best practice is adopted and that all actions are fair and reasonable. Both Atkinson Mcleod, as managing agent, and you, as a tenant need to ensure that call outs are:

Genuine Emergency Works

We must stress that your Landlord will only accept responsibility for out of hours repairs in a genuine and clear emergency that cannot wait until the next working day. Atkinson Mcleod reserves the right to challenge any unsubstantiated call outs and costs incurred on our client's behalf. An out of hours or emergency contractor should only attend to make the property safe and to enable full repairs to be undertaken during normal working hours. Every endeavour should be made, to use an Atkinson Mcleod Approved contractor.

Heating & Hot Water

Failure of a boiler is not usually considered an emergency and in almost all cases will be dealt with on the next working day. This would, however, be dictated by the temperature and whether the property is occupied by an infant or a vulnerable person.

Please bear in mind that emergency engineers will have limited access to parts and materials and are therefore often unable to carry out repairs, meaning an out of hours call-out is an unnecessary expense.

A list of approved Emergency contacts is listed below.

What is an Emergency?

For the purpose of this guide an emergency is deemed to have occurred when an unforeseen circumstance arises that if not dealt with quickly, would:

1. Damage or lead to significant further damage to the property
2. Endanger the occupant or cause them unreasonable discomfort
3. Render the property unsecure - for example, damage caused as the result of break-in which would compromise the security of the property, its contents and/or occupants
4. Render the property uninhabitable – for example through fire, flooding or structural failure

If You Have a Situation Where You:

1. Smell Gas

If you smell gas, think you have a gas leak, or are worried that fumes containing carbon monoxide are escaping from a gas appliance, please call the free **Gas Emergency Services line immediately on 0800 111 999**

Open all doors and windows to ventilate the property.

Do not turn on/off any electrical switches.

Extinguish all naked flames, do not smoke, strike matches or do anything which could cause ignition.

If there are any electrical security entry phones/locks, please open door manually.



2. Have No Electricity

If you have a pre-payment meter check your meter display – you may have run out credit

Check if your immediate neighbours are affected. If so, it's possible the power is off in your local area, contact your electricity supplier

If your neighbours still have power or the street lights are still on, there could be an issue with your fuses or switches. Check the trip-switches on your fuse board to see if there is a fault with your wiring or an appliance

In the event of an electricity emergency, please call the **Electricity Emergency Helpline on 0800 404 090**

3. Have no water

Check that you have cold water running from your kitchen tap

Check your stop valve is fully open (It's usually located under the kitchen sink or in a hallway cupboard)

Check for frozen pipes

Check if your immediate neighbours have the same problem.

Contact your water supplier

4. Burst or leaking pipe

Turn the water off at the mains

If electrics are affected, turn off the electricity at the consumer unit

Attempt to contain the leak and minimise damage using an empty bucket or some old towels

Email full details to the Property Management Department – who will respond as soon as a property manager becomes available

If the leak originates from a neighbouring property, you will need to contact the occupants, ask that they check their property for signs of a leak and to arrange for a contractor to investigate. Please obtain their contact information and pass this to your property manager. If you have a porter or concierge, please report the issue to them immediately.

5. Are locked out of your property

Please call our approved locksmith (details below) to allow you access to the property.

If you are locked out due to loss of your keys – you will be required to cover the cost of this call out and any subsequent costs relating to lock changes or key copies.

Be sure to notify Atkinson Mcleod of this on the next working day and to provide us with two (2) copies of the new keys.

Emergency Contacts

24/7 Locksmith

Access Locks & Security Limited - 0208 644 1989

Plumbing & Electrical

Tdorr - 0800 056 4000

British Gas HomeCare

If your Landlord has a HomeCare Policy - 0845 9500 400

Other Emergencies

Fire, Police, Ambulance

In the event of an emergency where you require any of the above emergency services please call 999.

Burglary

If your property is subject to a burglary you must contact the Police on 999 and obtain a crime reference number before contacting us. This is imperative if the landlord or tenant is to make a claim on their insurance.



LOOKING AFTER YOUR HOME

You are responsible for keeping your home in good condition. To help you do this it is best to carry out small tasks and checks to prevent future problems:

1. Wipe down all windows and walls affected by condensation on a regular basis. If any mould has formed, clean it off using a wash of diluted bleach, or an appropriate product from a supermarket or DIY shop. (See 'Condensation and Mould').
2. Limescale can be removed from baths, sinks, shower heads, and taps with distilled vinegar or a descaler available from all DIY shops and supermarkets.
3. Blockages in kitchen sink waste pipes can be prevented by flushing through a drain clearing product (also available from supermarkets & DIY shops).
4. Outside drains and gullies should be kept clear of leaves and other debris so that water drains away easily. It is your responsibility to maintain these areas and if blocked gullies cause leaks or damage to the property, you may be liable for costs.
5. It is your responsibility to replace light bulbs during your tenancy.
6. Make sure you know where the main water stopcock is, and how to turn it off. It is usually where the main water pipe enters the property or by the kitchen sink.
7. Be sure you know how to turn off the electricity and gas supply in an emergency.
8. Carry out regular Maintenance Washes, with Soda Crystals, to keep your washing machine clean and in good running order. See 'Maintenance Washes'.
9. If you have a kitchen waste disposal unit make sure you run water down it regularly, to keep it from seizing up.
10. Defrost your freezer compartment regularly. Excessive ice build-up will prevent your freezer from working properly and may break the door/flap.

Please note that demonstrations of most of the following tips are available through internet search engines.

CONDENSATION AND MOULD

Condensation occurs when the air contains too much moisture. The air can hold moisture to different levels depending on the temperature. The warmer it is, the more moisture can be held before the air is saturated and vapour starts appearing. The normal signs of condensation are damp surfaces, mould growth, decay of timber and corrosion of metals. Condensation often occurs due to life style such as cooking, washing and heating of a room or property. Insufficient airflow, i.e. ventilation will also allow for increased condensation. Remedies for condensation are, increased heating, increased thermal insulation, increase controllable ventilation and reducing moisture content by domestic management.

Normal daily activities (such as taking showers and baths, washing and drying clothes, cooking and boiling kettles) produce warm air containing a large amount of water vapour. If the warm air can't escape through an open window or air vent, it moves around until it finds a cold surface where it cools and forms condensation. If the property is heated intermittently it is more likely to suffer with condensation problems than if continuous heating is provided, even if at a lower temperature. Even at a lower temperature, heating keeps the surfaces of the rooms warm, which reduces the risk of condensation forming on them. Condensation often appears on windows, colder parts of walls, around external door and window openings, and where ceilings and floors meet with outer walls. It can also appear in areas where air circulation is restricted, such as inside cupboards and behind furniture that is placed against an outside wall. Continuous condensation in one area can cause mould to grow and it is therefore important to control the condensation.

How to Avoid Condensation

Although it is not always possible to completely eradicate condensation, it can often be controlled by applying domestic management and you as the occupier you are responsible for balancing the three main factors, which are Heating, Ventilation and Moisture.

Moisture

These five steps will help you reduce the condensation in your home by producing less moisture:

1. Cover pans and do not leave kettles boiling.
2. Avoid using paraffin and portable bottled gas heaters as these heaters produce a lot of moisture in the air.
3. Do not dry washing on radiators.
4. Dry washing outdoors on a line, or put in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or fan on.
5. Tumble dryers must be vented to the outside.

Ventilation

You can ventilate your home without making draughts to reduce moisture:

1. Keep a small window ajar when someone is in the room or open the trickle ventilators provided.
2. Ventilate kitchens and bathrooms when in use by opening the windows wider or use a humidity-controlled electric fan if one is fitted.
3. Close the kitchen and bathroom doors when these rooms are in use, even if your kitchen and bathroom has an extractor fan. This will help prevent moisture reaching other rooms, especially bedrooms, which are often colder and more likely to get condensation.
4. Do not block air-brick vents.
5. Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes.
6. Avoid putting too many things in cupboards and wardrobes as this stops the air circulating.
7. Cut a ventilation slot in the back of each shelf or use slatted shelves.
8. Where possible, position wardrobes and furniture against internal walls.



Do not

1. Do not block permanent ventilators or chimneys.
2. Do not draught-proof rooms where there is condensation or mould.
3. Do not draught-proof windows in the bathroom and kitchen.
4. Do not tamper with any ventilation or extract unit installed within your property.

Heating and insulation

You can make sure that you have adequate heating and insulation in your home to reduce moisture:

1. Thermal comfort ranges are very subjective. When at home, the ideal temperature usually ranges between 19-22 degrees Celsius in the living rooms, including the kitchen and bathroom, and 16-20 degrees Celsius in the bedrooms.
2. When away from home, the temperature in the rooms should not drop under 13 degrees Celsius to avoid condensation and increased humidity levels.
3. Do not heat up cold bedrooms in the evening by opening the door to heated rooms. The warm and humid air will condensate on the cold walls of the bedroom.
4. Good insulation of the building creates warmer walls and ceilings, and therefore inhibits mould growth by preventing condensation from forming on them. Note: tight windows and buildings require more active ventilation.

First steps against mould

First treat any mould you may already have in your home. If mould appears, you should sterilise the affected area with a suitable fungicidal wash.

If you then deal with the basic problem of condensation, mould should not reappear. The long-term solution to avoiding severe mould is to eliminate dampness. If the above points are followed, condensation should not be a persistent problem in your home. Please remember that a balance is needed between these factors and you may need to experiment and persevere until the problem is resolved.



PREPARE FOR WINTER

As the Autumn nights start drawing in, it's important to get your home winter-ready before the cold weather sets in.

Check Gutters, Pipes and Drains

During the Autumn it is likely that leaves will blow into gutters and drainpipes. Blocked gutters and pipes cause leaks. Remove any leaves and detritus from the drains to avoid blockage. If you believe you are unable to safely clear gutters, please contact the Property Management Department.

Check Doors and Windows

Ensure that there aren't any cracks around your doors and windows that can let cold air into your home. If you spot any crevice cracks or exposed entry points around pipes, they may need sealing. If water gets into these cracks and freezes it could potentially make the crack larger and cause further damage.

Heat and Ventilate

It is particularly important to allow air flow in the winter months or you will end up with nasty damp patches on the walls – particularly in high-humidity areas such as bathrooms and kitchens. Ensure extractor fans are working, fan filters are clean and properly ventilate the property. Leave the heating thermostat set to at least 14 degrees when away from home to avoid damp or frost damage. See section 'Condensation and Mould'.

Insurance

Check to make sure your contents and belongings are sufficiently insured. If there is an incident in your property such as a water leak, and your possessions are damaged, your remedy is a claim under your contents insurance - your landlord is not liable to reimburse you.

Prepare Your Boiler

If you've had your boiler turned off for the summer it's possible that, when turned back on, your system could present faults or even not work at all. We've put together a few pointers for successfully restarting your boiler after summer. Plumbing and Heating companies get extremely busy when a cold spell hits, which can result in lengthy delays for repairs.

Gradually Switch Your Boiler Back On

If you've had your boiler switched off over the summer you should have been aiming to fire it up once or twice a month to help prevent a build-up of things like dust, and corrosion. This will also flag up any potential issues before switching back on permanently when the weather gets colder. If you haven't been doing this and it's not too cold yet you could still fire it up a couple of times over the coming weeks.

Bleed Your Radiators if they Need it

You're unlikely to notice if your radiators have stopped working effectively over the summer because they've probably not been on. If you find that one or more of your radiators isn't heating up in certain areas (or not warming up at all) then you might need to bleed your radiators to remove trapped air.

When it comes to radiators, it's also worth noting that thermostatic radiator valves can get stuck if they're left closed for too long which means that they won't work when it comes to turning the heating on again. Try to keep them open as much as you can during the summer months.

Don't Turn the Heat up too Fast

It can be tempting to crank the heat up as soon as we start feeling the cold, but doing this could mean you set the temperature higher than necessary and end up wasting both energy and money. Instead try to turn your heating up one degree at a time. Generally your thermostat should be set at a temperature you feel comfortable at. For most households this is between 18 and 21 degrees Celsius. It's also important to remember that turning a thermostat up won't make your home heat up any faster, it will just reach a higher temperature.



Ventilation

If your boiler is in a cupboard then clear the space around it of any coats, shoes or anything else that might have been put to one side during the summer. This is because boilers require ventilation and engineers will also need easy access for any services.

Check for Faults

During a long period of inactivity (over the summer) is when problems with your boiler are most likely to happen.

HEATING & HOT WATER

If your heating and hot water system doesn't seem as though it's working to its full potential or your boiler is making some very strange noises, you may need to check it.

1. Check all the basic functions.
2. Check the gas, electric and water supply is turned on
3. Check the room thermostat (if you have one) is turned up and the clock timer is on
Check your boiler's pressure gauge (if you have one) is around 1 bar, you should find it on the front panel. If the boiler pressure falls below 1, you'll need to top up your system. You can usually re-pressurise your boiler yourself – see section 'Re-Pressurising a Boiler' or refer to your user manual. You can usually also find instructions on the inside of the control panel.
4. If your system has a permanent pilot light, check it hasn't gone out
5. Try putting your heating on full for a while to see if this triggers any heat
6. Check the boiler timer's set to the right time
7. Set your heating to come on in 15 minutes - if there's been a power cut recently, your central heating timer might have returned to its factory settings, so you'll need to reset it
8. See if you have a reset switch on the front of your boiler. You can check your user manual to see what to do
9. Try turning the boiler on and off. The switch is usually nearby or in an airing cupboard
10. Check your pipes haven't frozen. If it's been very cold, the condensate pipe of your boiler can freeze

If after trying all of the above you are still having problems, please contact the Property Management Department providing:

- Address of property
- Your full name and contact information
- Description of problem (as detailed as possible)
- Make, model and serial number of boiler (where applicable)

If your Landlord has a British Gas Homecare Policy or if the boiler is under guarantee/warranty, we will need to arrange an appointment with the appropriate provider.

Some newer developments have communal heating and hot water systems– in these cases please contact the on-site porter or building manager in the first instance.

RE-PRESSURISING A BOILER

What Can I Do If My Boiler Is Losing Pressure?

A depressurised boiler will not supply water to the household and cannot supply heat to the radiators. While intricate boiler repairs that involve removing the boiler cover should only be performed by Gas Safe-registered engineers, re-pressurising a boiler can be as simple as twisting a screw or turning on a tap and is a relatively simple repair that you can perform yourself. Read the Manufacturer's instruction booklet carefully as this will detail the position of the tap that re-pressurises the boiler. Copies of most operating manuals can be found online and there are a number of online demonstrations available through internet search engines.

How Can I Be Sure That My Boiler Is Losing Pressure?

Modern boilers almost always feature pressure gauges, which should typically be at one bar of pressure. The ideal boiler pressure should be clearly marked on the gauge –there are often red marks to indicate when the pressure is too high or too low, or an arrow on the gauge marking the perfect pressure.

Check For Leaks

If re-pressurising the boiler according to the manufacturer's instructions does not work, or if the boiler rapidly depressurises again, then there may be a leak somewhere in the pipework. It could be obvious where the leak is located; there may be damp patches, dripping water or puddles around your radiators and interconnecting pipework. Unfortunately, some leaks can be far harder to discover, particularly slow leaks in hidden pipes between the floorboards. If there is evidence of a leak, please report this to Property Management.

BLEEDING A RADIATOR

When to do it

If the top part of a radiator is cold, while the bottom is warm, this is because air is trapped in the system (which should be filled with water). Bleeding the radiator releases this air and allows hot water to fill the whole system.

Before bleeding

If the whole radiator is cold, check that the radiator valve is turned up (see diagram below). If more than one radiator is cold, the whole heating system may need to be checked by a heating engineer. Call your property manager during working hours.

Turn off the heating system before bleeding; otherwise the pump might draw more air into the system. You will need a special radiator key, available from most DIY and hardware shops. You will also need a rag or cloth and a bucket or bowl.

How to bleed a radiator

The bleed valve is the small square nut at the top end of the radiator. Place the key over the valve and hold the cloth around it to catch any water. Gently turn the key anti-clockwise until you hear a hiss - this is the air being released. When water starts to come through, turn the key back clockwise to shut the valve off. DO NOT unscrew the valve completely as the plug will come out.



FROST PRECAUTIONS

It is essential that every precaution is taken to avoid frost damage and burst pipes during cold weather.

Do not underestimate the onset of a severe cold spell. We must stress that if repair costs arise from damage or default on part of the occupant to take proper precautions, then the landlord will not be expected to pay for reinstatement and repairs, nor possibly will his insurers.

Why do pipes freeze?

Your pipes usually have a small amount of water in them, even when the taps aren't turned on. This water can freeze when the temperature drops. Frozen pipes can leave you without running water. And they're at risk of bursting and flooding your home.

How to prevent frozen and burst pipes

In the event that there is a burst pipe it is often very difficult to get plumbers to attend promptly as they are in high demand, so in this case prevention is definitely better than cure! If cold weather's on the way, it's worth taking some simple steps to prevent your pipes from freezing.

Set your thermostat at 12-15C when you're away from the property. This keeps the air inside warm to help stop internal pipes from freezing.

Run your taps - It's harder for water to freeze if it's running, so turn your taps on and off regularly. Or let your taps trickle so water is always passing. If you're on a water meter, make sure you keep an eye on your usage if you do this.

How to thaw frozen pipes

Turning on the taps in your home helps to relieve the pressure on the system. And it can show you where the frozen pipe(s) are.

Outside pipes or pipes in unheated places like attics are most likely to freeze. You may be able to work back from the affected tap to find the section that needs thawing.

If you're not sure where the frozen pipe is or it's not easy to access it try turning up your heating. Increasing the air temperature in your home can be enough to thaw affected pipes.

Open up cupboards and loft hatches to let the warm air circulate around your pipes.

You could use a portable heater for unheated internal areas like garages or lofts. If you do use a space heater, don't leave it unattended.

Applying heat to frozen pipes

For an exposed pipe, you can try applying heat to the pipe itself. First feel along the pipe until you find the frozen section then turn off the water supply at the stopcock (please take a moment to locate this now in your property – most stop taps are fitted under the kitchen or utility room sink and can be closed by turning clockwise - get in touch with your water supplier if you are unable to find it).

You need to warm the pipe slowly. Try using a hair dryer. If you're not able to plug one in, you could wrap a warm cloth around the frozen section of the pipe instead.

Do not use a direct flame like a blow torch. You could boil the water, causing your pipes to explode, or melt the pipe itself.



BURST OR LEAKING PIPES

Please contact Property Management and take the following precautions:

When pipes leak

Place a dish or bowl underneath the leak. Pull back any carpets and lay down newspapers or towels to absorb any dampness.

When pipes burst

Turn off the water at the main stopcock and switch off any water heaters.

Open all taps to drain water from the system.

Can it be isolated? Some appliances may have their own isolation valve (either a gate valve, or a service valve). You can use these to stop their water supply.



DRAINAGE

How to Unblock a Sink With a Plunger

1. Block up the overflow

It's easiest to do this using a dishcloth or old towel.

2. If you have a plunger, use it now!

Place the sink plunger over your plughole, cover with water – this will help you to create an airtight seal – and grip the handle with both hands. Pump up and down to create suction until the blockage is dislodged.

How to Unblock a Sink Without a Plunger

1. Add baking soda and vinegar

This low-cost solution uses two ingredients you're likely to have in your kitchen cupboards – baking soda and vinegar. Add a couple of teaspoons of baking powder, followed by a cup of white vinegar. Bicarb of soda can also be used in place of baking.

2. Try a common hangover cure

Alka-Seltzers are great for mild blockages and nasty smells. Pop a couple down the plughole and then pour in a cup of vinegar. Wait a few minutes and then blast with the hot tap to flush through the blockage.

3. Pour in a little biological washing powder

This is another idea that will leave your sink smelling sweeter. Pop two tablespoons of biological washing powder down the plughole, followed by a kettle's worth of boiling water. This should remove any fats or grease that have built up. Soda crystals are similarly effective.

4. Insert a long wire

Get hold of a long flexible wire tool. Feed it into the drain, so it bends around the pipe and clears what's blocking it. You could buy one or use a straightened wire coat hanger – just be careful of any sharp edges!

And if none of those work...

5. Unscrew the U-bend and clear out the blockage by hand

If all that fails, you need to take the U-bend apart. Don't call a plumber – this job's easy enough to take on, but do change into some old clothes, because it's going to get mucky and you'll be working in a very small space. Expect to spend anything up to an hour on it.

Put on a pair of rubber gloves, put down some old towels and slowly unscrew the U-bend or bottletrap using a wrench. It can come in several parts so take a picture first – that way, you'll know how to put it all back together later.

Have a bucket ready to catch any water as you pull it apart and clear out the pipework. Remember to wash out any dismantled traps or pipework in another sink, bath or using the outside tap – otherwise you'll end up with wet feet!

How to Unblock a Bathroom Sink

Try the methods above, but we do have a specialist tips for bathroom sinks, which can get clogged with hair.

Unblock sink hairs with a magic tool

Rid bathroom drains of pesky hair with the ingenious Drain Weasel tool, which snags and removes hair. Insert the wand in the plughole and hold it by the sleeve. Rotate the handle 360 degrees until you feel resistance. Carefully remove and discard the wand, saving the main part for next time.

Hopefully that's worked for you. But before we go, here are a few more of your sink unblocking questions, answered.

Can bleach unblock a sink?

A combination of bleach and boiling water can break down some type of clog – but it won't eat through hair, for example. We would recommend you try the above methods first, as we think you'll find them more effective and they are certainly less harmful to the environment.

If you do use bleach to unblock a sink, make sure you read the instructions on the bottle first. Wear gloves and keep your skin covered in case you accidentally splash yourself.

How do I unblock sink full of water?

If you are using a plunger, the fact that the sink is full of water won't be a problem, since you'll need it there to create an airtight seal (see above). The weight of the water might also act to push the blockage through.

How to Unblock a Toilet

It might be one of most unglamorous jobs ever, but it's really easy to do once you know how:

1. Gather your equipment before going into battle. You will need:

A plunger – ideally ball-shaped

Rubber gloves

Old newspaper to cover the floor around the toilet

Bleach/drain unblocker/caustic soda

An opened window/fan

2. Don't be tempted to keep trying the flush

If you try it once and it doesn't flush properly, it's blocked and no further flushing is going to help you out. If you know there's something stuck in your toilet (a child's toy, a bottle of something that's fallen in, you know the drill), reach for your gloves and pull it out. If it's something a bit, well, smellier, then it's time to flex your plunger muscles.

3. Locate the blockage

Lift the drain cover to see if the chamber is full of water. If so, the blockage is further along the soil pipe. If the chamber is empty, the blockage is in the soil pipe between the loo and the chamber, or in the pan. You can try and clear any blockages in the pipes by using specialist drain rods or makeshift devices, such as a wire clothes hanger. Failing that, a drain company is the answer.

4. Use the plunger firmly against the blockage

Use a plunger that is shaped to seal the opening in the toilet bowl to create the correct vacuum and pressure needed, and also to prevent mess. An auger is a flexible rod that reaches far into the toilet controlled by a crank handle. Once the blockage is located, the auger will pull or push the item to remove it. Try the flush again and watch the beautiful sight of a flushed toilet before your very eyes.

Top tip: Run the plunger under hot water before starting work. This softens it up a treat.

5. Use a wire coat hanger

If you don't have a plunger to hand, grab a wire coat hanger, unwind it so you have one piece of long wire and bend it into a curve. Push the wire up into the toilet and wiggle gently to push the blockage clear. The key word here is gently – you don't want to scratch your toilet.

6. Dissolve the blockage

If you don't think the toilet is badly blocked, you can try pouring hot water into the toilet bowl from a bit of a height before using a plunger – this can help dissolve the blockage, pushing it hard through the pipe and is the more environmentally friendly way of unblocking your toilet. If this doesn't work, you may need to recruit the help of some caustic soda or drain cleaner. Make sure you wear gloves for this step.

7. Clean up the evidence



Hopefully this has done the trick. Once unblocked and flushable, give your toilet a really good scrub and clean using strong bleach, then air your bathroom well.

8. Ongoing issues

If the elbow grease plunger method doesn't work, or if you continually have problems with a blocked toilet, there are several good quality unblockers on the market – you can find them in supermarket cleaning aisles.

SANIFLO Systems

How does a SANIFLO Toilet work?

A Saniflo toilet works through macerator technology. 'Macerator' means 'chopper', so Saniflo units first churn solid waste and toilet paper into a liquid. They then use their pumps to discharge this liquid through pipes as small as one inch (25mm) diameter.

Proper Use of a SANIFLO system

Problems can arise however if certain other materials are flushed down the toilet. This is because domestic macerators cannot handle them. Please ensure ONLY standard toilet paper is flushed. This includes, but is not limited to, cotton wool, cotton buds, sanitary items, and baby wipes. Certain liquids should not be disposed of in a toilet or sink connected to a Saniflo either. These include white spirits, turpentine, other paint cleaners, and other chemicals.

What maintenance does the Saniflo macerator require?

The macerator does not require any special maintenance; however, to ensure many years of good service, we recommend that you clean and descale your macerator regularly. Saniflo descaler is designed to remove scale while preserving the internal workings of your device. This should be done more or less frequently depending on the hardness of your water.

How long does the Saniflo run when the toilet is flushed?

The flush discharge generally triggers 2 to 3 cycles lasting 1 to 2 seconds each. If your device runs for longer periods than previously, it may be that the rubber membrane system of your device requires cleaning/descaling. You can also use white vinegar or preferably, Saniflo descaler to do this: disconnect your fixture from the power supply, then pour 2 litres of product in the bowl of your toilet. Leave it to work for a few hours and then reconnect to the power supply and flush.

How can I unblock my Saniflo?

The use of drain unblocking products is not recommended (e.g. containing acids, etc.) as these will tend to damage the rubber and/or plastic components within the unit. We recommend that an engineer familiar with Saniflo systems. Please note, charges related to unblocking the system or repairs to the system

Descaling and Cleaning

For descaling, we recommend you use Saniflo's own branded descaler, which can be purchased online. For general cleaning purposes, normal W.C. cleaners are okay to use with a Saniflo unit, but high-foaming brands should be avoided as the agitation could cause temporary difficulties in the pumping operation.

For both descaling and general cleaning, the following procedure is recommended:

- Turn off the power to the unit. Pour a strong dose of the descaling agent, bleach, or disinfectant into the WC pan.
- Flush the WC.
- Leave to stand for one to two hours.
- Switch power back on, allowing unit to pump out, and flush again.

Are there any smells from the machines?

Correctly used and installed Saniflo units should not emit any smells. We recommend a regular cleaning routine to keep your Saniflo in optimum condition.

CARING FOR THE PROPERTY AND APPLIANCES

Washing machine

Read the instruction booklet carefully before use, copies of most operating manuals can be found online. Check that the appliance is plugged in and switched on. To keep your washing machine in good running order, you should carry out a 'maintenance wash' every couple of months, to dissolve any mould or soap scum build up in the machine (see 'Maintenance Washes').

You should ensure that the door to the machine is wiped down after washes, and left open when not in use to allow the machine to dry out between uses. This will help prevent the formation of mould.

The tray should be removed from the detergent drawer, according to the manufacturer's instructions, and cleaned on a regular basis to prevent build-up of fabric softener and detergent. Warm water should also be poured into the drawer to dissolve any build-up of powder.

Be sure not to overload the machine as this prevents the clothes from properly circulating in the wash. If the machine starts to move more than usual it is likely to be because large bulky items, such as towels, become heavy when wet, which then causes the machine to become unbalanced.

Many common problems, such as the machine not draining properly or not completing cycles, are caused by foreign objects blocking the pump - this can be easily rectified.

Washing machine maintenance washes

Give the detergent drawer a thorough wipe, and remove, empty and soak the filter, before replacing it. Perform a washing machine maintenance wash every couple of months to clear the drum and the pipes of dirt and grease.

How to clean your washing machine with vinegar

You can stop your washing machine from smelling with 2 cups of vinegar, ¼ cup of baking soda and ¼ cup of water. Simply mix the baking soda and water together, popping the mixture into the detergent drawer and pouring the vinegar into the drum. Put your washing machine on the hottest setting and select a normal spin cycle. The baking soda and vinegar will naturally break down any mould or mineral deposits.

How to clean your washing machine's rubber door seal

Use a scouring sponge or old toothbrush to clean the washing machine door seal and wipe clean with water. Do the same for your detergent drawer as product can build up in there. If you're having trouble cleaning your machine door seal, mould may have seeped into the rubber, in which case you should replace the seal.

Checking the washing machine filter

Many problems, such as the machine not draining properly, or stopping part way through a cycle, are caused by foreign objects finding their way into the filter. This sometimes happens with socks or colour catchers, but you should ensure that collar stiffeners and other small loose objects such as coins are removed from clothes before washing.

Please note that if an object of this sort damages the machine, you would be responsible for the cost of fixing/replacing the machine.

If your machine is not full of water, follow the directions below:

Check you have an access panel to the filter. This is usually at the bottom front of the machine.

Open the panel; be careful as they are often flimsy.

Make sure you have a towel to hand in case there is water in the filter.

If your machine is not full of water, unscrew the filter anticlockwise and you should be able to remove the filter.

If there is a foreign object in the filter, remove it and replace the filter, taking care to close it completely to prevent leaks.



If your machine is full of water, follow the directions below:

Locate and open the access panel, as above.

Some machines have a drain tube next to the pump filter, which can be pulled out, and used to slowly drain the water from the machine, into a sink or bucket.

If your machine does not have a drain tube, place a bowl in front of the machine, under the pump filter.

Make sure you have plenty of towels on the floor as the water can drain very quickly.

Slowly open the filter and drain the water into the bowl.

When the bowl is full, tighten the filter, empty the bowl and start again, until no more water drains from the machine.

You are then free to remove the filter and check for foreign objects.

Tumble Dryer

Read the instruction booklet carefully before use, copies of most operating manuals can be found online.

Check that the appliance is plugged in and switched on. Make sure all items are removed from pockets.

Ensure the filter is kept free from fluff and fibres. Using a tumble dryer when the filter is clogged can result in damaged clothes and the breakdown of the motor. If you have a condenser dryer you will need to empty the water reservoir after each load.

Dishwasher

Read the instruction booklet carefully before use, copies of most operating manuals can be found online.

Check that the appliance is plugged in and switched on. The machine will need regular filling with dishwasher salt and rinse aid, this can be purchased from most supermarkets. Ensure that filter are cleaned regularly, it is recommended that you use a dishwasher cleaner once a month. Always rinse excess food from cutlery and crockery before loading the dishwasher. Do not overload the dishwasher.

Kettle

Please de-scale regularly.

Descaling procedure using white vinegar:

Fill the kettle with water up to three-quarters of the maximum level and bring the water to the boil.

After the kettle has switched off add distilled vinegar to the maximum level.

Leave the solution in the kettle overnight.

Empty the kettle and rinse the inside thoroughly.

Fill the kettle with fresh water and boil the water.

Empty the kettle and rinse it with fresh water again.

Repeat the procedure if there is still some scale in the kettle.

Vacuum cleaner

Read the instruction booklet carefully before use, copies of most operating manuals can be found online.

Check that the appliance is plugged in. If the appliance uses an internal 'dust bag', ensure that you replace the bag regularly using bags that are compatible with that particular model. Routinely check for hair, thread and blockages. Only use a domestic vacuum cleaner for normal everyday use.



Hard wood flooring

Avoid walking on your hardwood floors with spiked or damage-heeled shoes.
Resist wet-mop, damp-mop, or cleaning your hardwood with water or other liquids.
Don't use oil soaps, liquid or paste wax, or other household products containing lemon, citrus, tung oil, or silicon to clean floors.

Drying Clothes

Please do not place damp or wet items of clothing over the radiators as this causes damage to radiators and creates condensation. Please use a clothes horse if you need to dry your clothes indoors ensuring the property is sufficiently ventilated at all times.

Bicycles

Please do not store bicycles in the property or the communal hallways and doorways. Not only can this cause damage to the décor but may also pose a severe risk to health and safety and may invalidate the buildings insurance policy.

Bathroom

In the bathroom, avoid dropping any foreign objects such as hair grips down drains as these will quickly collect other debris such as hair and cause a block. Nappies, sanitary products, baby wipes, face wipes and cotton wool should be placed in the bin and not flushed down toilets where they may get jammed in narrow pipes and cause an overflow of water. Using excessive amounts of toilet paper can also be a common factor in drains becoming blocked, so ensure you are using just enough each time.

Shower

Please descale the shower head regularly.
Part-fill a plastic bag partway with distilled vinegar.
Hold the bag under the shower head and open it. Slowly bring it upwards until it covers the shower head and the shower head is in the vinegar.
The plastic bag needs to be secured to the shower head. Hold the top of the bag tightly around the shower head and tie a piece of string around it ensuring it's tight and secure. Let go of the bag making sure it won't fall off before stepping away.
Leave the shower head to soak for 30 minutes or overnight depending on how bad it is. If the shower head is made from brass, remove the bag after 30 minutes. The process can be repeated after you've rinsed the shower head if required.
Carefully untie the shower head, tip the bag over and empty out the vinegar. Turn the water on to flush out any limescale deposits.
Scrub the shower head with an old toothbrush focusing on the nozzles, switch the water back on to flush out any residue. Polish with a soft cloth for a sparkling clean finish.
Take a soft cloth and polish the shower head, wipe until dry and there are no water spots. The shower head can then be screwed back onto the hose. Turn on the shower to flush out any residue the toothbrush didn't get.



Kitchen

The most important thing you can do to prevent drains from becoming blocked in the first place is to monitor the waste that goes down your drain pipes on a regular basis. For kitchens, this means scraping plates thoroughly to ensure food does not go down drains, and using adequate soaps and detergents to break down the grease and oil used in cooking. Don't pour grease, fat or oil directly down the drain; if possible pour it into a container, wait for it to cool and throw it in the bin. If you must pour it into the drain, always follow with a blast of cold water as this solidifies the grease and stops it from clinging to pipes, thus preventing blocked drains.

Kitchen Extractor Filters

Cleaning your extractor fan or cooker hood regularly is a necessity to ensure that the fan works as it should. Try to wipe down the fan each time you use the hob (always remember to wait until all the surfaces are cool!).

How to Clean an Extractor Fan Filter

Cleaning a filter takes a bit of time but if you follow the correct steps it's an easy process to complete. Remove the filter from the main extractor hood and place the filter in a sink filled with very hot water, dish soap and a cup of white distilled vinegar.

Leave the filter soaking in the mixture for as long as possible (at least 30 minutes).

Remove the filter from the water-based mixture and sprinkle baking soda on it.

Use a scrubbing sponge to work the baking soda around the filter and into its nooks and crannies until most of the grime is all removed.

Clean out any remaining dirt with a toothbrush.

Leave the filter to dry.

Once it's completely dry, place the filter back in the extractor fan

Replacing a Carbon Filter

Some extractors have a carbon odour filter. It's not possible to clean these and you need to replace yours if you feel it's no longer effectively removing odours.

You can buy replacement cooker hood carbon filters from most DIY shops or look for compatible spares online.

It's recommended that you change the filter about once every six months.



Garden

If your property has a garden, you will be responsible for its reasonable maintenance during the tenancy. This includes mowing lawns, trimming hedges, keeping all window boxes, borders, paths, and patios in good order and free from weeds.

Spring and Summer Care

At this time of year, your lawn and plant life are actively growing and will require regular care and attention including watering, feeding, weeding and regular mowing.

Autumn Tidy Up

Early Autumn is the perfect time to prepare your garden for the cooler months. Give it a good tidy up and don't forget to prune, shape and clean up your plants. Dispose of yellowing or dead leaves, weed and straggly lower branches. Be sure to remove any leaves and detritus from the drains to avoid blockage.

Do not lop, prune, remove or destroy any existing plants, trees or shrubs, unless it is required to keep the garden in good order and without prior written consent.

Preventing Blocked Drains

There are steps you can take to prevent blockages from happening, and these should be part of your everyday household routine. If you're careful about what goes into your drains and what lies around them, you'll be able to avoid some of the unpleasant side effects of blocked drains, including:

- Foul smelling water
- Leaking roofs, walls or ceilings
- Damage to wiring or electrical fittings

Outdoor Drainage

It goes without saying that you should always try to keep the drains in your yard free from leaves, foliage or any other garden waste which could be washed into the drain and cause an obstruction. Sweeping your garden, terrace or balcony regularly is one way of preventing these drains from becoming blocked.

You should also use a drain clearing product every so often to clear the drains. These are readily available from DIY shops or supermarkets.

If a blockage is caused by your misuse, you are likely to be held liable for the full cost of clearing the blockage. Therefore, you should try to clear any blockages yourself before calling the Property Management Department.



Electricity Consumer Unit / Fuse Box

You can lose power to your home for several reasons from a planned interruption from your supplier through to a switch tripping or a fault with your wiring or an electrical appliance.

If you lose power but you are not aware of a planned interruption and your neighbours still seem to have power then you may well have tripped the system. You will usually not lose power throughout the whole house if this happens, it will usually be only one circuit which has gone; check whether perhaps the lights still work if an electrical item has gone out or vice versa.

The first thing to do is find your main fuse box (these days called a consumer unit), which will be in the same place as your electricity meter. They are often in the main hallway of a house, in a purpose built cupboard. This is where the electricity in your house is controlled from, and it's important that you know where to go and what to do if you need to turn off the mains electricity. (It's also helpful to remember where you left the torch...)

In the case of loss of electric light or power

Your fuse box, or consumer unit, will either have fuses or trip switches. Modern electric circuits are fitted with a circuit breaker fuse system: if a fault develops, a switch is tripped and the circuit is broken. Older ones have fuse holders and when a fuse is blown it must be replaced or rewired.

Setting a trip switch

Open the cover on the consumer unit to see which switches have tripped to the OFF position. Put them back to the ON position.

If tripping occurs again, it is probably being caused by a faulty appliance. You need to identify which circuit is affected and which appliance on that circuit is causing the problem.

Which appliance is faulty?

Go around the house noting which set of lights or sockets are not working. Unplug all appliances on that problem circuit and switch off any immersion heaters (if you have one). Switch the tripped switch to the ON position and plug in the appliances one by one until the trip goes again. Leave that appliance unplugged, and have it repaired by a qualified electrician or contact Property Management if the appliance belongs to the Landlord.

What causes it to trip or blow a fuse?

An overloaded circuit

Too many appliances being used at the same time

A faulty or misused appliance

Overfilled kettles

Unclean toasters

Cooker rings worn out or cracked

Faulty immersion heaters

Faulty connections on leads to appliances e.g. televisions or stereos etc.

Light bulbs blowing

Plugs

Most plugs will have a fuse inside them. If the appliance suddenly stops working, it is worth replacing the fuse inside the plug before calling the electrician.

To find out the correct type of fuse to fit in the plug, check the rating plate on the appliance. Do not overload plug sockets by using multiple plug adaptors.

Replacing the plug on an appliance is fairly straightforward, and is well worth doing before you declare your electrical appliance broken.

Light Bulbs

It is your responsibility to change the bulbs in your property. If you are unsure how to change a bulb there are a number of online demonstrations available through internet search engines.

Before replacing a bulb be sure to turn off the light at the switch and ensure the bulb is cool. It is a good idea to use a cloth glove or other soft cloth.

Replacing halogen light bulbs

Normal and halogen bulbs can be purchased from most hardware shops. Halogen bulbs usually come in two types; GU10 and G9 (or bi-pin). Both have two pins, but the GU10 screws into place, and the bi-pin pushes into the base.

Changing a standard GU10 halogen bulb

Place your fingers lightly but firmly around the bulb. Turn the bulb in an anti-clockwise direction to unscrew the bulb.

Put a new bulb in and screw in a clockwise direction until it is securely fixed in place.

Changing a G9 (bi-pin) halogen bulb

Grip the bottom of the bulb and pull directly down. Do not twist.

Fit the new bulb by aligning the pins with the slots and pushing in.

Changing a double ended halogen bulb

Hold the bulb in the middle and push it towards one of the end connections. This will release the other end enabling you to remove it.

Fit the new bulb by pushing it firmly against one end of the socket until the other end will easily slip into its connection.



PEST CONTROL

It is your responsibility to carry out pest control within your home. Traps and bait can be purchased from most supermarkets and DIY stores.

Alternatively, we can provide you with details for a professional pest control company if you prefer.

Mice

Mice are one of the most common types of pest in London and it can be very difficult to exclude them from properties, particularly conversion flats and terraced houses, as there are so many points of entry.

The best way to get rid of mice is to use one of the new poisons which have been specifically designed for the purpose. Mouse traps can be very effective, but unless you have just one or two mice they will not clear an infestation.

Please note that if you are aware of mice in the property you **MUST** either treat yourself, or use a Pest Control company to treat for you.

Preventing mice coming into your home

Close off access points, such as holes in walls, skirting boards, cupboards or floors.

Keep food in secure containers.

If you have left-overs after a meal or waste from preparing food (such as vegetable peelings), put them in the recycling or the bin immediately

Clothes Moths

Due to the small size of the eggs and larvae most infestations initially go unnoticed, it is only when adults appear or when holes start appearing in your clothing that it becomes obvious. Moths are equal opportunity destroyers of clothing with no preference over wardrobes, closet or drawers so when looking for signs of their presence be sure to check everywhere clothes are stored in your home.

Moths like to lay their eggs in warm, dark places so pay particular attention to the corners of your wardrobe, drawers, skirting boards and architraves.

Deep clean your wardrobe

Moths adore dark, warm spaces so take all of your clothes out of the wardrobe and drawers and give them a thorough cleaning with a vacuum, making sure to get right into the corners. After this, clean the insides with a damp, detergent soaked cloth to kill off any remaining larvae or eggs.

Lower the heat

As mentioned previously, moths love the warmth and the use of central heating has greatly extended their normal period of activity. Try lowering the temperature setting of your radiators or reduce the amount of time they are in use.

Clean your clothes

Moths are particularly attracted to food and perspiration stains on clothing so before putting everything back in the now clean wardrobe/drawers, wash all of your clothes. If your clothes are clean, place them in ziplock bags and place in the freezer for 48 hours as the sub-zero temperatures will kill off any hidden larvae or eggs. Double-check vintage furniture and clothes. We all love a good bargain but vintage furniture and clothing are usually the source of moth infestations. Before adding any vintage clothing to your wardrobe or bringing a piece of old-time furniture into your home, make sure they are thoroughly cleaned to avoid the risk of introducing these rude house guests into your home.

Vacuum and deep clean

Keeping your home clean and well maintained is the surest way to avoid an infestation. Be sure to vacuum and clean on a regular basis and periodically deep clean any wardrobes and drawers.



Throw out old items

Similar to keeping your home clean, maintaining an orderly wardrobe can also help reduce the chances of an infestation. Every time you purchase a new piece of clothing, try to give away a less used older item.

Use cedar hangers or cedar balls

Moths detest cedar and it can be quite effective at killing off the eggs and larvae. Invest in some cedar wood hangers or cedar balls for a natural, pleasant smelling moth deterrent.

Lavender bags

Similar to the effects of cedar, moths hate the smell of lavender. Try placing bags of dried lavender in your wardrobe and drawers to keep moths at bay, keep in mind that you should replace the lavender regularly so that the scent always has the maximum effect.

Check periodically

Vigilance is the key to preventing an infestation occurring or reoccurring. Check your furniture for signs of eggs and larvae, pay attention to your rugs and carpets in darker areas and make sure there are no open packets of food left in cupboards at least once a month. The moths won't know what hit them and will have no chance to gain a foothold in your household.



MOVING OUT OF THE PROPERTY

End of Tenancy Procedures

You must give Atkinson McLeod two months' notice in writing to terminate your tenancy (unless your tenancy agreement says otherwise). You should advise the utility providers, local authority and any other relevant organisations with the date your tenancy is due to end and arrange for the meters to be read. You should use Atkinson McLeod's name and address as a 'care of' address for your landlord unless you have been advised otherwise.

We advise all tenants to arrange to have their post redirected by the post office. We are unable to forward post to you and you should not expect the new tenant to do so.

Before the day of your departure you should make your own check of all the items in the property against the inventory. It is in your interest to replace any missing or broken items at this stage. If this has to be done after you leave you may be charged.

Utilities

You should advise the utility providers, local authority and any other relevant organisations (including the providers for gas, electricity and water), with the date your tenancy is due to end and arrange for the meters to be read. Please note that it is your responsibility as a tenant to obtain meter readings – this is not something we will arrange for you.

Note – you will need to provide proof that all utility bills have been finalised and settled. This includes council tax, electricity, gas, water and any communal heating or other charges that may apply.

Viewings

Please allow access for prospective tenants or purchasers during the weeks leading up to your vacation of the property. Our lettings or sales team will contact you to arrange viewings.

End of Tenancy Cleaning

Make sure that the property and all the fixtures and fittings are cleaned to a good professional standard, or as per the inventory / schedule of condition at the start of the tenancy, including cleaning and laundering of all bedding, linen, towels, upholstery, curtains and carpets.

Areas that are often missed include:

Lime scale build-up on taps, shower head, waste.

Discoloured grout and sealant

Kitchen appliances inside and out, including shelving and all rubber seals

Kitchen units, cupboards and drawers – inside and out

Wooden paint work, tops of skirting boards, picture rails, architraves

Scuffs from painted walls

Extractor fans and air vents should be vacuumed / cleaned – remember the bathroom extractor!

Ceiling/wall light fittings, shades and bulbs

Curtains and blinds

Carpets and flooring, including under furniture - vacuum and spot clean

Windows and frames (inside and out)

Fridges and freezers should be defrosted and the landlord may ask that during winter months the central heating is left on the minimum setting. Be sure to check all light bulbs are in working order as you may incur a call out / fitting charge in addition to the cost of any replacement bulbs required.



Rent Payments

Cancel the standing order set up to pay your rent.

Returning your Keys

Please return all keys, fobs and permits to your local Atkinson McLeod branch on the day you vacate. Keys must be handed to a member staff and not posted or left within the property.

Our opening hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 7pm and Saturdays 10am to 4pm. Please request a key receipt from the Agent they are handed over to - it is recommended that you also take a photograph of the keys and fobs you are returning. **Never label keys with the property address.**

Note – failure to properly return ALL keys, fobs and permits on the last day of your tenancy may render you liable for continued rental payments and/or the cost of replacement locks. This includes keys for windows, post box, meter cupboards and communal areas.

Preparing for your Inventory Check Out

Before the day of your departure you should make your own check of all the items in the property against the inventory. Please ensure that you place all inventory items back in the location stated in the inventory at the end of the tenancy. It is in your interest to replace any missing or broken items at this stage as, if this has to be done.

An appointment will be made for an inventory clerk to carry out a check out after you have vacated the property. All of your personal effects should be removed, and all keys, fobs and permits returned **before** the check-out is completed. Deductions may be made from your deposit if there are any missing or damaged items or the property requires further cleaning etc.

Deposit Return

If Atkinson McLeod is holding your deposit as stakeholder, it can only be released once we have received written authorisation from both you and the landlord. If any items on the inventory require repair or replacing this will inevitably lead to a delay in monies being returned to you.

Once the checkout report has been received (typically 5-7 working days after the end of your tenancy) your landlord will review its contents and advise Atkinson McLeod of any deductions they wish to put forward. All correspondence relating to the return of your deposit must be in writing, we will be unable to discuss the deposit related matters over the phone.

Once the terms of the release have been agreed by all parties, Atkinson McLeod will release the deposit which will credit the nominated bank account within 5-10 working days.

You will need to provide your forwarding address, details of your utility providers and confirm that all final bills have been settled along with your bank account details so that we can forward your deposit electronically.

If you have any questions, please contact the Deposits at deposits@atkinsonmcleod.com



USEFUL CONTACTS

Property Management

Direct Line: 020 7068 7650

E-mail: propertymanagement@atkinsonmcleod.com

The Property Management Department is available from 9.30am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

Utility & Service Providers

Local Council

<https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

Gas

<https://www.findmysupplier.energy/webapp/index.html>

Electricity

<https://www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/internet/en/help-and-advice/who-is-my-supplier/>

Water

<https://www.water.org.uk/advice-for-customers/find-your-supplier/>

Emergency Contacts

These contacts are for use in a **Genuine Emergency** Only.

Gas or Carbon Monoxide Emergency

National Gas Emergency Helpline - 0800 111 999.

24/7 Locksmith

Access Locks & Security Limited - 0208 644 1989

Plumbing & Electrical

Tdorr - 0800 056 4000

British Gas Home Care Policy

0845 9500 400

Note - your Landlord will only accept responsibility for out of hours repairs in a genuine and clear emergency that cannot wait until the next working day. Please make every endeavour to use an Atkinson Mcleod Approved contractor. An out of hours or emergency contractor should only attend to make the property safe and to enable full repairs to be undertaken during normal working hours. Failure of a boiler is not considered an Emergency. Atkinson Mcleod reserves the right to challenge any unsubstantiated call outs and costs incurred on our client's behalf.