



cairn

YOUR GUIDE TO KEEPING
SAFE IN YOUR HOME

We want you to be safe in your home. As your landlord, we do a great deal to keep your homes as safe as we can including providing smoke detectors, carrying out gas and electrical safety checks and maintaining your home to a regulatory standard.

There are also lots of things that you can do as a Cairn tenant to keep yourself safe and help protect your family and your property. This handbook contains lots of information on how you can do that.

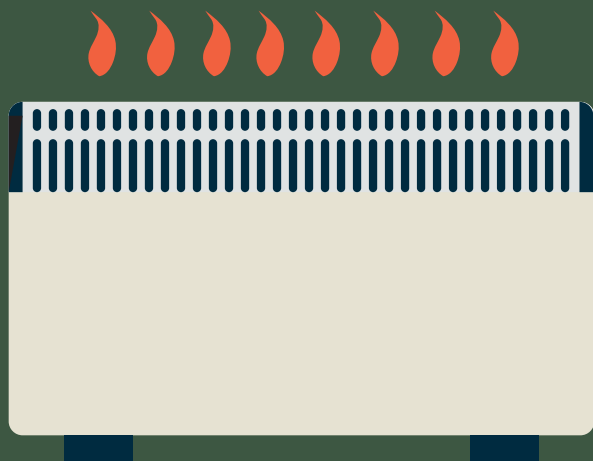
If you have any questions, please get in touch and we'll be happy to help. And keep an eye on our social media and newsletters where we post regular content on health and safety.



CONTENTS

Fire Safety	1
Electrical Safety	8
Water Safety	15
Gas Safety	17
Asbestos	20
Damp, Mould and Condensation	21
Winter Conditions	25
Christmas	26
General Safety Advice	27
Useful Numbers	28
Advice and support	28





FIRE SAFETY



Fire Alarms

Your home has fire alarms (a heat detector in the kitchen and smoke alarms elsewhere) which can give you precious time to escape in the event of a fire. They are literally a life saver. Don't tamper with your fire alarms or cover them; this could result in you missing the essential early warning signs of a fire and not being able to escape when it matters.

If your fire alarm beeps intermittently, this indicates a low battery or other fault which needs attention. Please contact us immediately so we can fix it for you. We will test and replace fire and smoke detectors at gas services and electrical check visits.

Fire Doors

Fire doors are designed to keep smoke and flames at bay in the event of a fire.

The front doors of our flats are fire doors, and some homes may have fire doors inside their home. You will know you have one as they will self-close. Do not prop these doors open or tamper with the door or the frame.

There are also fire doors in communal areas of our blocks and retirement courts. You will know they are fire doors as they have signs on them. Some fire doors are to be kept closed, while others are held open but will close in the event of a fire. Follow the instructions on the signs. Please be careful not to damage these doors or tamper with them. They are there to protect you in the event of a fire.

What to do in the event of a fire

If the fire alarm sounds **in your home** or you suspect a fire:

- Get out and stay out. If possible, close the doors and windows on your way out, but **DO NOT** put yourself at risk. Don't take belongings with you.
- If you live in a sheltered or retirement court, go immediately to your fire assembly point. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will be alerted automatically, but you can phone 999 to report the fire if you wish.
- If you don't live in a sheltered or retirement court, phone 999 immediately.
- Wait for the fire service to attend, follow their instructions and don't go back into your home until they have told you it's safe.

If you live in a flat or a sheltered or retirement court

If you're in your flat and an alarm is triggered **elsewhere in the building**, the alarm will not sound in your flat. This is because the walls and doors of your home are designed to withstand fire, smoke and heat long enough for the fire service to arrive. You should be safer in your flat than trying to escape. The fire service will tell you if you have to leave your flat.

If you are in the communal area of your court and the fire alarm goes off in the communal area, please get out, stay out and follow the advice above.

If you live in a sheltered or retirement court

Our courts are linked to an Alarm Receiving Centre, so when a fire alarm goes off a call goes straight to the fire service and you do not need to phone 999. All tenants in our other properties should call **999** in the event of a fire.

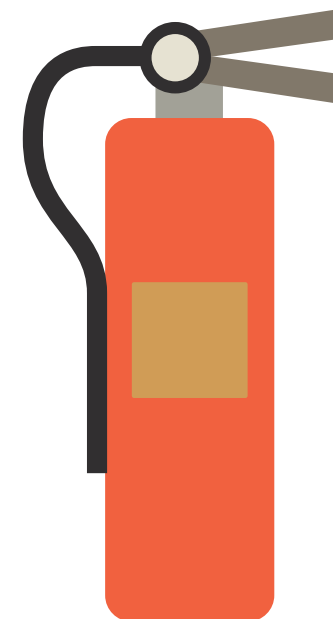
Fire safety in communal areas

Please make sure that escape routes in communal areas are kept clear. Keep these areas free from large items such as mattresses, buggies or furniture, and flammable items. Small items such as doormats or plants to make your front door feel homely are fine, but please be mindful of how these may impact escape routes or create trip hazards.

Mobility scooters, electric wheelchairs, e-bikes and e-scooters should not be stored in communal areas due to how quickly their batteries can go on fire and how ferocious the fire can be.

Smoking, burning candles or any other naked flames are not allowed in communal areas.

Please tell us if you have any issues or concerns about your communal area.



Mobility scooters, electric wheelchairs and e-scooters

Mobility scooters, electric wheelchairs and e-scooters are not allowed to be stored or charged in the communal areas of our properties.

We mostly do not allow them to be kept in flats in our sheltered or retirement courts. This is because they are a fire risk and most flats do not have appropriate storage. You need to have permission from us to keep a mobility scooter or electric wheelchair at one of our courts. We have a programme of work for installing dedicated storage for mobility scooters and electric wheelchairs at some of our sheltered and retirement courts. It is important that you use these once they have been provided.

If you do not live in one of our sheltered or retirement courts, you should store and charge scooters or wheelchairs in a separate room with a fire detector. Make sure the door is closed. Do not store or charge where it may block your escape route in the event of a fire. Try not to charge it overnight when you or your family are sleeping.

Finally, make sure to only use the manufacturer's charger and check it is in good condition before using. If you would like further advice on storing or charging mobility scooters, electric wheelchairs or e-scooters then please get in touch.

Fire safety in your home – what you can do.

The major causes of fires in the home are cooking, candles, smoking, heating and electrical gadgets. Fires can start suddenly, spread quickly and put you and your family in great danger as well as damaging your home and belongings. There are a few simple steps you can take to protect your home from fire.

Be prepared:

- Keep escape routes clear. You never know when you might need them.
- Have an escape plan so you and your family know what to do in the event of a fire, particularly if there is someone in your household who is vulnerable.

In the kitchen:

- Don't leave cooking unattended.
- Don't use deep fat fryers or chip pans.
- Regularly clean toasters, grill pans, frying pans, cookers, ovens and extractor fans.
- Keep flammable items, such as tea towels, away from the cooker.
- Avoid using the top of the cooker or oven for storage.
- Check that your oven and hob is switched off after use – double check before you go to bed.
- Don't cook if you're tired or under the influence of alcohol.

Reducing your fire risk

- Don't hoard flammable items like lots of magazines or newspapers that could fuel and spread a fire. If you need support with hoarding, help is available. Please contact your housing officer for more information.
- Close your living room and kitchen doors at night. This will help to hold back smoke and flames, giving you extra time to escape and call for help.
- Avoid using portable heaters. If you must, then make sure you use one that will turn off if it falls over. And keep them away from curtains, furniture and flammable items. Oil-filled heaters are considered the safest.
- Ensure your furniture is fire retardant.
- Don't smoke in your home, particularly in bed, when you are tired or under the influence of alcohol. If you do smoke indoors, make sure cigarettes and matches are properly extinguished and don't put them in a normal waste bin. Make sure ashtrays are regularly emptied (when contents are cold) into a safe place. Consider a self-extinguishing ashtray for those at particular risk.
- Be careful when using candles. They should be on a stable and fire-resistant surface and away from flammable items such as curtains or books. Keep them out of reach of children and extinguish when you leave the room.
- Medical oxygen carries specific fire risks. Make sure that you follow the instructions carefully. Please inform us if you live in a sheltered or retirement court and use oxygen.
- Emollient creams that are used for skin conditions can be highly flammable. Be careful of these transferring to your clothing and bedding and then coming into contact with a naked flame such as a lighter or gas cooker.



Fire Safety Home Visit

Get a free fire safety visit from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. Simply get in touch with the fire service by phoning **0800 0731 999**, texting FIRE to **80800** or going to the online booking form on **www.firescotland.gov.uk**



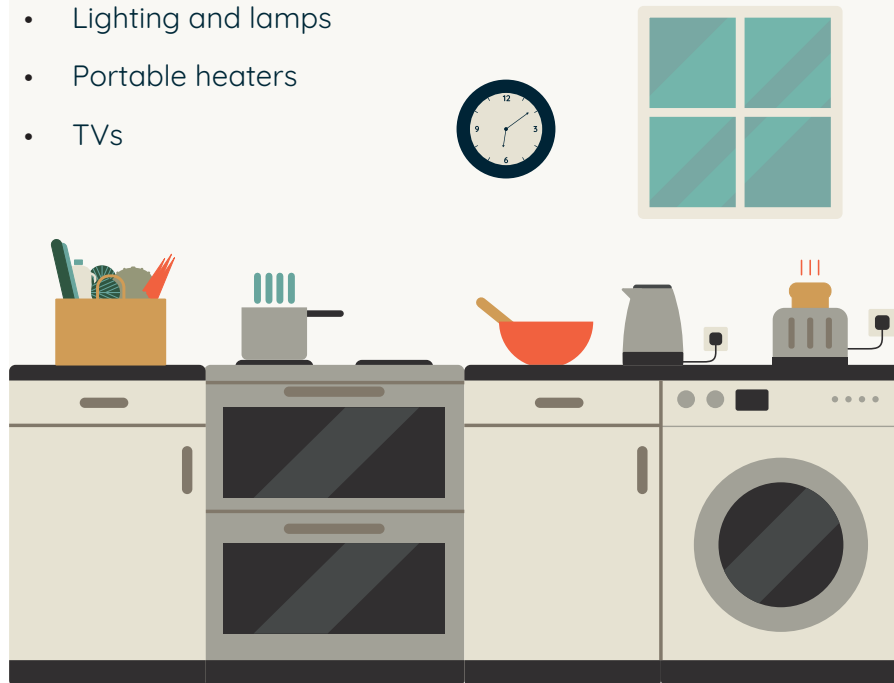
ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Where would we be without electricity? We rely on it for everything from cooking and bathing to keeping warm and keeping entertained. But electricity is responsible for 20,000 fires in UK homes every year, so it's important you take steps to protect yourself and your loved ones from electrical dangers. Here's how.

What are the most common dangers?

The five appliances that cause the most electrical fires in UK homes are:

- Cookers and microwaves
- Washing machines and tumble dryers
- Lighting and lamps
- Portable heaters
- TVs




The biggest cause of fires in the home is cooking appliances. When using them be sure to follow these rules.

Do not:

- Let leads from other appliances like kettles and toasters trail across the cooker
- Use the area on top of the microwave or cooker for extra storage
- Dry towels on or near the cooker
- Hang items above the cooker hob such as utensils
- Put metal, including foil, into a microwave
- Leave cooking unattended
- Let fat and grease build up on or in the cooker, especially in the grill pan where it can easily catch fire

What else can I do to prevent a fire?

- Don't overload tumble dryers. Regularly remove lint build-up and clean the filter. Do not run when you are out of the house or overnight.

- Do not use any damaged sockets or cables.
- Use the correct chargers and leads for devices as provided by the manufacturer. Cheap replacements have an increased risk of catching fire.
- Unplug chargers when not in use.
- Don't charge laptops on soft furnishings as this can block air vents and cause them to overheat.
- Turn off any electrical appliances that you are not using, particularly at night, when a fire can quickly spread unnoticed and cause more danger and damage.
- Only use equipment that has the British kite and CE marking: 
- Always register your appliances to receive information on product recalls.

Get in touch with your local fire service - they will be happy to carry out a free home fire safety visit

What about electrical adaptors?

Only use 13 amp 4-way multi bar adaptors (extension leads) with surge protection rather than a block adaptor as this will put less strain on the wall socket.

Some block adaptors don't have a fuse, which increases the risk of overloading and fire.

Only use one 4-way multi bar adaptor per socket and **NEVER PLUG ONE EXTENSION LEAD ONTO ANOTHER.**

DO NOT overload electrical adaptors by plugging too many appliances into one socket, especially those with a high electrical current rating such as kettles, irons, heaters and hair dryers. Do not plug microwaves, washing machines, tumble dryers, freezers, ovens or cookers into an extension cable.



13 amp 4-way
multi bar adaptor



Block adaptor



How do I know how much power my appliances use?

Just because your extension lead can squeeze in four plugs doesn't mean it's safe to do so.

Surprisingly, some of the smallest appliances in our homes actually use the most amounts of power.

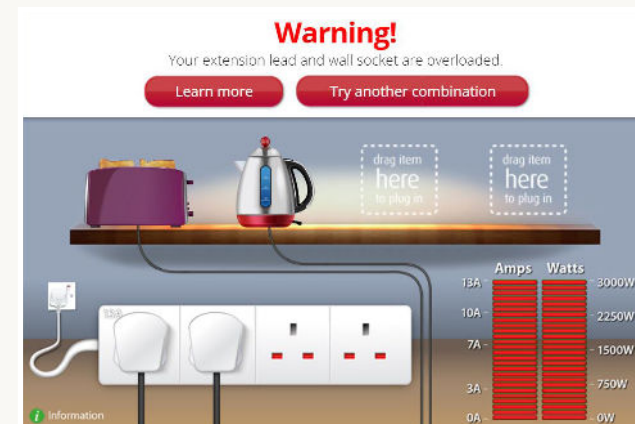
As a guide, you should only load one plug socket with a maximum of 3,000 watts.



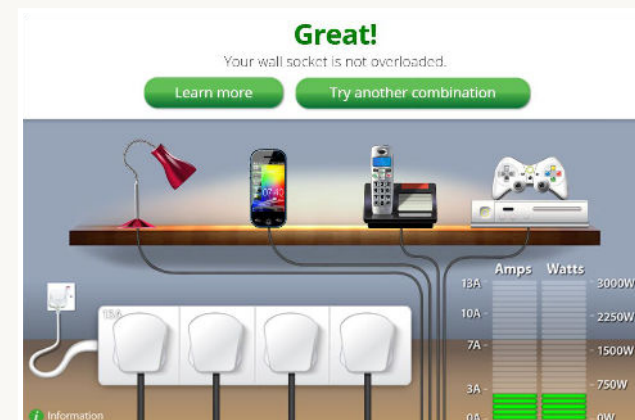
Taken from which.co.uk

If you're not sure about how much power your electrical appliances use, then you can use a handy online calculator to find out:

www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/guidance/safety-around-the-home/overloading-sockets



This example clearly shows how easily an extension lead can become overloaded

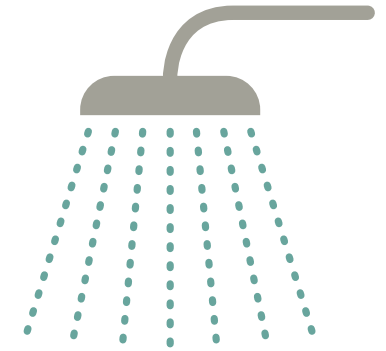


This example clearly shows that the wall socket is not overloaded and is safe to use

Electrical checks

We carry out an electrical safety inspection every five years. We also do them before every new tenancy starts to ensure your home is safe before you move in.

You'll receive a letter from our electrical contractor before they are due to attend. If, after repeated attempts to carry out this safety check, you do not let us in, we may force entry to your home and all costs will be charged back to you. It is really important that we carry out these safety checks so please cooperate with us.



WATER SAFETY

Legionella is a type of bacteria found in water. It can become a health concern when it grows and spreads in human-made water systems like pipes, showerheads, taps, hot water tanks and heaters. People can contract Legionnaires disease, which is a form of pneumonia, when they breathe in small droplets of water in the air that contain the Legionella bacteria. It can make you very ill. Symptoms are similar to the flu and the illness is treated with antibiotics.

Am I at risk of catching Legionnaire's Disease?

Thankfully, catching Legionnaires disease in your home is rare. However, there is a possibility that when certain conditions exist in the home it increases your risk. Water that is between 20 - 45°C (lukewarm to hot) is a suitable breeding ground for bacteria to grow. This can happen in large water tanks in lofts that are not used much, or pipes that go to a tap that is hardly ever turned on.

What can I do to minimise risk?

The likelihood of Legionella being in your home is very low as most households do not store huge amounts of water and water is used regularly so it's not standing still in pipes.

However, here are some tips to make sure the water in your home is safe.

- Make sure you run water through **all** your taps, showerheads and toilets at least once a week. Unscrew your showerhead and hose every three months and put into disinfectant for a couple of minutes. If you live in a sheltered or retirement court, we will do this for you.
- If your home has been lying empty for at least a week, then you should flush out your water.
- To do this, run all taps (both hot and cold) for at least five minutes. Turn on taps slowly so that you don't splash water. If you're unable to remove your showerhead, wrap it in a facecloth or towel. Close the door and stay out while flushing.
- Your hot water should be at or above 50°C and your cold water should be below 20°C. Temperatures in-between can promote Legionella growth. If you or a family member has sensitive skin and can't tolerate these temperatures, please let us know and we can discuss fitting a TMV, which is a special valve that moderates hot water temperatures.

If you live in a sheltered or retirement court, we monitor water temperatures. We may need access to your home periodically to carry out these tests. Please accommodate this as it helps to keep you safe. We may also be able to help flush your water if you are away from your home for more than a month and don't have anyone else to help you.

GAS SAFETY



Annual gas service

By law, we have to carry out a gas service for your home every year. We will inspect your gas supply when we carry out the annual service on your boiler. If you do not have this safety check every 12 months you could be putting your family and other people in surrounding properties at risk.

Why do we check your gas?

It's our legal duty to make sure you are safe. Gas can be dangerous. Every year more than 50 people in the UK die from breathing carbon-monoxide fumes from faulty gas appliances. Many more end up in hospital. We don't want this to happen to you.

The only way to make sure you and your family are safe is to let our experts carry out their gas safety checks. Please make sure our engineer can access your home. If you're out the engineer will leave a card. Call the number on the card as

soon as you can to arrange a new appointment.

We rely on your co-operation to let our contractors in to carry out your gas safety checks. We take gas safety very seriously and if you refuse to allow a contractor into your home we could take legal action against you or cut off your gas supply.

If you do not allow access we will have to force entry to carry out the gas check and you will be recharged for the cost of this.

If you think you can smell gas

Do:

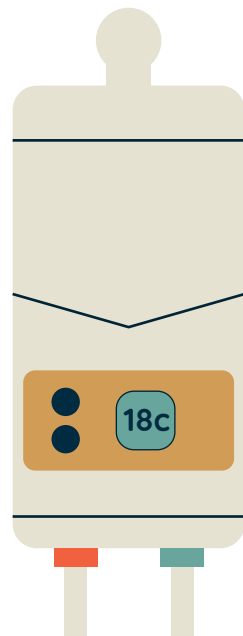
- Turn off your mains gas supply
- Turn off all gas appliances and put out all naked flame.
- Open doors and windows to get rid of gas and leave your home
- Once outside, phone the National Grid Gas Emergency 24-hour number on 0800 111 999 (do not phone inside your home - it could spark an explosion)

Do not:

- Use matches, naked flames or cigarettes
- Use electrical switches (do not turn your lights on or off)
- Use the telephone or mobile phone inside your home

Gas emergency number:

0800 111 999



The dangers of carbon monoxide

Carbon monoxide is a toxic, colourless, odourless, tasteless, non-irritant gas which is harmful to humans and animals. It can occur when a gas appliance has been incorrectly fitted, badly repaired or poorly maintained. It can also occur if flues, chimneys or vents are blocked.

Symptoms of carbon-monoxide poisoning include headaches, dizziness, nausea, breathlessness, collapse or loss of consciousness. These symptoms are very similar to those of flu or a viral infection, which is why carbon monoxide poisoning often goes unnoticed. Other signs to look out for include noticing if your symptoms get better if you leave your house or if other family members or pets are also ill.

If you think you have carbon monoxide poisoning turn off all gas appliances and open all doors and windows. Call the doctor or go to the hospital immediately.

Once you're out of danger call the gas emergency number to report it.

Our homes with gas or solid fuel are fitted with carbon monoxide detectors. Please do not cover or tamper with this alarm. If your alarm beeps intermittently, this means the battery is low or there is a fault with it. Please call us for advice. If your alarm goes off, get out of your property immediately and call the emergency gas number.

ASBESTOS

Like many landlords throughout Scotland, some of our homes and properties may contain asbestos. Asbestos can be found in a wide range of building materials and was commonly used in construction until it was banned in 1999. If someone breathes in dust that contains asbestos, it can cause serious health conditions and can be fatal.

Asbestos is entirely safe if it is undamaged and in good repair, so a few simple steps can help keep you safe.

- Contact us BEFORE you carry out any DIY or alternations on your home. We can advise you whether there may be asbestos in your home and what you'll need to do.
- If there's asbestos in your homes, you must not damage or disturb it.
- If in doubt, treat it as asbestos, leave it undisturbed and get in touch with us for advice.
- Immediately report to us any damage to asbestos materials or suspected materials, whether in your home or in communal areas of your building.

Do not damage, break or disrupt any materials that you know or suspect to be made of asbestos.

When we carry out improvements to your home, we may do an asbestos survey to find out whether it is present before any work is carried out. This survey will be carried out by an accredited and competent surveyor.

DAMP, MOULD & CONDENSATION

Most social homes in Scotland are of good quality. However, damp and condensation can be a big issue for many households thanks in part to the nation's climate, where we experience wetter and colder weather for a lot of the year.

Here is some useful information about damp, what causes it, what to look for, and what you should do.

What is damp and what causes it?

Damp in a house is caused by an excess of moisture on internal walls and surfaces that has no way of escaping. The most common form of dampness in a house is condensation. Condensation forms when warm air inside a building meets a cold surface like a wall, window or even furniture and leaves drops

of water on the surface. It tends to be worse in winter, but if left unresolved it can be an issue all year round.

Condensation is commonly caused by steam from hot showers, drying clothes inside, and cooking. These common household activities can release an average of six to twelve litres of water each day into the atmosphere. If there's no way for that excess moisture to escape, it could eventually lead to damp and mould problems.



The first sign of condensation is usually moisture drops on walls, mirrors or windows. While this may not be troublesome right away, the effects of condensation can worsen and lead to damp and mould.

There are other types of damp including penetrating and rising damp. Penetrating damp is caused by water leaking through walls. It tends to happen as a result of structural problems, such as faulty guttering or roofing, or cracks in external walls. Rising damp is a relatively rare form of damp, that affects the walls of buildings. It occurs when moisture from the ground level travels up through the walls by capillary action.

Keep an eye out for the following signs:

- A musty, damp smell
- Patches of discoloured paint or wallpaper on a wall
- Excessive water droplets on windows or walls
- Dark patches of mould on the walls, floors, ceilings, or around windows
- Rotting or damaged skirting boards
- Walls that are always cold to touch
- Lifting or peeling wallpaper that won't stick back down
- Increased humidity in the air

What can I do to prevent damp, mould and condensation?

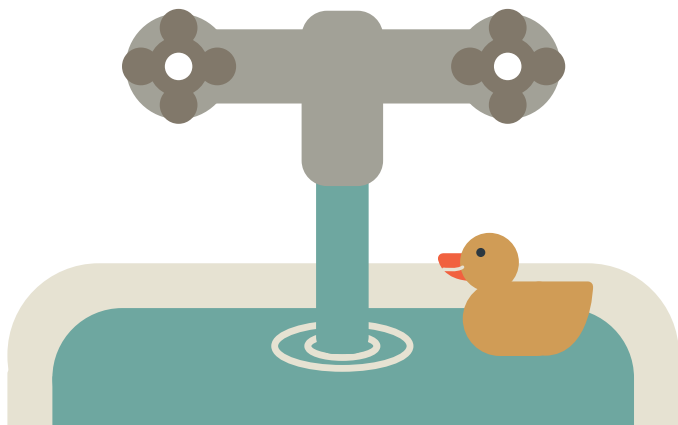
- Close the door and open windows when you're using the kitchen or bathroom. Use an extractor fan if you have one
- Reduce the temperature of your shower
- Use pan lids when you're cooking
- When drying your washing, hang clothes outdoors where possible. Avoid drying clothes on radiators but if you have to, try and do it in a single room, keeping the door closed and the room well ventilated and heated.
- Consider buying a dehumidifier. They reduce condensation but also help your clothes dry quicker too.
- Open trickle vents in windows
- Regularly open your windows to air your house
- Place furniture a couple of inches away from external walls
- Ensure carpets have a good underlay beneath them
- Air your wardrobes and cupboards occasionally and keep clutter to a minimum. Consider extending carpets into integrated wardrobes too.
- Make sure your tumble dryer is vented outside. If you have a condensing tumble drier keep the window open and the door closed while in use.
- Try and keep your home heated to a minimum of 15C (higher if you are elderly or have health problems). Make sure you heat your whole house and not just the rooms you use as this will create cold spots throughout your house. If you are struggling with your energy bills, then please get in touch so we can direct you to advice and support that may be available to you.

What if that doesn't help or it starts to get worse?

Damp can be a serious problem as it can cause damage to a buildings infrastructure. It is a problem that can affect any home and can be a threat to your health if left untreated.

If left untreated damp and mould can have an affect on your health, causing things like; runny nose, throat irritation, coughing or wheezing, eye irritation, or, in some cases, skin irritation. It can also cause or worsen lung conditions, allergic reactions and infections, so needs to be taken seriously.

We take all reports of damp, mould and condensation very seriously. If you are worried about damp or mould in your home, then please get in touch with us as soon as possible.



WINTER CONDITIONS

We don't provide gritting or snow clearance services at Cairn houses and flats other than our courts (see below). It is your responsibility to make sure your family and visitors are safe when venturing outside your house in icy and snowy conditions. We are not responsible for any injuries or incidents.

We provide a limited gritting and snow clearance service at our sheltered and retirement courts. This is focused on certain areas which you will be informed of, and further information is available from court staff. We also provide grit bins and grit for you to use. However, it remains your responsibility to make sure that your family and visitors are safe when venturing outside your home in icy and snowy conditions. We are not responsible for any injuries or incidents.



CHRISTMAS

Christmas is a magical time of year, but also comes with an increased risk of house fires. Here are some tips to make sure that you stay safe over Christmas.

- Check your tree lights carry the British Safety Standard sign and don't use if they are damaged.
- Turn off Christmas lights when you leave the house or go to bed.
- Don't overload your electrical sockets.
- If you have a real tree, make sure that you keep it well watered. Don't let it dry out as real Christmas trees are extremely flammable, especially if left to dry out.
- Never place candles near your Christmas tree or other flammable items. And don't leave unattended.
- Decorations can burn easily – don't attach them to lights or heaters.
- Avoid cooking when under the influence of alcohol.



GENERAL SAFETY ADVICE

For more information, contact our specialist retailers.

- Don't allow children unsupervised in the kitchen.
- Turn pan handles away from the front of the cooker so they can't be accidentally knocked over.
- Replace broken bulbs in your home and report any damaged lights to us.
- Replace worn carpets and address trip hazards. Report any found in communal areas to us.
- Keep all medicines locked and out of reach of children.
- Always follow the instructions and safety warnings on household goods and chemicals.
- Keep matches and lighters out of reach and out of sight of young children.
- Do not store items in the attic and loft spaces of your home, these are not designated as storage areas.
- Always supervise babies and young children in the bath.
- Promptly address any insect infestations, vermin issues or pests. Call us for advice if required.
- If you or any family members have mobility issues, ensure mobility aids and methods of calling for help (e.g. emergency pendants) are close to hand, especially at bedtime.
- Be aware that hot radiators and storage heaters can reach very high temperatures and can cause serious burns even after brief contact. Keep children, elderly and vulnerable people away from heaters and make sure they are well supervised to help prevent burns. Turn down the temperatures to a safe level and consider fitting guards to protect against injury, especially for children and vulnerable persons.

USEFUL NUMBERS

National Gas Emergency Service	0800 111 999
Emergency police, fire and ambulance	999
NHS24	111
Non-emergency crimes	101

ADVICE AND SUPPORT

We are always on hand to offer advice and support on anything related to your health and safety. Please get in touch to see how we can help.



NOTES

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes, spanning the width of the page.



OUR HEAD OFFICE:

Bellevue House
22 Hopetoun Street
Edinburgh
EH7 4GH

OUR WEBSITE:

www.cairnha.com

OUR EMAIL:

enquiries@cairnha.com

OUR PHONE NUMBER:

0800 990 3405

This document is available on CD, in Braille, large print and community languages.

Cairn Housing Association.

A registered Scottish Charity No SCO16647. The Scottish Housing Regulator Registration. No 218. Property Factor Reg No PF000292