

safety in your home

information for tenants about ensuring
the safety of you and your family

believe
housing

safety in your home

believe housing takes the safety of all tenants very seriously. We carry out frequent and rigorous safety checks.

But tenants also have a duty to pay care and attention to their safety too.

This guide is intended to provide a short overview of important safety information. It includes helpful tips on looking after safety in your home on a day-today basis. It is particularly appropriate to any tenant carrying out decorating work or other basic improvements too.

We encourage our tenants to look after their home, but please remember that you should inform believe housing and ask for permission before making any changes. If you have any concerns about safety in your home, contact believe housing immediately.

We also encourage tenants to report any defects, potential hazards or repairs that may be needed to their home. Hazards could include issues such as loose light switches, insecure floorboards, loose roof tiles, or damaged garden paths that could lead to a trip or fall.

carrying out work in your home

Nothing beats the smell of fresh paint in a home and most decorating tasks, such as painting walls or woodwork, are encouraged by believe housing.

But with safety high on the agenda, it's important to ask permission before carrying out more significant work as some jobs can be dangerous or illegal.

However there are a number of things you can do which you do not need our approval for, as long as you read this booklet before starting any works. These are:

- Installation of Smart meters for Gas, Water or Electric.
- Internal painting and decorating.
- Laying carpets or vinyl floor coverings.
- Redecoration or replacement of internal doors (replacement doors with glass must be kitemarked safety glass)
- Extending of or changing kitchen and bathroom wall tiles.
- Replacing like for like fencing of the same height and location
- Mounting TV brackets, shelving, mirrors, curtain rails and blinds.
- Fitting of outside taps by a qualified plumber.
- Putting up a key safe – providing your home doesn't have external wall insulation

Please be aware that some alterations are not allowed on any believe housing property, these include:

- Installation of solid fuel burners in any part of the home, garage, outhouses or garden sheds
- Fitting gas fires
- Loft Conversions that do not have building control approval and planning consent
- Removal of any structural part of the home, including loft space and outbuildings
- Installing ponds
- Work to gas or electrics by unauthorised or unqualified people
- Painting of Brickwork
- Painting UPVC doors or windows
- Adding pet access flaps to doors

fire safety in your home

Your home will receive regular checks from believe housing to ensure your safety.

There are many steps that you can take to prevent a fire starting:

- Keep your cooker clean
- Don't leave the kitchen unattended when cooking
- Avoid deep frying wherever possible
- Keep tea towels and cloths away from the hob
- Keep any candles in a heat resistant holder and never leave them unattended
- Don't use portable heaters, unless agreed with your neighbourhood officer
- If you smoke, make sure to stub out cigarettes thoroughly and dispose of them carefully
- Keep any matches or lighters out of the reach of children
- Never smoke in bed
- Buy electrical items like phone chargers and Christmas decorations from reputable sources
- Don't store anything in cupboards with gas appliances or hot water cylinders
- Test the batteries in your smoke alarm regularly by pressing the button until it makes a loud beeping noise.

In communal areas:

- Do not smoke in communal areas, it is against the law
- Do not store anything in communal areas including rubbish, bikes, clothes and shoes, prams or mobility scooters
- Keep all storage cupboards locked
- Never keep flammable items like liquids or gas in storage cupboards.

Gardens and outdoors:

- Do not burn rubbish or wood
- Never place barbecues directly on the ground or decking, keep them away from fences, plants or windows
- Don't light barbecues in garages or close to buildings.

In flat blocks or buildings with communal areas, fire doors are fitted to prevent the spread of fire. All entry doors to individual flats are also fire resistant. Access doors to buildings and homes are fitted with self-closing devices designed to contain fire and smoke. Never wedge open a fire door, tamper with a self-closing mechanism or change the door in any way. Report any fire door faults to believe housing immediately.

In the unlikely event of a fire evacuation:

- If there is a fire in your home, get out quickly
- If there is smoke, keep low to the ground
- If possible close doors behind you to prevent the spread of smoke and fire
- Get yourself and any other family members to safety
- Call 999
- Do not re-enter the building.

If you can't escape:

- Get everyone into one room and close the door
- Smoke and fumes can kill people quickly, so put bedding or towels along the bottom of any doors to seal the gap
- Open the window and stay near it for fresh air and to let firefighters see you
- Shout for help so neighbours can offer assistance and call the fire brigade
- If you are on the ground or first floor, you may be able to escape from a window
- If you must break the window, cover the jagged glass with towels or thick bedding
- Throw more bedding out of the window to break your fall
- Don't jump out of the window - lower yourself down to arm's length and drop to the ground
- If you have any children, elderly or disabled people with you, plan the order that you will escape in so you can help them down
- Do not stop or go back in for any reason.

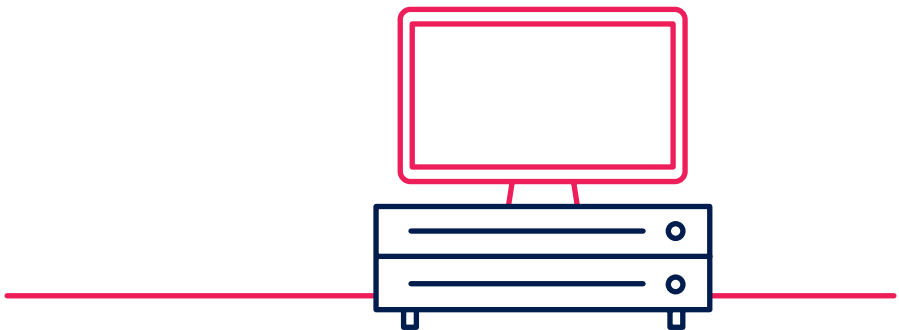
electrical safety in your home

believe housing carries out regular electrical inspections to all properties.

Your home will receive a thorough electrical inspection at least every five years. But if you become aware of a problem with any electrical installation, including lights and sockets, it is important that you report it immediately.

If you intend to carry out any electrical work in your home, you must apply for written permission from us first. We need to know full details of the work and see proof that a competent qualified electrician will be carrying out the work by seeing copies of their certification. The work will also need to be inspected once complete to ensure it has been done correctly and is safe.

If you have a faulty appliance, it is a tenants responsibility to replace any plug with the same size fuse and get a suitably qualified electrician to check any other faults. If we need to remove or rectify any unauthorised electrical works then any costs to make safe/remove/rectify the issue will be the responsibility of the tenant.



general electrical safety advice

- Do not overload sockets or extension leads. Most four-plug extension leads have a maximum loading of 13 amps. This equates to two 5-amp plugs and one 3-amp plug in one extension lead. If you exceed the maximum load it will result in the extension lead cable heating up, which could result in fire. Use an extension lead with a residual current circuit breaker or residual current device (RCD), which will isolate the power if there is a problem.
- Switch off and unplug non-essential electrics before you go to bed and when you go on holiday. Appliances left on standby can be a fire risk. They also waste energy and your money.
- Visually check your electrical appliances and cables regularly. Either repair or replace faulty appliances using a competent qualified electrician. Always register new appliances with the manufacturer to receive any important safety information. Look out for danger signs such as scorch marks on plugs or sockets, damaged or frayed cables, flickering lights and fuses that blow regularly.
- Report any electrical installation defects immediately. Examples include damaged wall sockets or light switches, and damage to installation cabling.
- Do not run extension leads through doorways.
- Fully unwind reel type extension leads before use as the cable will heat up if you don't.
- Test smoke alarms monthly by pressing the 'test button' located on each alarm. Report immediately any defects or damage. Do not paint alarms.
- Your consumer unit (fuse board) incorporates one or more circuit breakers which must be tested by pressing the yellow button every six months. If the device fails to operate, report it immediately.

information about asbestos

The vast majority of buildings, including homes, will contain asbestos in some form, but that does not mean they are dangerous if looked after properly.

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral that is very strong and resistant to heat and chemicals. Over the years it has been used in a wide range of building materials and products.

Asbestos, when not disturbed, isn't dangerous. It only becomes dangerous if materials containing asbestos are damaged or deteriorate with age. When damaged, asbestos releases tiny fibres into the air and breathing in high levels of these fibres may cause damage to your health.

It is not always easy to tell whether a product in your home contains asbestos as many modern asbestos free materials often look similar. It is usually older products that contain asbestos.

Where could asbestos be found in the home

The following are examples of where asbestos may be found:

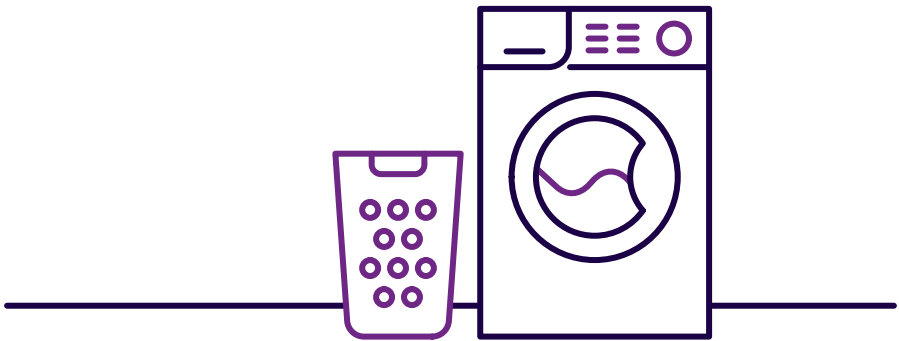
- Insulation panels
- Vinyl or thermoplastic floor tiles.
- Some textured coating
- Rainwater pipes and gutters
- Some ceiling tiles
- Outhouses, sheds and garages
- Eaves/soffits
- Flue pipes

believe housing is committed to making sure that all materials containing asbestos in our properties are safe.

Full surveys are carried out before refurbishment works are undertaken in your home and records are kept of where any asbestos is identified.

Asbestos materials can become a risk if they are damaged, drilled, cut, sawn, scrubbed or sanded during DIY work and can result in exposure to asbestos fibres.

*It is important that you contact believe housing before undertaking any DIY work that could potentially disturb asbestos containing materials in the home. Please see page 3 for full information on carrying out work in your home or call **0300 1311 999**.*



information about legionella

It is important that the water supply in your house is looked after properly.

Homes are considered to be at very low risk of water borne problems such as legionella bacteria. But there are simple steps recommended that can be taken to reduce that risk even further.

Legionella is a bacteria which naturally occurs in water sources such as ponds and lakes. In certain conditions it can also live in the water systems of buildings. If allowed to grow the bacteria can cause illnesses such as Legionnaires' disease, which is a serious lung infection.

Although anyone can contract Legionnaires' disease some people are at higher risk. These include people aged over 45, smokers, heavy drinkers and people with underlying health conditions.

Simple steps to reduce risks

- Make sure that taps and showers are regularly cleaned and kept free of debris and scale.
- Make sure that every water outlet that isn't used on a weekly basis is opened and flushed through to ensure all the water in the building is kept moving. This includes all taps (including outside taps), showers, and toilets.
- When returning from extended periods away from the home, make sure that all taps are run for several minutes.
- If you notice any debris or discolouration coming through the taps and showers report this to believe housing on **0300 1311 999**.

In hot water

- Don't reduce your hot water temperature from the pre-set level. Keeping hot water at between 50°C and 60°C will kill any bacteria which may enter the system.
- If you notice the hot water temperature drop unexpectedly report it to believe housing immediately on **0300 1311 999**.

In cold water

- Legionella bacteria can't grow in water below 20°C, so it is important that your cold-water supply is kept cold.
- If you have a bidet toilet, switch it off at the wall if you intend to be away from the property for more than one week. This is so warm water is not left in the cistern.
- If you notice the cold water coming through your taps is warm report it to believe housing on **0300 1311 999**.



gas safety in your home

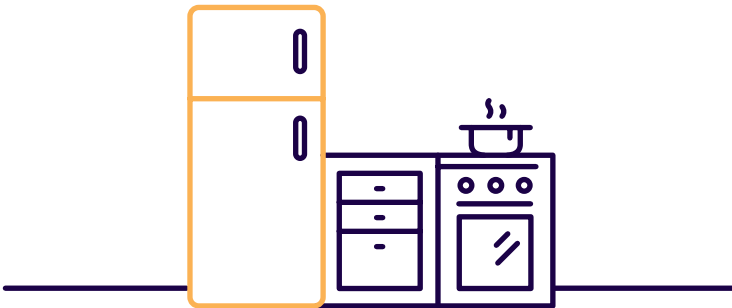
The in-house gas engineers at believe housing carry out annual checks to every property.

Tenants must allow access to their home for gas safety checks.

These safety check visits are required as part of your tenancy agreement. If you can't keep an appointment, please call believe housing so that your appointment can be rescheduled.

By law believe housing must ensure that all work on gas appliances or fittings is carried by a qualified engineer with Gas Safe Register accreditation. No DIY work can be carried out on gas appliances or fittings; it is dangerous and illegal.

If any extra work on gas appliances is required, you must inform believe housing in advance and use only qualified personnel with Gas Safe Register accreditation.



Carbon monoxide

Carbon monoxide poisoning can kill or leave you hospitalised. You can't see it, taste it or smell it, but carbon monoxide can kill within a matter of hours. The symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include tiredness, drowsiness, headache, nausea, pains in the chest and stomach pains.

If you or your family experience these symptoms and believe that carbon monoxide may be involved, you must seek urgent medical help.

There are some simple steps that can be taken in your home to reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning:

- Never use a gas appliance if you think is it not working properly. Signs to look out for include a yellow or orange flame (except for fuel efficient fires which display this colour flame), soot or stains around the appliance and pilot lights which frequently blow out.
- Do not cover an appliance or block the air vents.
- Don't block or obstruct any ventilation grilles or air bricks.
- Never block or cover any outside flue.
- Regularly check carbon monoxide alarms.

If you smell gas, or suspect a carbon monoxide leak, open all the doors and windows immediately and call the Gas Emergency freephone number **0800 111 999**

If you have any concerns about safety in your home, contact believe housing on **0300 1311 999**.

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Call: **0300 1311 999**

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