



SAFETY in the HOME

Useful information on
home safety



GAS SAFETY

As a landlord we have a legal responsibility to ensure that all gas appliances, fittings and flues within your home are safe and properly looked after - this includes central heating boilers and gas fires.



To do this we must conduct annual gas servicing checks on all of our properties.

Your Responsibilities

You must allow access to your home to complete your annual gas safety check.

If you do not allow access then you will be in breach of your tenancy agreement which can lead to us taking legal action, which could result in us requesting a warrant from the court to gain entry to your property to enable the gas safety check to be carried out.

You must never attempt to do any gas related work or repairs yourself. Doing so could be life threatening for you and your neighbours.

If you want to install your own gas appliances, such as a cooker, you need to use a Gas Safe registered engineer and you'll need to show us a valid Gas Safety Certificate.

Gas Safety Tips

- Don't use any gas appliances that you think may be broken or faulty
- Never cover a gas appliance, such as a boiler or gas fire
- Make sure you know how to turn off the gas supply in the event of an emergency
- Do not block or cover outside flues

What to do if you smell gas or suspect carbon monoxide?

- Stop using all appliances, switch them off, and open doors and windows to ventilate the property
- Evacuate the property immediately

- Call the gas emergency number on 0800 111 999 to report the incident
- Don't go back into the property – wait for advice from the emergency services
- Seek immediate medical help – you may not realise you've been affected by the carbon monoxide, and going outside into fresh air won't treat any exposure by itself

If you have any queries, please contact our Gas Technician on 01229 876522.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

We undertake regular tests on electronic installations in your home to ensure that the property is safe to live in.

All our properties are periodically tested. You will receive a letter informing you of the testing, followed by a letter from the contractor to arrange an appointment date.



Your Responsibilities

You must allow access to your home to complete your electrical safety test.

The test will take approximately half a day to complete. The contractor will require someone over the age of 18 to be in the property to allow access and will require unrestricted access to all areas of your home to test electrical circuits such as meters, sockets, switches and lights.

Failure to provide access may result in further action being taken against your tenancy.

Electrical Safety Tips

- Buy electrical appliances and chargers from a reputable source and always check for a safety mark.
- Check your sockets for burn marks regularly. These will be checked on your safety test, but if you have concerns at any time then contact us.
- Don't overload sockets or extension leads. They will have a power limit so be careful and try to keep to one plug per socket.
- Switch off appliances at the switch when not in use - unless they are designed to be left on (e.g. fridge freezer).

If you have any queries, please contact our Contract Supervisor on 01229 876465.

FIRE SAFETY



Fires in the home are a main cause of deaths which is why it is important to know what to do if a fire does break out in your home and what action you can take to prevent fires.

Smoke alarms are fitted in your home. We know that smoke alarms save lives. You should test the alarm each week to make sure it is working properly.

It is your responsibility to replace back up batteries in smoke alarms.

If you have any queries, please contact our Contract Supervisor on 01229 876465.

LEGIONNAIRE'S DISEASE

Legionnaires' disease is a lung infection you can catch by inhaling droplets of water that is contaminated by the legionella bacteria. It's uncommon but can be serious so it is important to be aware.

It is common in natural water sources such as ponds and lakes. It may contaminate and grow in water systems such as hot and cold water systems.

The best way to avoid legionella is by maintaining good water hygiene in your home, such as:

- Run your taps and flush the toilet cistern if you have been out of the property for a number of days
- Clean your shower head regularly to prevent a build up of bacteria
- Keep water temperatures above 40 degrees at all times
- Make sure you use water collected in water butts or drain regularly

If you have any queries, please contact our Maintenance & Asset Manager on 01229 876540.

RADON GAS

Radon is a radioactive gas that comes from the rocks and soil found everywhere in the UK. It is not possible to see, smell or taste radon gas and as such special equipment is needed to detect it.

In general terms radon gas levels in the air we breathe outside is very low but can be higher inside buildings. The only way to know if a property has high radon levels is to have it tested.

If you have any queries, please contact our Maintenance & Asset Manager on 01229 876540.

LEAD PAINT

Do you know old leaded paint can be serious risk to your health?

Breathing or ingesting lead dust or fumes can cause serious problems like kidney, nerve and brain damage or infertility.

You are most at risk if you:

- strip old paint using blow lamps or gas torches; or
- dry sand old paint.

You can take simple steps to stop dust/fumes:

- Plan your work – only strip back old paint if it is flaking, chipping or it is a risk to children.
- If paint is in poor condition remove using a combination of chemical paint stripper, wet abrasive paper and on-tool extraction.
- If paint is in good condition use waterproof abrasive paper to make a key for the new coat of paint.
- Remove any debris with a damp cloth.
- Place any debris, cloths, abrasive paper in a plastic bag for disposal.

Remember

- Lead pigments were widely used in paints for homes, schools and offices until the 1960s.
- Lead pigments were not removed from commonly used paints until the early 1980s.
- Lead paint can be found under existing paintwork in older buildings.

If you have any queries, please contact our Maintenance & Asset Manager on 01229 876540.



ASBESTOS

What is asbestos?

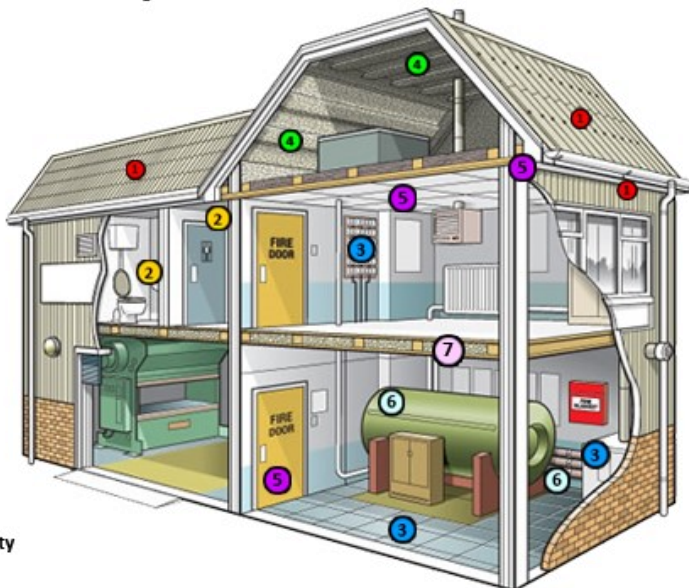
Asbestos is the name given to a group of naturally occurring fibrous materials and was previously used in many building products, domestic appliances and household goods because of its strength and heat resisting properties.

- Blue and Brown asbestos is generally regarded to be more hazardous than white asbestos.
- You cannot identify the type of asbestos just by looking at the colour, testing is the preferred means of identifying asbestos types
- As long as the asbestos is in good condition and is not being or going to be disturbed there is **NO RISK** to you or your family
- You should always seek advice about asbestos before starting any DIY projects or improvements to your home.
- You should not attempt to cut, saw or drill materials that may contain asbestos as it may release fibres into the air.

If you have any queries, please contact our Maintenance & Asset Manager on 01229 876540.

Asbestos Materials: Likely Locations

- 1** Asbestos Cement Products
- 2** Textured Coatings
- 3** Floor Tiles, Textiles & Composites
- 4** Sprayed coatings on walls, beams/columns
- 5** Asbestos insulating board
- 6** Lagging
- 7** Loose Asbestos in ceiling or floor cavity



HOW TO REDUCE THE RISK OF ACCIDENTS IN THE HOME

There are many simple changes you can make around your home to reduce your risk of falling. Here are some tips on how to make your home safer.

Floors

- Loose rugs and mats can be a trip hazard and should be avoided, if possible. If you do have rugs on the floor secure them with double-sided tape or a non slip backing so that the rugs won't slip.
- Have a clear path through each room so you don't have to walk around furniture.
- It is important not to hoard items within your property as these could be a fire risk.
- Keep your floors clear of items such as shoes, books, blankets and other objects.
- Try to organise your room so appliances are close to sockets. Coil or tape cords and wires next to the wall so that you can't trip over them.

Steps and stairs

- Always keep the stairs free of objects.
- Report any loose or uneven steps.
- Where you have carpet on steps make sure that it is firmly attached to every step.
- Ensure when using the stairs at night that they are adequately lit.
- If you have stair rails make sure they are securely fitted. If they become insecure, please contact us.
- If you are struggling with a high step to get in and out of your property, please contact us.

Bathroom

- In the bath or shower, get a non slip rubber mat or use self-stick strips to secure your bath mat.
- If you require support when you get in and out of the shower/bath or up from the toilet, please contact us to be considered for a minor adaptation.

Bedroom

- Have a lamp close to the bed where it is easy to reach.
- If you use an electric blanket, make sure you follow the health and safety guidance supplied.

Garden

- Keep paths clear of leaves and overgrown plants.
- Moss and algae can make steps slippery when wet. There are products available to rinse off and remove algae.
- If you need to go outside and paths are icy, cover them in salt or sandy salt. Avoid going outside in icy conditions if possible.
- Never use a ladder when you are alone, it's far safer to have someone with you who can hold the ladder steady. If possible have someone to climb the ladder for you.
- When using power tools or an electric mower, make sure they are fitted with a residual current device (RCD). This shuts off the power if an electrical fault develops or if you accidentally cut through the cable.
- Always put garden tools, rakes and spades away.

Kitchen

- Keep items you use regularly at working height.
- If you must use a step stool, get one with a bar to hold on to. Never use a chair.

General

- Always ensure used sharps/needles are disposed of properly in line with safety guidance given.
- You must not obstruct any communal areas. If we feel that any item is an obstruction or a hazard we may remove it after giving you reasonable notice and dispose of it, and charge you our reasonable costs for doing this.
- You must not store, park, recharge the batteries of or repair any motorised vehicle (petrol or electric) inside your home or in any communal or shared areas other than an area identified for such purposes.

Barrow Borough Council • Housing Department

Town Hall
Duke Street
Barrow-in-Furness
Cumbria LA14 2LD

Tel: (01229) 876540

www.barrowbc.gov.uk • email: housing@barrowbc.gov.uk

TOWN HALL OPENING TIMES: Monday to Friday: 9am - 4pm

Telephone enquiries : Monday to Thursday: 8:30am to 5pm (4.30pm on Fridays)

FOR EMERGENCY OUT-OF-OFFICE ENQUIRIES TEL. (01229) 833311