



## Winter Advice



Unfortunately it is that time of year when the weather starts to become cold and damp - on the upside it's not long until Christmas! We really want you to enjoy your home during the long nights and damp days so please bear in mind the following advice.

### Heating & Hot Water

Test your heating system early - if your radiators and/or your boiler has not been active for a long period then the most likely time for a fault to occur is when you first turn it on - so don't wait until the really cold weather starts before trying the heating for the first time. Heating engineers and spare parts may take several days to become available.

If you have problems then consider the following:

- Don't forget to set your room thermostat - if your thermostat is set low then the heating may not come on.
- Most modern boilers will give basic fault indications - consult the user instructions
- Check the system pressure - a basic refill on a combi-boiler is a simple task
- Check our other info sheet entitled "Boiler Breakdown"
- If you need to report a boiler breakdown then use our online form - ask us for details or check your tenant's booklet.

If you plan to be away from your home for any period of time then please leave the heating on low and allow warm air to circulate around pipes and water tanks to avoid bursts and leaks.

Outside taps should, wherever possible, be isolated from the mains using the isolator provided. The tap and associated pipe work should also be insulated against the cold.

### Empty Property

If you plan to leave your home vacant for a prolonged period of time (more than a week) then please inform us. Consider switching off the water supply at the stop cock and resist turning your boiler off - most modern boilers will run periodically (whilst not necessarily heating) and circulate water which can safeguard against frozen pipes.

### Gutters & Rain Water Drains

Unless you live in a Flat or HMO then it is usually the tenant's responsibility to keep drains and gutters clear of leaves and debris (these are the little tasks and chores that are required along with cleaning, sweeping chimneys, gardening etc) - so please do not neglect to clear drains and gutters - gutters overflowing with water can cause major problems with penetrating damp.

### Condensation

Condensation and mould can be a really big problem; warm air carries moisture which then condenses on cold surfaces such as the interior side of external walls and windows. The moisture then promotes growth of mould and associated spores which can be bad for health. The solution is heating and adequate ventilation - so this problem often occurs in spare/unused rooms where doors remain closed (and air stagnates) or in older properties which have had double-glazing or draft excluders retrofitted.

To help avoid claims against your deposit for unreasonable deterioration, always use extraction fans and ventilation systems whilst regularly opening windows and trickle vents to allow fresh air to enter the property (and all rooms) and circulate.

### Clear Up fallen Leaves

If you have trees and hedges in your garden then do not allow the leaves to settle and smother the lawn otherwise the grass will die and leave a bare patch of earth. You will be liable for reseeded/returfing - it's a really easy task if done regularly so please clear leaves and start early in the autumn on a regular basis.

### Smoke Detectors & Carbon Monoxide Alarms

This letter is also an opportunity to remind you to test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Whilst it is your responsibility to replace batteries at your own expense, faulty alarms should be reported at your earliest convenience.

## Electrical RCDs

RCDs are safety devices fitted within or near to your consumer unit (fuse-box). They're not always installed but if they are then they are often labelled and may also be called an RCCD or an RCBO. However, they all have a test button which should be tested quarterly - if the test button is working correctly then power will be isolated to the associated circuits so when testing be careful and don't surprise anyone in remote rooms or using tools, computers etc. Why not test them at the same time as changing the clocks? You will be resetting timers anyway.



## Christmas

If you're having a big family Christmas then bear in mind the electrical loading on your home's circuits - lots of occupants using electric kettles, lighting, showers, heaters, ovens and other appliances can put a high demand on electrical circuits causing circuit breakers and RCDs to occasionally trip. Usually it's fairly easy to reset a circuit breaker but if you are having a persistent problem then think about what appliances you are using; reduce the demand by switching some appliances off. Remember a faulty appliance may be the cause your circuit breakers and/or RCD to tripping so only use reliable appliances.

Proudhouse Property Management hope that the autumn and winter period is warm and cosy for you - if you have any problems then let us know as early as possible and please provide us with as much information as possible about any problems to allow us to help you as quickly as possible.

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