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Your guide to . . .

Safety in the home

Ensuring your home is protected and your family is safe

Glen Oaks
HOUSING ASSOCIATION



This document provides you with information on how to ensure your home is safe for you and your family.

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Glen Oaks Housing Association is committed to providing you with a home that is safe, secure and of a good standard.

Protecting your home

Accidents do happen and it is important that you have contents insurance to cover any damage to your home. This should be full insurance, which covers risks such as fire, flood and leaking water pipes. You can suffer severe financial loss if you do not have insurance or if the cover is not enough.

We make your safety a high priority and take steps to make sure any risk is the lowest it can be.

Following the simple guidelines listed below could help to protect you, your family and your home.

Fire safety

You can help to prevent most fires in your house by taking a few simple precautions.

- Always make sure you put out all candles
- Unplug all appliances when you are not using them
- Put out all cigarettes and empty ashtrays into something that will not burn
- Close all doors in your home at night. If a fire starts this will help to prevent it from spreading.

Keeping common stairs clear

A fire may not necessarily be in your home. If you live in a flat and you have a common stair it is important that you keep it clear because it is your only means of escape in the event of a fire.

Even a small bag of rubbish can create enough smoke to fill a whole stairwell.

Items left in a common stair are often deliberately set on fire.

Keep it clear

- Put rubbish, old furniture etc outside the building
- Make sure storage areas are kept locked

Smoke detectors

All Glen Oaks properties are fitted with smoke detectors. Some are battery-operated and others work from the mains electricity supply.

Following changes in Fire Regulations, the Association will be installing linked smoke and heat detectors in your home by 2020. This will consist of a heat detector in the kitchen and one smoke detector in the hall and living room. If you live in a house, a smoke detector will also be fitted on each landing. All detectors will be linked by a radio signal so that if one goes off, they all go off.

In addition, all properties with a gas supply have been fitted with a carbon monoxide detector. This is not linked to the other detectors.

Smoke, heat and carbon monoxide detectors are checked once a year at the same time as the annual gas safety visit.

Smoke detectors can save lives

It is important that you regularly check your smoke alarms are working. This can be done by pressing the test button and you should be able to hear if the alarm still works.

If you have a battery operated smoke detector you will need to replace the batteries from time to time. It is advisable

to do this every year. Normally, as the battery is running down it makes a "bleeping" sound. If you have a medical issue and are unable to change these batteries, you should contact our Technical Department.

Gas safety checks

Glen Oaks takes gas safety extremely seriously and all properties with a gas supply must have an annual gas safety check. It is vital that we gain access to your property to carry out this check.

You will be contacted by Gas Sure with an appointment in the first instance and thereafter by Glen Oaks.

If we do not get access to your property we will have to force access and disconnect your gas supply. If we need to do this you will be invoiced for the cost.

It would be easier and cheaper for you to provide access to us - if you are not available for the first appointment, please contact us to re-arrange to a more suitable time.

Gas emergency – smell of 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**.

Legionella

What is Legionella?

Legionella are bacteria which cause Legionnaires' disease. This is an uncommon disease similar to pneumonia. Legionella bacteria can live in hot and cold water systems within domestic properties. Contaminated bacteria can be released into the air in an aerosol form such as from the fine spray from running taps or showers.

Please be aware that Legionnaires' disease is extremely rare and the risk of infection is small.

What does Glen Oaks do about Legionella?

Some of our homes are served by cold water storage tanks and we have a contractor inspect and test the water in these tanks on a regular basis.

We also carry out any works required as a result of these inspections i.e. cleaning and disinfecting tanks, based on recommendations from our contractor.

If you have any questions regarding Legionella or require any advice on preventative measures please contact Louise McNicol on 0141 620 2749.

What can you do about Legionella?

There are some things you can do to help minimise the risk of Legionella bacteria developing in your domestic water supply for example:

- Prevent the build up of stagnant water by running all infrequently used outlets such as showers, hot and cold taps, outside taps and second toilets at least once a week. Run water very slowly for 1 minute and then on full power for 5 minutes to ensure any stagnant water lying in the pipework is cleared.
- If a shower has not been used for a week or more, immerse the head of the shower in a basin or bath of water and turn on the shower letting the water run for 2-3 minutes.
- If your hot water is supplied by a hot water cylinder, ensure the stored temperature of this is set to at least 60°C. Do not turn off your hot water cylinder as this will cause the temperature to drop and bacteria will thrive, increasing the risk of Legionella.
- If you have a cold water storage tank within your own house or flat, it is recommended that the temperature of the water in the tank should be less than 20°C.

Cold weather precautions

Taking some basic precautions can help avoid pipes freezing - or worse, bursting - with disastrous consequences.

- During the coldest spells of weather, leave your heating switched on as long as you can. If you have a thermostat for your heating system set it to at least 10°C.
- If you are going away let us know. We'll offer advice and assistance in relation to draining down your plumbing system, if necessary. Leave a door key with a neighbour or relative and tell us how we can contact the person who has the key should an emergency occur.

If a burst happens

Turn off the stopcock **immediately**. Fully turn on the taps to drain the system. If possible, carry out a temporary repair to prevent flooding your neighbours. This can be done by tightly binding the damaged length of pipe with an old cloth or with tape. Call us as soon as possible for a full repair to be carried out - **this is essential**.

If water has penetrated electrical fittings, switch off the mains electricity supply. Call us **immediately** to ask for assistance.

Electrical safety

Electricity can kill. Electricity is now the major cause of accidental fires in UK homes. It is important that any electrical installation work is carried out only by people who are competent.

If you carry out any electrical work in your property such as changing light switches or sockets, you **MUST** gain our permission first. All work must be carried out by a qualified electrician and we must be provided with an electrical certificate. For more information contact our Technical team.

Blocked drains

Blocked drains can be a nuisance, but can normally be prevented.

Blocked drains in the toilet or bathroom are a problem; it's usually due to the items you flush down your toilet.

If it's a kitchen drain that is blocked, it could be because of food particles, grease and other debris which is washed into the pipes from your kitchen sink or washer.

These can cause significant blockages which may require a professional drainage engineer and you will be charged the full cost of the repair.

Condensation

Condensation is when water vapour that is trapped within the air condenses on to a cooler surface. It then changes from a gas to liquid and causes moisture to appear on the surface. If this continues over a period of time and does not dry out, it encourages mould.

There are many ways to reduce the risk of condensation in your home. These include:

- ✗ **Don't** block off any ventilation around the house such as air bricks or trickle vents on windows
- ✗ **Don't** use tumble driers unless they are self-condensing or vented with a hose leading outside
- ✗ **Don't** keep the door open when cooking or bathing
- ✓ **Do** keep lids on pans when cooking
- ✓ **Do** use extractor fans in bathrooms and kitchens or open the window to allow moisture to escape
- ✓ **Do** open the window after a bath or shower and open the door
- ✓ **Do** try to keep a good level of background heating throughout the property
- ✓ **Do** try to dry your clothes outside, where possible

Window safety

Our properties should have safety catches fitted on all windows above ground level. Windows can be dangerous, especially to young children or when you are cleaning them.

We will check for safety catches in your home before you move in. However, you should keep checking them to make sure they work properly and contact us immediately if you have any concerns.

Asbestos

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous material that was commonly used as an insulator and has good fire protection properties. It is most likely to be found in homes built between the 1950s and the early 1980s.

Where is asbestos found?

Asbestos fibres may be found in the following materials:

- Floor tiles (vinyl or thermoplastic tiles)
- Wall and ceiling boards
- Artex (textured) ceiling finishes
- Sprayed coatings to steelwork
- Lagging around pipework and hot water cylinders
- Water tanks
- Wall boards / lining boards
- Inside electrical distribution boards and fuses
- Bath panels

What we do about asbestos?

We have carried out a high number of asbestos checks on our properties and hold an asbestos register of the results.

Prior to any repair or major upgrade works this register is checked by our staff and contractors. If no information is held an asbestos check will be carried out before any work is allowed to proceed.

When is asbestos dangerous?

The presence of asbestos in your home does not necessarily pose a risk. If it is sealed (encapsulated) and is in good condition then it will not be a problem unless the sealant is damaged – asbestos is only dangerous when fibres are released into the air.

The most common disturbance of asbestos results from DIY. In order to ensure your safety when carrying out any DIY, please follow the guidelines below:

- **DO NOT** drill a hole through any asbestos boards or suspected asbestos-containing materials
- **DO NOT** cut or break off any parts of asbestos products or suspected asbestos-containing materials
- **DO NOT** rub down asbestos panels or Artex with sandpaper or suspected asbestos-containing materials
- **DO NOT** use wallpaper scrapers on asbestos products or suspected asbestos-containing materials
- **DO NOT** remove asbestos or suspected asbestos-containing materials or panels to gain access to services such as concealed pipework.

If you are unsure if a product contains asbestos it is advisable not to carry out any works until you have contacted us for further advice on 0141 638 0999.

Further information regarding asbestos can be found at Health & Safety Executive www.hse.gov.uk

Contact Us

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Our office opening hours are:

Monday, Tuesday & Thursday: 9am - 5pm

Wednesday: 9am - 1pm

Friday: 9am - 4pm

Our office is closed for staff training from 1pm every Wednesday.



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