

# Your home Your safety

An essential guide to  
Health and Safety



enabling independent living

**As your landlord, we are responsible for meeting Health and Safety standards in your home.**

**This leaflet summarises:**

Colne's responsibilities

Your responsibilities

Essential tips and information to avoid issues and hazards



## Contents

**Gas Safety**

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# Gas Safety

What your landlord does

## Colne's responsibilities and service standards

We will make sure your gas appliances and pipe work are well-maintained. ✓

We will carry out an annual safety check of Colne-owned gas appliances and flue. ✓

We will write to you at least eight weeks before the expiry of the gas safety certificate. ✓

We will make an appointment at your convenience to carry out a safety inspection in your home. ✓

We will carry out regular customer satisfaction surveys and publish the results of these surveys each year. ✓

We provide gas engineers who are correctly trained, qualified and registered with the Gas Safety Register. ✓

We keep a record of the gas safety check for two years. ✓

We carry out a visual safety check of the gas appliances you own. ✓

How **you** keep your home safe

## Your responsibilities

You keep appointments for your annual gas safety inspection. ✓

You allow gas contractors into your home to carry out safety checks and maintenance. ✓

Your report gas leaks and turn off the supply at the mains. ✓

You use gas safe registered contractors to install and service your own appliances. ✓

Do not use gas appliances that you think may be unsafe. ✗

Do not paint the casing of your gas fire or boiler. ✗

Do not block any ventilation needed for gas appliances. ✗

Do not sleep in the lounge of your property if it has an open flue gas appliance, such as a fire and back boiler. ✗

# Gas Safety

## Remember!

**If you smell gas or your carbon monoxide detector is sounding you must**

**1**

Get fresh air immediately. Open all doors and windows to ventilate the room.

**2**

Switch off the appliance and do not use it again until it has been checked by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

**3**

Turn off the gas supply at the mains.

**4**

Call the national gas emergency number – 0800 111 999.

**5**

If you are feeling ill, visit your GP or the hospital immediately and tell them that your symptoms may be related to carbon monoxide poisoning.

**6**

Contact Colne on 01206 244700 to arrange for an engineer to check and fix the appliance.

## Carbon monoxide detectors – our responsibilities

Colne installs carbon monoxide detectors in homes that use solid fuels or have open flued appliances. We check them during the Landlord Gas Safety Checks.

## Frequently asked questions

**Q. How will you arrange my gas safety check?**

A. We will write to you offering a morning or afternoon appointment from Monday to Friday. If you are unavailable during these times, we can offer an evening or Saturday morning appointment.

**Q. What if I don't allow contractors in to carry out the gas safety check?**

A. By law, we must check your gas appliances every year. So we can get in your home to do this, we write to you at least eight weeks before the service is due to arrange an appointment.

**Q. What if I don't keep the appointment or don't let the gas contractors in?**

A. If we have visited more than twice to get in your home, we reserve the right to force entry and ask you to pay for costs associated with this.

**Q. What if I am ill or vulnerable so can't let you in?**

A. If there are legitimate reasons why we cannot get in your home we will work with you to resolve these.

**Q. What if my home does not have any gas appliances?**

A. If there is a gas meter but no gas appliances, we are required by law to inspect your property and provide a Landlord's Gas Safety Certificate.

**Q. What is an open flued appliance?**

A. An open flued appliance is one that vents into your home, normally into a chimney stack.

These include:

- Open fires
- Wood burning/  
multi-fuel stoves
- Gas fires
- Back boilers.

**Q. Why do you block up open fires?**

A. Colne proactively blocks up open fires and removes open flued appliances when properties become empty.

We want to phase out these appliances so if you request to have one it will be refused.



# Fire Safety

## Fire safety tips

You need to think about your escape route in the event of a fire within your home – and make sure everyone in your house is familiar with it. ✓

Make sure the smoke alarms in your home are working by testing them weekly. ✓

Take extra care when cooking with hot oil – don't leave children alone in the kitchen when the hob or oven is on. ✓

Use the fixed heating system fitted in your home, do not use any form of radiant heater, especially one with either a flame (gas or paraffin) or a radiant element (electric bar fire.) ✓

Think of your escape route - do not store anything in your hall or corridor. ✓

Don't overload sockets. ✓

Ensure all cigarettes and candles are put out properly and do not leave them unattended. ✓

Make a bedtime check. ✓

## Bedtime checks

Check the cooker is turned off. ✓

Turn off and unplug electrical appliances (unless they are meant to be left on like your freezer). ✓

Ensure candles and cigarettes are out properly. ✓

Turn heaters off. ✓

Make sure exits are clear. ✓

Close inside doors at night to stop fire spreading. ✓





## Frequently asked questions

**Q. Can I have a fire safety check at my home?**

**A.** Some fire and rescue services offer a free home fire safety visit. They will inspect your home to help you spot any potential fire hazards and show you what to do to reduce or prevent the risk of fire.

**Q. How do I get a fire safety visit?**

**A.** Contact your local fire and rescue service for more information (see useful numbers on page 11 of this leaflet).

**Q. What if I live in a block of flats and there is a fire in another part of the building?**

**A.** If you live in a flat with communal areas, the flats are designed to contain the fire within the area in which it started. This means if you hear an alarm sound and the fire is not in your flat the safest option is to stay put, unless instructed otherwise by the Fire Brigade.

**Q. How do I know what to do if I live in a block of flats?**

**A.** There are fire action notices in the communal areas – please familiarise yourselves with them.

**Q. Can I have my own information?**

**A.** If you would like a copy of the fire action notice inside your flat – please contact our Customer Services Team.

## Remember! In the event of a fire:

**1** Do not stop to save valuables.

**2** Do not investigate the fire.

**3** Crawl on the floor if there is smoke.

**4** As you leave – only open doors you need to and close any open doors you can to slow the spread of fire.

**5** Stay together if you can.

**6** If there is a lift/stair-lift do not use.

**7** Do not go back in.

**8** Call 999 and ask for fire, provide your name, full address and contact telephone number.

# Damp, mould and condensation

## What causes damp?

- Leaking pipes, wastes or overflows
- Rain seeping through the roof
- Rising damp
- Condensation

**Condensation is the most common cause of damp and mould.**

## What is condensation?

Condensation occurs when warm moist air meets a cold surface, such as windows or walls. As the air cools, water is deposited.

Problems mainly occur during the winter, when the difference between the internal and external temperature is at its greatest.

The condensation often appears where there is little movement of air. You may notice it on or near windows, in or behind wardrobes and cupboards and on north facing walls.

New buildings can suffer from condensation until the water that was used during building, for instance in the plaster, has completely dried out.

## Preventing condensation – your responsibilities

Keep your property heated at a low level to increase the temperature of internal surfaces. ✓

Produce less moisture. Cover pans and do not leave kettles boiling. ✓

Do not use paraffin and portable Calor gas heaters, as these put a lot of moisture in the air. ✓

Dry washing outdoors or put it in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or extractor fan on. ✓

Vent any tumble dryer outside unless it is the self-condensing type. ✓

When running bath water, mix both hot and cold taps together to minimise steam. ✓

Ventilate to remove moisture. Keep a small window ajar whenever possible or the trickle vent open when someone is in the room. ✓

Ventilate kitchens and bathrooms when in use by opening the windows wider or using the extractor fan. ✓





Close the kitchen and bathroom doors during and after use. ✓

Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes. Avoid putting too many things in them as this stops the air circulating. ✓

If possible position furniture against internal walls. Leave a gap of around 10 cm where possible if you have to place furniture against external walls. This allows airflow and prevents cold spots occurring. ✓



## Remember! How to deal with mould.

**1** First, treat any mould you may already have in your home. You can do this by wiping it down with a fungicidal wash, which can be purchased from most supermarkets or DIY stores.

**2** Dry-clean clothes and shampoo carpets. Disturbing mould by brushing or vacuuming can increase the risk of breathing difficulties.

**3** After treatment, redecorate using a good quality anti-fungicidal paint to help prevent mould recurring.



# Asbestos

## What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a mineral fibre found in building materials and products used from 1950 to 2000.

Asbestos is safe if undamaged. However, if the fibres become damaged through age or DIY activity, it can be dangerous if breathed in.

## Where is asbestos found?

The types of asbestos materials that may be found in your home are described below:

**Sprayed coating** – found as fire protection material on columns or beams which may be found in steel framed houses or communal areas of flats.

**Pipe insulation** – asbestos thermal pipe lagging used to insulate pipes and boilers.

**Asbestos insulating board** – found on ceilings and in door panels used for fire protection and heat insulation.

**Floor tiles** – vinyl (PVC) or thermo-plastic tiles may contain a small amount of asbestos material.

**Asbestos cement roof sheeting** – found on industrial roofs, walls and sometimes garage roofs.

**Textured decorative coating (artex)** – found on ceilings or walls.

## Your responsibilities

Before you carry out any DIY on your home, check that you are not working on any products containing asbestos.

Obtain written permission from us before you start work on your property.

It is vital that an asbestos survey is carried out before any type of major refurbishment work takes place.

## Colne's responsibilities

We hold an asbestos register, so we know where asbestos is present.

We know most of the asbestos in Colne properties is in floor tiles that are safe if undamaged.

## Remember!

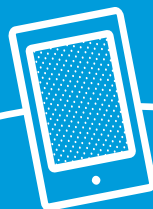
**1** Asbestos building products have now been banned.

**2** If you live in a property that was built after 2000, it is highly unlikely that you will find asbestos in your home.

# Useful numbers

- Emergency number **999**
- National Grid  
**0800 111999**
- Essex County Fire and Rescue  
**01376 576000**
- Suffolk Fire and Rescue  
**01473 260588**

If you have any further questions about any of the issues in this guide, you can call our Customer Services Team on **01206 244700** or contact your Neighbourhood Officer.



# enabling independent living

We will make every effort to provide information in alternative formats on request, including audio, large print and translations.

**Colne  
Digby House, Riverside Office Centre,  
Causton Road, Colchester, Essex CO1 1RJ**

**Tel: 01206 244700**

**Fax: 01206 760403**

**Text Service: 07539 114114**

**E-mail: [info@colnehousing.co.uk](mailto:info@colnehousing.co.uk)**

**Website: [www.colnehousing.co.uk](http://www.colnehousing.co.uk)**

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