



- Compliance and safety checks
- Mould, damp and condensation



Health and safety

Compliance and safety checks

We take our health and safety responsibilities to tenants very seriously and planned programmes are in place to ensure that our properties are safe to live in.

You are also responsible for the safety of your home and must allow us to complete safety checks. Failure to do so is a breach of your tenancy agreement and can result in legal action being taken against your tenancy.

If you would like to review any of the documentation relating to the health and safety of your home, please contact the **Housing Maintenance Team**.

Gas

Where there is a gas supply, we have a legal duty to carry out an annual gas safety check in every tenant's home. We will write to you every year offering an appointment for this essential check.

All of the engineers we use for this are Gas Safe Registered.

Never use a gas appliance that you think may be faulty. If you suspect there is a problem, call the **Housing Maintenance Team** on **0800 111 4484** immediately.

To report a suspected gas leak, call the **National Gas Emergency Service** on **0800 111 999**.

If you own a gas cooker, it is your responsibility to have it safely installed in your home by a Gas Safe Registered engineer.

Smoke and carbon monoxide alarm

We must ensure at least one smoke alarm is equipped on each storey of your home where there is a room used as living accommodation.

We must ensure a carbon monoxide alarm is equipped in any room used as living accommodation which contains a fixed combustion appliance (excluding gas cookers).

We must ensure smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms are repaired or replaced once informed and found that they are faulty.

We will test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarm yearly at the same time as your gas safety check. We will repair or replace any that have issues. We also have a replacement programme, which is based on the manufacturer's guidance.

You should test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms weekly by pressing the test button. If this does not work or if you suspect there is a problem, call the **Housing Maintenance Team** on **0800 111 4484** immediately.

Health and safety

Asbestos

You will have received an **asbestos survey** for your home when you moved in. Please refer to it before carrying out any DIY that involves drilling, cutting or attaching fixings to a wall or partition. If you do not have this information, contact our **Housing Maintenance Team** for a copy.

If your property was built before 2000 we will complete an asbestos survey prior to starting any intrusive works. Please allow access for this so that any works are carried out as quickly as possible.

If you suspect any asbestos has been damaged call the **Housing Maintenance Team** on **0800 111 4484** immediately.

We carry out regular inspections of all our communal blocks that contain asbestos.

Electric

We have a legal duty to carry out an electrical safety test in every tenant's home on a regular basis. This will be completed on a five-yearly programme.

You must allow the engineers into your home to carry out essential safety checks and repairs. Failure to do so is a breach of your tenancy



agreement and can result in legal action being taken against your tenancy.

If the test fails, depending on the results, we will either complete the required repairs or rewire the property.

- do not use any electrical item that appears damaged or has damage to the cable
- do not overload any socket
- do not use multiple extension leads together
- do not cover any plugged-in item as this could cause it to overheat

Health and safety

- try to minimise extension lead usage
- do not do any unauthorised work on the electrics in your home
- Any authorised work must be carried out by a qualified electrician and evidence such as certificates must be sent to the **Housing Maintenance Team**

If you suspect any electrical equipment has been damaged call the **Housing Maintenance Team** on **0800 111 4484** immediately.



Water safety

We will conduct water hygiene risk assessments anywhere required (all communal blocks) on a regular basis.

We will do periodic testing and tank inspections of any communal water tank.

We will flush any infrequently used water outlets, such as taps or toilets, in communal / shared areas.

If you are leaving your property for more than a week turn the main stopcock off and drain the tank by running the taps. This will stop potential leaks while you are away. When you return, turn the stopcock back on and flush the system by turning on all the taps.

Ensure you use all your outlets (taps/toilets/bath and shower) at least once a week.

If you are concerned about water hygiene, call the **Housing Maintenance Team** on **0800 111 4484** immediately.

Lift safety

We complete planned preventive maintenance on all our communal lifts monthly. Any issues identified will be repaired as soon as possible. If the lift is taken out of action, we will notify you.

Health and safety

We complete six-monthly LOLER inspections for all lifts in communal settings and carry out any recommended works.

We complete six-monthly inspections/services on all our domestic lifts.

Please do not overload the lift with bulky items.

Do not use the lift in the event of a fire.

If the lift stops when you are in it press the call button which will contact the lift company who will assist you.

If you suspect a lift has a fault call the **Housing Maintenance Team** on **0800 111 4484** immediately.

Fire safety

We complete regular fire risk assessments based on the risk of the block. All actions are recorded and completed.

We inspect the blocks to ensure escape routes are kept clear and the signage in communal areas is up to date.

Where required, we regularly service fire alarm systems, firefighting equipment, automatic opening vents and emergency lighting.

We inspect fire doors on a regular basis.

- please keep exit routes in your home or in communal blocks clear
- make sure fire doors are kept closed
- do not leave combustible materials in an area where they could catch fire
- do not smoke in any communal area
- make sure bins and rubbish are secure

If you have any concerns about fire safety please contact the **Housing Maintenance Team** on **0800 111 4484** immediately or consider a **free home fire safety visit** from Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.



Health and safety

Mould, damp and condensation

Condensation and mould

Condensation is the most common cause of damp and forms when warm, moist air comes into contact with a cold surface like a window.

Left untreated, condensation can lead to mould growth on walls, ceilings and even furniture. It can also affect woodwork and plaster.

Condensation mainly occurs during the colder months, from September to April. It doesn't matter if the weather is wet or dry.

The amount of condensation in a home depends on:

- how much water vapour is produced
- how cold the property is
- how much ventilation there is in the house

Where does moisture in the home come from?

Our everyday activities add extra moisture to the air inside our homes.



Health and safety

Two people at home for 16 hours  3 Pints (1.7 litres)	Drying clothes indoors 9 Pints (5.1 litres) 
A bath or shower  2 Pints (1.1 litres)	Cooking and boiling a kettle 6 Pints (3.4 litres) 
Washing dishes 2 Pints (1.1 litres) 	Using a paraffin or bottled-gas heater 3 Pints (1.7 litres) 

As a landlord, we have a responsibility to fix the causes of damp and mould where it is a repair or defect, but we do ask our tenants to work with us in preventing the build-up of damp and mould by ventilating and heating homes.

Tips to reduce condensation

Reduce moisture

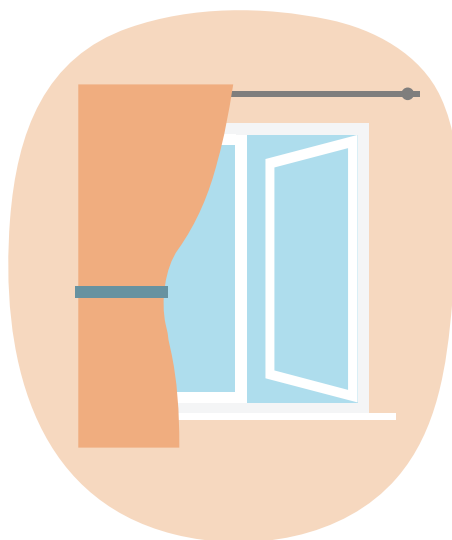
- cook with pan lids on
- use an extractor fan in kitchens and bathrooms, keeping the doors closed during and after use
- dry clothes outside where possible or on a clothes airer in the bathroom with the door closed and

a window slightly open to provide ventilation. Don't hang clothes on radiators to dry

- if you use a tumble dryer, make sure it is vented properly or use a condenser dryer
- put cold water in first when you run a bath
- wipe surfaces to remove excess condensation

Improve ventilation

- open windows regularly and use trickle vents, where fitted.
- don't completely block chimneys and flues – fit with an air vent.
- move furniture away from walls so air can circulate.
- keep cupboards and wardrobes clutter free.



Health and safety



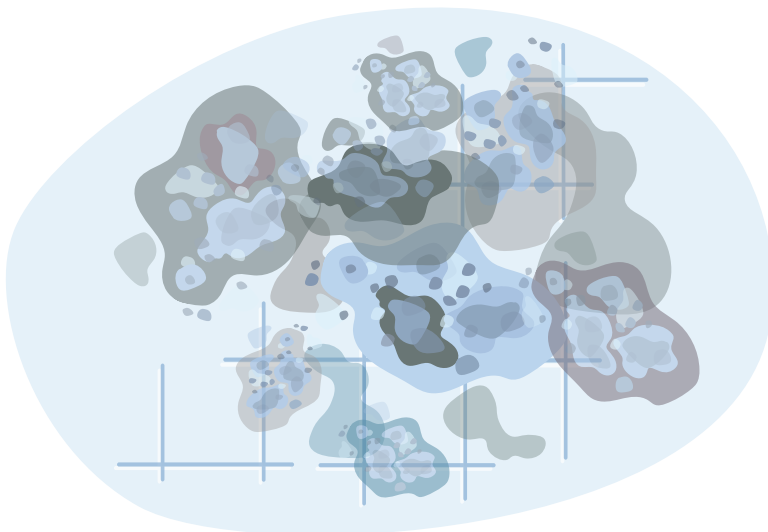
Heat your home

- Try to keep your home properly heated to a temperature of at least 18°C. It helps to provide a low heat all day.
- Avoid heaters that use bottled gas or paraffin as they produce lots of moisture and they are not allowed under your tenancy agreement.

Dealing with mould

- Don't disturb mould by vacuuming or brushing it.
- Wipe down affected areas with a fungicidal wash, following the instructions. Use a product that has a Health & Safety Executive (HSE) approval number.
- Use a fungicidal paint or wallpaper paste after treatment. Don't use ordinary paint on the affected area.
- Dry-clean any clothes that have mould/mildew on them.
- Shampoo any carpets that have mould on them.

If there are large areas of mould in a room, contact us to arrange a fungicidal wash. We will then need to establish the cause of the mould to prevent it returning.



Health and safety

Other types of damp

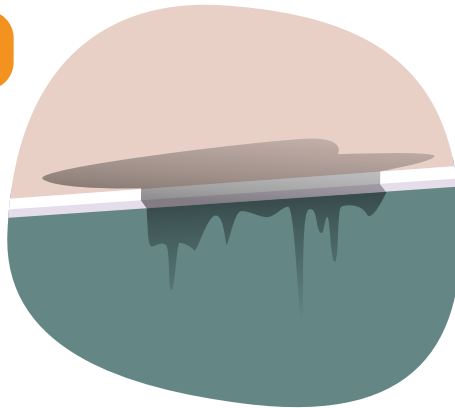
(Black mould will rarely be seen in these situations.)

Rising damp

- Caused by water rising from the ground into the home. The water gets through a broken damp proof course or the brickwork if a property was built without one.
- Only affects cellars and ground floor rooms.

Penetrating damp

- Only found on external walls or, in the case of a roof leak, on ceilings.
- Appears because of a defect outside the home such as missing pointing to the brickwork, cracked rendering, broken/missing roof tiles or a build-up of soil/plants against a wall.



Defective plumbing

- Caused by leaks from water and/or waste pipes.
- Affected area looks and feels damp.

It's important we know if your home has condensation, damp or mould so contact our **Housing Maintenance Team** on **0800 111 4484**.

If possible, send a photo to housingmaintenance@welhat.gov.uk.

If we are not able to easily diagnose the cause, the damp and mould is not improving, or it is at an advanced stage, we will arrange a visit from one of our surveyors to assess the problem.

