

Safety in the home

Glen Oaks
HOUSING ASSOCIATION



**HOME SAFETY SUPPLEMENT:
CAREFULLY READ THIS DOCUMENT
AND KEEP IT SOMEWHERE SAFE.
IMPORTANT HOME SAFETY ADVICE.**

Christmas is traditionally spent at home with family and friends. And with all the festive fun, it's easy to forget what a DANGEROUS place home can be.

NEVER MIND THE SAYING "SAFE AS HOUSES"

A staggering two-and-a-half MILLION people go to hospital each year in the UK after an accident in the home, with over one million involving an in-patient stay.

Around 3,800 people are killed in accidents at home each year, and it's children and older people – the very people brought together at Christmas – who are most at risk.

The good news is that the vast majority of home accidents are completely preventable – and a little preparation can make all the difference.



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Working together for a safer Scotland

DECORATIONS

Before the Christmas celebrations even begin, think about your decorations and where to hang tinsel, streamers or paper chains. They should always be well away from heat sources and where they cannot fall into a heater or open fire.

Take simple precautions to minimise the risk of fire:

- make sure balloons or paper chains are not hanging near a light fitting;
- don't stand cards on the mantelpiece or above a heater or fire;
- make sure all fairy lights are to a "British Standard" and have a "Kite mark";

- inspect the lights to ensure there are no cracked bulbs;
- check that wires have not been pulled away from the bulb holders;
- ALWAYS turn off and unplug the lights before changing a bulb or making checks;
- Christmas tree (fairy) lights can heat up so keep them away from anything that will burn;
- NEVER use indoor Christmas tree (fairy) lights outside;
- NEVER light candles on a Christmas tree;
- ALWAYS replace your lights if they are showing signs of wear.

DRINK

Alcohol-related accidents are not just confined to the roads. It's almost impossible to quantify how many home accidents are caused by alcohol misuse.

The Emergency Services are well aware of the connection between alcohol & fires.

It's natural to enjoy a drink at Christmas, but it doesn't make sense to overindulge, especially before the cooking is out the way.

Alcohol affects co-ordination and reaction time. This makes slips, trips and falls more likely, particularly for older folk.

KITCHEN

Your kitchen is one of the main DANGER AREAS your home, especially at Christmas.

Over 250k people need medical attention for injuries in the kitchen every year, with women being almost TWICE as vulnerable as men.

When you're cooking the Christmas

dinner;

- Protect children from the risk of burning/scalding by making sure they are kept well away from the kitchen and food preparation areas; and
- Involve as few people as possible in the preparations and be extra careful lifting a heavy roast turkey from the oven.

SAFER THIS CHRISTMAS

The main thing to remember is to identify risks and potential hazards BEFORE they become a problem. Would you not rather spend Christmas watching Casualty on the TV rather than visiting the local real-life one?

IN AN EMERGENCY

If a fire does break out the advice is simple: Get out, stay out and call 999.

In the event of a fire, make sure everyone leaves immediately - call 999 and ask for the fire service.

Closing doors behind you as you leave the house will slow down the spread of flames and help protect both people and your belongings from fire.

If you live in a tenement close and if safe to do so, ensure that you tell your neighbours that there is a fire and get them to evacuate also.

Do

- Stay low to the floor where the air is cleaner and cooler
- Shout to warn your family or anyone nearby – even outside
- If your clothing catches fire, stop, drop down and roll on the ground until the flames go out.
- If someone else's clothing catches light, use a blanket, rug or thick coat to put out the flames
- If you can't get out, stand by a window so firefighters can see you
- Never open a door if it's warm to touch, there could be fire inside

Never

- Stop to take anything with you
- Try to go back inside until a firefighter tells you it's safe to do so
- Jump out of a window, unless you are sure it will be safe to do so
- Remember, smoke and fumes can quickly overcome anyone. Trying to tackle a fire or staying to salvage goods could prove fatal. If a fire does happen in your household, the only safe thing to do is get out the building and call the fire service.

Legionella Advice – Be Aware – Be Safe!

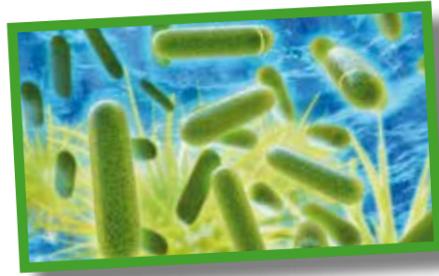
Legionella are bacteria which cause Legionnaires' Disease. This is an uncommon disease similar to pneumonia. Legionella bacteria can live in hot and cold water systems within domestic properties. Contaminated bacteria can be released into the air in an aerosol form such as from the fine spray from running taps or showers. Some Glen Oaks homes are served by cold water storage tanks and we have engaged a contractor to 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.

There are some additional ways that YOU can help to minimise the risk of Legionella bacteria developing in your domestic water supply and we have provided some tips below:

- 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. As Legionella can be dispersed as an aerosol through water spray, running the shower under water will lessen the likelihood of infected particles from being released. An alternative to this method if possible, would be to take the showerhead off before flushing the outlet as normal.
- If your hot water is supplied by a hot water cylinder, ensure the stored temperature of this is set to at least 60°C. It is very important that you 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 use any garden hoses in the summer, please ensure that you run the outside tap for at least 5 minutes before using ensure any stagnant water lying in the pipework is cleared.
- The risk of contracting Legionella from cold water storage is low and



the bacteria thrive at a temperature above 20°C. If you do 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.

- Where possible, shower heads and attaching hoses should be dismantled, descaled and disinfected on a quarterly basis, or more regularly if required, using a standard disinfectant cleaning product.

Please be aware that Legionnaires' Disease is extremely rare and the risk of infection is small. This risk can be further reduced, however, if the steps outlined above are followed.

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

KEEP YOURSELF SAFE FROM ASBESTOS

What is Asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous material that became a popular additive to building materials to increase performance in the 1950s. It was commonly used as an insulator and has good fire protection properties.

Asbestos is most likely to be found in homes built between the 1950s and the early 1980s. Asbestos has been banned since November 1999 because it can pose a danger to health. Properties built after the year 2000 should not contain asbestos products anywhere in the building.

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

Asbestos fibres may also be found elsewhere therefore please contact us if you are in any doubt about the presence of asbestos in your home.

When Is Asbestos Dangerous?

The presence of asbestos containing materials (ACMs) in your home does not necessarily pose a risk. If the asbestos containing material 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
- DO NOT cut or break off any parts of asbestos products
- DO NOT rub down asbestos panels or Artex with sandpaper
- DO NOT use wallpaper scrapers on asbestos products
- DO NOT remove asbestos panels to gain access to services
- DO NOT cut any asbestos products with power tools or break asbestos products with a hammer.

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

What Does Glen Oaks Do About Asbestos?

We work closely with Health & Safety specialists to identify and manage the risk of asbestos to ensure that all known asbestos containing materials are effectively managed to reduce the risk to its lowest practical level. 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. If we have a positive sample and works are required to that area then the safe removal of the asbestos will be instructed.

An annual check is carried out to assess the condition of asbestos containing materials in our common areas. If the condition of the asbestos containing material has changed and a risk is posed then the asbestos will be removed.

If you think your home may contain asbestos, particularly damaged asbestos, you should contact us immediately. If necessary we will arrange a survey. If asbestos containing materials are found, they may be removed, however this can be a disruptive process therefore if materials are found to be in good condition and do not pose a danger we would recommend that they are managed rather than removed.

For further advice on asbestos please contact Kelly Swain on 0141 620 2741.

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

Cold Weather Precautions

Please remember that the low temperatures at this time of year bring an increased risk of damage to your home and, ultimately, your personal belongings. 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 much 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 you find frozen pipes...

Thaw them out slowly by using warm air from a hairdryer or electric fan heater. Alternatively, take cloths that have been heated in hot water and wrap them round the pipes. Turn on your taps (when the pipes thaw this provides a way for the water to escape) as this may help to prevent a burst.

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.

Contents Insurance Cover

Please also check you have insurance to cover any damage to your contents and decoration in the event of a flood. If one of your neighbours has a flood or burst pipes due to the cold weather Glen Oaks will repair the damage to your home but we will not replace or provide compensation for any of your own belongings or your decoration i.e. wall paper. It is vital that you take out contents insurance to make sure that you don't have to buy all your important personal items again which could be costly.

Details of an affordable insurance policy for Scotland's tenants are available below.



Available to Scotland's tenants, is a Home Contents Insurance scheme that gives you the chance to insure the contents of your home in an easy and affordable way. There are many benefits and it's so easy to apply.

Ask your local housing officer for a free information pack or call Thistle Tenant Risks Insurance on 0345 450 7286.

Terms and conditions, limits and exclusions apply. A copy of the policy wording is available on request.



Thistle Tenant Risks is a trading style of Thistle Insurance Services Ltd. Lloyds Broker. Authorised and Regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. A JLT Group Company. Registered Office: The St Botolph Building, 138 Houndsditch, London, EC3A 7AW. Registered in England No 00338645. VAT No. 244 2321 96.

This Christmas

KEEP SAFE



- ★ Shop safe - be alert at ATMs and look after your bags.
- ★ Be careful online - use a secure browser and only insert card details if the padlock icon is visible.
- ★ Plan your nights out - stick with friends and know how you are getting home.
- ★ Secure your home - keep cash at home to a minimum and gifts out of view.
- ★ Be aware of changing road conditions. In severe weather increase stopping distances.
- ★ Keep safe - www.scotland.police.uk/festivesafety



**POLICE
SCOTLAND**
Keeping people safe

#KeepXmasSafe

 @PoliceScotland

 PoliceScotland