

Health and safety in your home

This leaflet contains important information.
Please read it.



Carbon monoxide guidance

Every year about 30 people die from carbon monoxide poisoning caused by gas appliances and flues which have not been properly installed or maintained. Many others also suffer ill health. When gas does not burn properly, as with other fuels such as coal, wood or oil, excess carbon monoxide is produced, which is poisonous.

You can't see it, you can't taste and you can't smell it – but carbon monoxide can kill without warning in just a matter of hours.

You are particularly at risk when you are asleep because you cannot recognise the early symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning. These include tiredness, drowsiness, headache, nausea, pains in the chest and stomach pains. These symptoms can mimic many common ailments and may easily be confused with flu or ordinary tiredness.

You are at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning if:

- A gas appliance was poorly installed.
- A gas appliance is not working properly.
- A gas appliance has not had a recent safety check or been regularly maintained.
- There is not enough fresh air in the room.
- Your chimney or flue gets blocked up.
- You allow non-Gas Safe engineers to install or maintain your appliances.

If you believe you have been exposed to carbon monoxide then seek urgent medical advice. A doctor will need to test a blood or breath sample. Carbon monoxide quickly leaves the blood and tests can be inaccurate if taken more than four hours after exposure has ended, so the faster you act the better.

Protect yourself with a carbon monoxide detector

You can collect a free carbon monoxide detector from the reception at Newlon House which you can install in your home. This will alert you to any carbon monoxide leak.

Gas safety guidance

Follow these simple steps to minimise the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning or a gas escape:

- Never use a gas appliance if you think it is not working properly. Signs to look out for include yellow or orange flames (except for fuel-effect fires which sometimes display this colour flame), soot or stains around the appliance or pilot lights which frequently blow out.
- Never cover an appliance or block the convection air vents.
- Never block or obstruct any fixed ventilation grilles or air bricks.
- Never block or cover outside flues.
- Whenever draught excluders, ceiling or extraction fans, double glazing or conservatory extensions are fitted to a room containing a gas appliance, you should have a safety check.

If you smell gas, or suspect there is a gas escape, immediately open all doors and windows and shut off the gas supply tap. This is usually located next to the gas meter, but you should check to make sure you know where it is.

You should then call the National Grid emergency line on **0800 111 999**.

Annual gas safety checks

If you rent your home from us we will undertake a gas safety check every year. We will arrange for our gas contractors to make an appointment with you to carry one out. We are required to do this by law, and it is a condition of your tenancy that you allow these contractors access to your home.

If our contractor cannot gain access then we will contact you to arrange an alternative appointment. If they still cannot get access this may result in a solicitor's letter being sent to you and ultimately legal proceedings. If you persistently refuse us access you could be at risk of losing your home.

All our contractors carry identification, so please ask to see it. If you want further confirmation contact us on **020 7613 8080**.

If you are a leaseholder or Shared Owner it is your responsibility to make sure your gas central heating system is checked and serviced every year. You must use a Gas Safe registered engineer. We recommend you purchase a British Gas 3 star service agreement or equivalent.

Remember that if you smell gas, turn off the gas supply and call **Cadent** on **0800 111 999**.

Fire safety guidance

To prevent the risk of fire it is important that you do the following:

- Ensure your smoke and heat alarms are working, by testing them weekly and never paint them.
- If you rent your home and your smoke detector is not working please contact our Service Centre on **020 7613 8080**.
- If you are a leaseholder or Shared Owner you are responsible for repairing or replacing your own smoke detector. Information about the brand and supplier as well as any warranties should be in your welcome pack. Smoke detectors we supply in our housing generally have a 10 year warranty.
- Keep fire doors closed at all times.
- Ensure escape routes (hallways, balconies, stairs and communal areas) are kept clear of obstructions.
- Check the communal noticeboard to familiarise yourself with fire exits and plan your escape route.
- Remember to switch off and unplug all electrical equipment which is not in use.
- Do not store aerosols on windows or near heat sources.
- Never leave food cooking on hobs unattended.
- Keep your cooker clean.
- Put cigarettes out properly and dispose of them correctly. Under no circumstances should you drop cigarette butts from a balcony.
- Make sure candles and incense sticks are secured in a proper holder in an open area and kept away from materials which might catch fire, such as curtains.
- During power failures use battery operated torches and not candles.
- Don't tackle fires yourself. Always dial **999**.

More detailed advice and guidance on fire safety at home can be found online at: www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home.

Asbestos guidance

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral that is very resistant to heat. It was commonly used between the 1940s and 1980s in a range of building materials. It is no longer used as it can be harmful to health. If your home was built before 2002 then it may contain asbestos.

Why is it dangerous?

Asbestos can cause serious health problems including hardening of the lungs, lung cancer and cancer of the chest cavity. Asbestos is not a problem if it is not damaged and is left alone. However, it can be dangerous if it is damaged or disturbed, such as when doing DIY.

If asbestos is not disturbed, it is not dangerous. So please do not be alarmed if you suspect there is asbestos in your home, or if we find it.

What does Newlon do about asbestos?

We have carried out an asbestos survey for all of our properties and maintain a register of the location, type and risk of materials containing asbestos. Our policy is to monitor asbestos in residents' homes as this is safer than removing it, which can be a dangerous process.

Where might I find asbestos in my home?

Asbestos may be found in many older homes. The following are some of the most common places where asbestos containing materials have been found:

- Textured or decorative ceiling and wall coatings.
- Floor and ceiling tiles.
- Duct panels around pipe works.
- The underside of stairs.

What should I do if I have asbestos in my home?

Asbestos is only a risk when it is damaged or moved without being first made safe. Please do not drill, sand, scrape or cut into a wall or surface you think may contain asbestos without speaking to us first.

Most importantly do not touch any damaged asbestos.

Contact us if:

- You think you have found asbestos in your home.
- You are planning on doing any DIY.
- You want to report any damage to an asbestos containing material.

Water safety guidance

There are a number of simple measures that you can take to reduce any risks from the water supply to your home:

- Do not drink water from bathroom taps. You should only drink water from the kitchen cold water tap.
- If you are away from your home for long periods, the water quality in your system can deteriorate. Therefore, when you return put on your hot water and turn on all taps and showers for a few minutes.
- Regularly clean your taps to prevent the build-up of limescale, which bacteria can grow on. Also ensure any taps that are only occasionally used are flushed through with water on a regular basis.
- Clean showerheads and hoses thoroughly every two or three months by removing the head and cleaning in hot water.

We carry out a risk assessment on all properties with a communal water supply every two years. Where there is any risk we will take action needed. Most of our properties, particularly homes with water direct from the mains to combination boilers, will be very low risk. However we may want to check water temperatures or take water samples for testing.

Depending on these results we may need to clean your water system or change your piping layout to reduce risk.

If your boiler needs replacing it may be changed to a combination boiler to avoid the need to store water, as this reduces water safety risks.

Electrical safety guidance

We check the electrical systems in all our rented properties every five years, to ensure they are safe and make any necessary repairs. You will be contacted by our contractors to arrange any appointments needed. It is a condition of your tenancy that you allow these contractors access to your home.

As part of this programme we will inspect and upgrade the smoke alarms and any carbon monoxide alarms within the property.

If you are a leaseholder or Shared Owner you are responsible for carrying out your own electrical safety checks and we advise you to do so regularly.

Further information on electrical safety can be found at:
www.nhmf.co.uk/bestpractice/compliance/electrical.

Alterations and improvements

Please remember that you should contact us to let us know if you are planning any improvements to your home. This will allow us to consider any safety aspects of the changes you are thinking about making.

Contacting us

If you have any further questions about health and safety in your home please call our Service Centre on **020 7613 8080**. There is also information for residents online at www.newlon.org.uk.

If you would like this information in large print, audio, Braille, or an alternative format, please ask a member of staff.

The information contained in this leaflet was correct at the time of publication. For updates please check our website www.newlon.org.uk.

Newlon Housing Trust
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Tel: 020 7613 8080

Phone calls may be recorded for training and quality purposes.

Newlon Housing Trust is a charitable housing association.

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