

HANDY TIPS FOR GENERAL MAINTENANCE OF A PROPERTY

GAS, ELECTRIC AND WATER

As a general rule the distribution utility companies are responsible for dealing with leaks and other problems that occur outside your home (before the stop tap or meter).

GAS LEAKS

If you suspect a gas leak in the property:

- Put out any naked flames
- Turn off the gas at the meter
- Open the windows
- Do not operate anything electrical, e.g. do not turn light switches on or off
- Call the Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999

REGULAR MAINTENANCE

Gas appliances will be checked on an annual basis and a Gas Safety Certificate provided. Should you have any doubts about the safe working of any gas appliance, please advise your Property Management Co-ordinator immediately if you have a Managed service with Accord.

GAS CENTRAL HEATING

Boiler Thermostat: This provides overall control of the temperature of the water in the system. You will find it on the front of the boiler or behind the front panel. On back boilers, it is usually behind a cover at the base of the fire. If your system has room and hot-water cylinder thermostats, set the boiler thermostat on maximum and use these other thermostats to set comfortable room and hot water temperatures.

If there is no temperature controls fitted to any part of the system then the boiler thermostat will control the central heating and the temperature of the hot water. In this case, set the thermostat to high in winter and low in summer.

Room Thermostat: The room thermostat keeps the temperature in your home at the level you set by turning the boiler on and off automatically. The thermostat will be on the wall, usually in the hall or landing.

Combination Boiler: You should read the instructions for these boilers carefully as it is essential that they are kept at the correct pressure at all times. The pressure will drop, and therefore will need to be kept "topped" up. Combination boiler systems have the hot water supplied straight from the boiler.

Hot Water Cylinder: Where a hot water cylinder thermostat is fitted, set the temperature that suits you best on the cylinder thermostat – 60°C (140°F) is normal.

How to get Hot Water Only: You can either switch the central heating off using the time switch programmer or turn the room thermostat down to its lowest setting.

Combination boilers have 'summer' and 'winter' or 'hot water only' and 'hot water and central heating' settings. When set to the 'summer' setting, the central heating is bypassed and only hot water is available.

ELECTRIC HEATING

Electric Storage Heaters: Storage heaters use cheap rate electricity to heat up at night, allowing the heat out to heat the property during the day. They need to be switched on at the wall switch on the side of each heater.

Input Control: This controls the amount of heat stored in the heater. We suggest you set this control to number 3-4 and leave for 24 hours.

Output Control: This controls the amount of heat released from the heater. The lower the setting, the longer the stored heat will last. Set to number 1 during the day but, if you feel cold in the evening, turn the heater up to the maximum setting and turn back to 1 at the end of the day.

Warning!! Do not drape clothes over the heaters as this could cause a fire.

Problems with Electricity: When the electricity fails and it is only affecting your property or part of your property, there could be a problem with the consumer unit or you may have blown a fuse. Switches are usually tripped and fuses blown by faulty electrical appliances. Old electrical items are more likely to cause problems indicating a fault in the item. Problems are also caused when circuits are overloaded by plugging in too many appliances.

Electrical Consumer Units: In your consumer unit there are switches called MCBs (Mini Circuit Breakers) and RCDs (Residual Current Devices). When these switches are tripped 'off' a green stripe or the word 'off' can be seen. The RCD covers all the circuits in your property – it is a switch on its own.

If the RCD is off: unplug any possibly faulty electrical item and reset the switch to restore the electricity supply.

If the RCD will not switch on: switch off all the other (MCB) switches, and then switch it on. It should now stay on but you will have no electricity because the MCBs are off.

Switch them on one by one until you find the one that trips the RCD again.

This is the circuit with the fault on. The unit should indicate what the circuit covers.

The next step is to try and find out which electrical item is causing the problem. One way of doing this is to unplug everything, then turn all the switches in the consumer unit on – returning the electricity. Plug the appliances in one by one to see which appliance has the fault causing the consumer unit to trip. Once you have identified the appliance causing the problem, disconnect it and advise your Property Management Co-ordinator if your property is Managed by Accord Sales and Lettings.

CAUTION: Do not handle the appliances when you plug them in.

Checking your Consumer Unit: If you push the button marked 'T' or 'Test', the RCD switch should trip off. It can then be switched back on. This proves that the safety systems are working correctly. If the switch fails to trip, contact your Property Management Co-ordinator.

If a fuse blows: unplug the probable faulty electrical item and replace the fuse wire. Switch off all the electricity and remove the fuse block. The fuse must only be replaced using the correct fuse wire for the circuit. Return the fuse block and switch the supply on. If the fuse continues to blow, you will need to identify the faulty item by unplugging everything and plugging it back in until you know which appliance is causing the fuse to blow.

AVOIDING BURST AND FROZEN PIPES

You can guard against frozen pipes by following these simple steps:

- Locate the stop tap and turn it off and then back on occasionally, to stop it sticking.
- Try to keep the property warm.
- Do not leave taps dripping.
- If you go away for any length of time, leave the heating on a low setting.
- Drain down all water supplies before leaving the premises vacant.

If you get a frozen pipe:

- Turn off the stop tap
- Turn on the taps to the sink, bath and basin
- Try to gently unfreeze the pipe with warm rags, heater or hair dryer – do not overheat the pipes as this will cause them to crack.

CONDENSATION

Produce less moisture

- Cover pans
- Dry clothes outdoors
- Vent your tumble dryer outside
- Do not use paraffin or bottle gas heaters

Ventilate to remove moisture

- Open the windows and vents when at home, especially when having a bath or shower.
- Increase ventilation in kitchens and bathrooms when in use
- Shut the door to keep moisture out of the rest of your home
- See that rooms are always warm

RATS, MICE & INSECTS

The Environmental Health Department are able to treat the above, however there may be a charge for some treatments.

FIRE SAFETY

In a fire, smoke detectors can give you that vital warning that can save lives. It is essential that they be active. You are legally responsible for replacing the batteries in smoke detectors when they run out. You will know that they are running low when the smoke alarm makes a slow beep every so often. Smoke alarms should be tested regularly by pushing the test button. If you have any problems with your smoke alarm, please contact your Property Management Co-ordinator if your property is managed by Accord.

For your own safety:

- Make sure that smoke alarms are working
- Do not store anything in your hall, especially anything that will burn easily.
- Only use the fixed heating system in your home.
- Do not store things in the cupboards where your gas and electricity meters are fitted.
- Close doors and windows where possible within the house, especially at night time.
Every door closed will reduce the amount of oxygen to fuel the fire.