

Home Safety

March 2019



If you need assistance understanding the information in this document, please contact us on **0300 365 1111**.

01

Fire safety

Smoke alarms

To reduce your chances of being injured or even killed in a fire at home, you should ensure that you have at least one working smoke alarm in your property. If you do not have a smoke alarm, you should contact us. You can also contact Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service on **0800 731 5958** to arrange a home fire safety check.

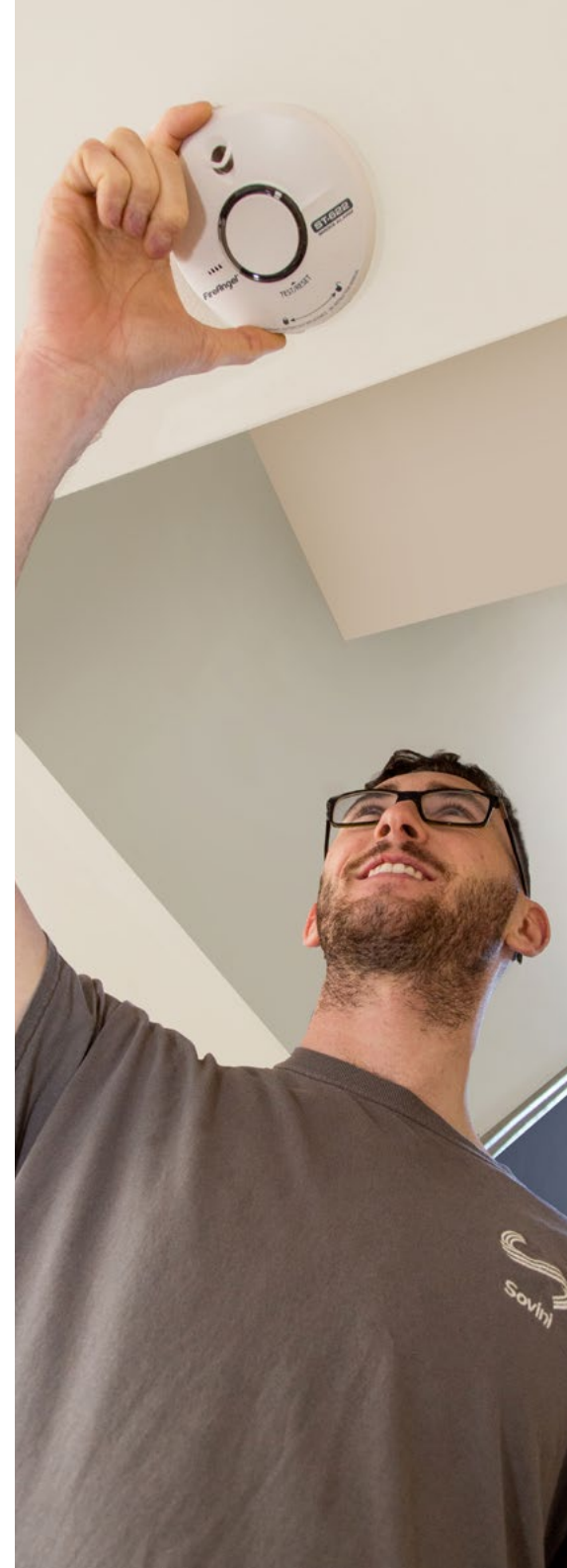
You should test your smoke alarm weekly to make sure it is working properly, if it does not work, you may need to replace the battery. Standard battery operated alarms will need batteries replacing every year.

If your smoke alarm starts to bleep on a regular basis, you need to replace the battery immediately.

Never disconnect or take the batteries out of your smoke alarm. If fitting your own smoke alarm, refrain from fixing them in or near kitchens or bathrooms where smoke or steam can set them off by accident.

The ideal position is on the ceiling, in the middle of the room, and on the landing or hallway.

Smoke alarms designed specifically for people who are deaf or hard of hearing are available, contact the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service on **0800 731 5958** to discuss your options.



What to do if there is a fire Domestic house or flat (i.e. not contained within a purpose-built block)

In the event of a fire within your house or flat, you should:

- Keep calm and act quickly, get everyone out as soon as possible.
- Don't waste any time investigating what's happened or rescuing valuables.
- If there's smoke, keep low where the air is clearer.
- Before you open a door check if it's warm. If it is, don't open it - fire is on the other side.
- Once you are outside the building, call the fire and rescue service by dialling **999**.

High rise blocks, low rise blocks and sheltered schemes

In the event of a fire in your flat:

- Alert everyone in your flat. Close the door to the room where the fire is located.
- Ensure everyone in the flat leaves as quickly as possible. Close the front door to your flat.
- Make your way out of the building, using the common escape route. Never use a lift in the event of a fire.
- If your planned escape route is too dangerous because stairs and hallways are full of smoke, call 999 and stay in the safest room. Keep doors closed and use towels or bedding to block the smoke at the bottom of the door.
- Once you are outside the building, call the fire and rescue service by dialling **999**.

In the event of a fire elsewhere in the building:

- The building is designed to contain a fire and allow you to remain in your flat in relative safety if the fire is in another flat or elsewhere in the building.
- If your flat is not affected by fire, you will be safe to remain in your flat.
- You will be safe to stay in your flat - unless your flat subsequently becomes affected by fire and smoke or you are directed to leave by the fire and rescue service.
- If your planned escape route is too dangerous because stairs and hallways are full of smoke, call **999** and stay in the safest room. Keep doors closed and use towels or bedding to block the smoke at the bottom of the door.

- If your flat becomes affected by fire - or you are in any doubt and it is safe to use the common escape routes - leave the building as quickly as possible. Do not use the lifts. Once you are outside the building, call the fire and rescue service by dialling **999**.

Calling the Fire and Rescue Service

Dial **999**. When the operator answers, give your telephone number and ask for **fire**.

When the fire and rescue service answers, give them your address and the location of the fire.

Do not end the call until the fire and rescue service have confirmed the address.

Fire doors

You should never disconnect door closers. The door closer is a critical fire safety device. Please contact us if you have any problems with door closers in your building.

Do not wedge fire doors open.



Important note:

Where a 'stay put' policy is in place, we would emphasise that if you are in any doubt that it is safe to remain in your flat and, provided it is safe to use the common escape routes, then you should leave the building as quickly as possible.

*Never assume anyone else has called **999** – make the call yourself*

Electrical safety

Do's and Don'ts

- Do buy electrical appliances and chargers from a reputable source and always check for a British or European safety mark.
- Do check your sockets regularly - if you see burn marks or they feel hot, get them checked by a qualified electrician, or contact us.
- Do check the electrical current rating of an electrical adaptor before you plug appliances in; make sure that the total current used does not exceed the adaptor's rating. For advice on how to do this visit the Electrical Safety Council's website esc.org.uk/public.
- Do switch off appliances at the socket when not in use. Switch off appliances when you go to bed or when you go out unless they are designed to be left on (e.g. fridge freezer).
- Do regularly check for frayed or worn cables and wires. Check to see if the cable is fastened securely to the plug and check the socket for scorch marks. You should always carry out these checks before you use an appliance.
- Do follow the manufacturer's instructions if you need to change a fuse.
- Do keep electrical appliances clean and in good working order. Look out for fuses that blow, circuit-breakers that trip for no obvious reason and flickering lights.
- Don't overload plug sockets or adaptors, an extension lead or adaptor will have a limit to 13amps, so be careful not to overload them and try to keep to one plug per socket.
- Don't use electrical appliances near water, and never touch electrical appliances with wet hands.
- Don't use water on an electric fire. Pull the plug out or switch the power off if it is safe to do so.
- Don't put electric heaters near curtains or furniture and don't dry clothes on them or cover the air vents on heaters.
- Don't trail flexible cables under carpets or rugs.
- For more information in relation to electrical safety visit the Electrical Safety Council's website esc.org.uk/public.
- Take care if you're wearing loose clothing - they can easily catch fire. Also, you should keep tea towels and cloths away from the cooker and hob.
- Spark devices are safer than matches or lighters to light gas cookers.
- Double check the cooker is off when you've finished cooking
- Keep the oven, hob and grill clean and in good working order. A build-up of fat and grease can ignite a fire.
- Don't put anything metal in a microwave.
- Take care when cooking with hot oil - it sets alight easily.
- Use a thermostat controlled electric deep fat fryer - they can't overheat.
- Never throw water over a chip-pan fire.
- Invest in a fire blanket.

Cooking

- Take extra care if you need to leave the kitchen whilst cooking, take pans off the heat or turn them down to avoid risk.
- If cooking oil starts to smoke - it's too hot. Turn off the heat and leave it to cool.
- Invest in a fire blanket.

Smoking

- Never smoke in bed.
- Use a proper ashtray, make sure it cannot tip over and is made of a material that won't burn.
- Never leave a lit cigarette, cigar or pipe unattended.
- Take extra care if you smoke when you're tired, taking prescription drugs or if you have been drinking.
- Keep matches and lighters out of children's reach.

Mobility scooters

Storage

- Mobility scooters must not be stored in the communal areas, including hallways, stairwells, corridors and landings.
- It is possible for mobility scooters to be stored inside residents own homes but it is the residents responsibility to first ensure that there is sufficient space to store it safely, and should not block any fire escape routes.
- We do not currently provide purpose built storage for mobility scooters.
- The storage of a mobility scooter external to any communal building must be in such a manner that it does not cause any health and safety issues to any other residents, visitors or threaten the fabric of the building.

Recharging/maintenance

- Mobility scooters must not be recharged in the communal areas, they should be recharged safely within the residents own home, and should be charged according to the manufacturer's instructions. Recharging should only be carried out during day time hours, and not overnight.
- We do not currently provide charging facilities for mobility scooters.
- Residents must ensure that the scooter is serviced and maintained regularly, and this is the responsibility of the scooter owner.

General needs

- Mobility scooters will only be allowed where a resident can safely store and charge the scooter without hindering safe escape from the property in the case of fire.

Compressed gas

(e.g. propane, butane or oxygen)

Unless for medical reasons, you must not use, permit to be used or store compressed gas within your home or any communal areas.

If you are required to use and store compressed gas for medical reasons (i.e. oxygen), you must inform the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service on 0800 731 5958 who will arrange to carry out a home fire safety check.

Always refer to the manufacturer's instructions when using or storing compressed gas.

02

Legionella

What is Legionnaires' disease?

Legionnaires' disease is potentially fatal and is caused by legionella bacteria. Infection is caused by breathing in small droplets of water contaminated by the bacteria. The disease cannot be passed from one person to another.

Everyone is potentially at risk of infection but some people are at higher risk - e.g. those over 45 years of age, smokers and heavy drinkers, those suffering from chronic respiratory or kidney disease and people whose immune system is impaired.

Where are legionella bacteria found?

Legionella bacteria are common in natural water courses such as rivers and ponds. Since the bacteria are widespread in the environment, they may contaminate and grow in other water systems such as hot and cold water services. They are killed by high temperatures.

How do people get it?

The agent that causes Legionnaires' disease is a bacterium called Legionella pneumophila. People catch Legionnaires' disease by inhaling small droplets of water suspended in the air, which contain the bacteria.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms are similar to those of flu, i.e. high temperature, fever and chills, cough, muscle pains and headache. In a severe case, there may also be pneumonia, and occasionally

diarrhoea, as well as signs of mental confusion. Legionnaires' disease is not known to spread from person to person.

What do I do if I think I have contracted Legionnaires' disease?

If you develop these symptoms and you are worried that it might be Legionnaires' disease, see your doctor. If you are diagnosed with Legionnaires' disease please contact us on **0300 365 1111**.

What can I do to reduce the risk of legionella?

We recommend you run all your taps and your shower for a couple of minutes each week to prevent the build up of harmful bacteria. We also recommend you clean your shower head every month to prevent the build-up of limescale.



03

Gas safety

As a landlord we have a legal duty to ensure that all gas appliances, fittings and flues owned by One Vision Housing provided for your use are safe. This includes things like central heating boilers and gas fires.

To do this we must carry out an annual gas safety check or gas service using registered Gas Safe engineers. The annual gas safety check will include testing of all required gas appliances, pipe work, flues and smoke alarms in your home.

We will provide you with a copy of your gas safety certificate within 28 days of the check being completed. We will notify you in writing two months before your gas safety check is due to expire and we will arrange an appointment to complete the gas safety check.

What to do if you smell gas or suspect carbon monoxide?

If you smell gas, or suspect there is a gas leak you should:

- Turn off the appliance.
- Turn off the gas supply at the meter (unless the meter is located in a cellar or basement, in which case you should evacuate immediately).
- Not use or switch any electrical appliances on or off.
- Call the National Grid immediately on 0800 111 999
- Open doors and windows to allow the gas to disperse.
- Check to see if a gas tap has been accidentally left on or if a pilot light has gone out.
- If you have a faulty gas appliance, it can be dangerous and produce carbon monoxide gas.

- Not use matches or anything that has a naked flame.
- Not smoke.
- Not use a mobile phone anywhere near the leak.

Any one of the following could be a sign that there is carbon monoxide in your home:

- The flame on your cooker should be crisp and blue. Lazy yellow or orange flames mean you need to get your cooker checked.
- Dark staining on or around gas appliances.
- Pilot lights that frequently blow out.
- Increased condensation inside windows.

Anyone suffering from headaches, dizziness, nausea, breathlessness or who collapses or loses consciousness where gas is present, should seek medical advice immediately.

Your responsibilities

You must allow us access to your home to complete your annual gas safety check. If you do not allow us access you will be in breach of your tenancy agreement and we will take legal action, this may result in you losing your home.

If you employ anyone to carry out gas work in your home, you must ensure they are a Gas Safety Registered engineer.

You must never attempt to do any gas related work or repairs yourself. Not only could you be breaking the law, but any work you carry out could be life threatening for you and your neighbours.

What if you have gas but no gas appliances?

If you have a gas supply meter fitted in your property, but do not have any gas appliances, we still need to inspect the pipework inside your home.

What if an appliance fails the safety check?

The Gas Safety Record will contain details of any problems found at the time of the inspection, and any action that has been taken.

If an appliance fails the safety check, it may be necessary to disconnect it. Our engineer will make the appliance safe whilst on site in this circumstance. We will then contact you to discuss and agree any further actions and when we will do them.

If one of the appliances that you own is faulty we will disconnect it and advise you to seek help from a qualified Gas Safe Registered engineer.

Gas safety tips

- Make sure you know where your gas meter is located and how to turn off the gas supply in the event of an emergency.
- Never cover an appliance such as a boiler or gas fire or block the air vents.
- Never block or obstruct any fixed ventilation grilles or airbricks.
- Never block or cover outside flues.
- Never fit draught exclusion strips to doors of a room that contains a gas appliance.
- Never use a gas appliance if you think it's not working properly and never cover gas appliances.



04

Asbestos

Asbestos is not something to be worried about but you do need to be aware of the risks it could present if it is not safely managed.

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral that has been used for many years in a variety of different building products due to its thermal heat retention, sound proofing and fire retardant qualities. Asbestos can break into microscopic fibres if broken or disturbed and these fibres can be hazardous to health if inhaled.

Asbestos is generally not a problem if the products containing asbestos are in fair/good condition and remain undisturbed. However, if these products are damaged, broken or abraded there is the risk that asbestos fibres may become airborne and could be inhaled.

How likely is it to be in my home?

Asbestos was effectively banned in the United Kingdom in 1999 and is therefore not going to be found in modern buildings constructed after 1999 or in modern building products used in the UK.

There is a possibility that products containing asbestos may be in homes constructed before the year 2000. If your home was constructed before the year 2000 you must be aware of its potential presence in your home.

What are the health risks?

Exposure to asbestos, mainly from inhaling asbestos dust, can potentially result in fatal lung diseases such as Asbestosis, Lung Cancer and Mesothelioma.

The majority of these diseases are generally associated with individuals who have received heavy and

occupational exposure to asbestos. However, there is still risk associated with low and sporadic exposure to the material so we must remain vigilant and take some common sense measures to minimise our risk of inhaling the fibres.

What to do?

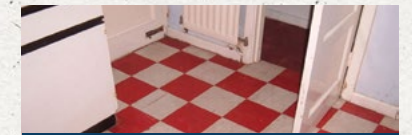
If you suspect you may have disturbed asbestos or have found a suspected asbestos product and are worried that dust may be released, please leave the room where the suspect material was found, close the door to that room and contact us on **0300 365 1111**.

We will discuss and assess the situation with you and agree the best course of action.

Where might asbestos be found in your home?

Asbestos was used extensively in a large number of building products.

Photographs of some of the asbestos products commonly found in domestic properties such as houses and flats are included here.



Floor tiles



Textured coatings



Toilet cisterns



Asbestos cement products



Asbestos soffits

What we will do

We will discuss and assess your concerns and will act accordingly. We may have records indicating where asbestos may be present within your property and can put your mind at rest or we may need to send specialists to your home to carry out further investigations to determine the best course of action. Rest assured it is our intention to keep the risk associated with asbestos in our properties to an absolute minimum.

We are working to fully identify the presence of asbestos in our properties and to minimise the risk to our tenants arising from its presence. This is an on-going programme of survey and inspections works and you may at some point in the future be asked to allow our specialist surveyors to enter your home to undertake precautionary asbestos inspection works.


However, asbestos has been used so extensively that its complete removal is impracticable to achieve in the short term and so we must put our efforts into safely managing asbestos in our properties.

What are your responsibilities?

As a resident you will be aware that you must not undertake any significant building related works on your property without first confirming with us that it is acceptable and safe to proceed. Aggressive building works are a likely potential source of disturbance of asbestos products so we must be cautious when planning and undertaking such works.

If you have any concerns regarding asbestos or if you think you may have disturbed asbestos in your home, please contact us on **0300 365 1111**.

Get in touch

 ovh.org.uk/my-account
Make payments, report (and book) repairs and view accounts online with My Account

 ovh.org.uk

 0300 365 1111 (24hr)

 enquiries@ovh.org.uk

 @ovhousing

 facebook.com/ovhousing

Customer Access Centre

Coral Drive, Bootle,
 Merseyside L20 3UG

Open: Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm

OVH Head Office

Atlantic House,
 Dunnings Bridge Road, Bootle,
 Merseyside L30 4TH

Open: Mon to Fri, 8.30am to 5pm



One Vision Housing is part of The Sovini Group

*The information inside is correct at time of print.
 For the most up to date information please visit our website.*



If you need assistance understanding the information in this document, please contact us on **0300 365 1111**.

Chinese

如果您需要幫助了解本文檔中的信息，請致電 **0300 365 1111** 與我們聯繫。

Lithuanian

Jei norite, kad Jums kas nors padėtų suprasti šiame dokumente pateiktą informaciją, prašome su mumis susisiekti tel **0300 365 1111**.

Polish

Jeśli potrzebujesz pomocy, by zrozumieć informacje zawarte w tym dokumencie, skontaktuj się z nami pod numerem **0300 365 1111**.

Portuguese

Caso necessite de assistência para compreender a informação constante neste documento, deverá contactar-nos através do **0300 365 1111**.

Russian

Если вам требуется разъяснение информации, содержащейся в данном документе, пожалуйста, свяжитесь с нами по телефону **0300 365 1111**.

Turkish

Bu belgede verilen bilgileri anlama konusunda desteğe ihtiyacınız olursa lütfen bize ulaşın **0300 365 1111**.