

Keeping you safe at home



Resident Safety Information

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Asbestos

Having asbestos in your home is no reason to panic. Due to our safety and management procedures any asbestos containing materials in your home are likely to be in good condition.



Asbestos advice

It is only when asbestos materials are damaged or disturbed that they become hazardous. If you carry out any DIY jobs such as sanding or drilling, you could potentially release asbestos fibres into the air. You must ask us for approval before carrying out DIY works that could disturb asbestos in your home. If you think the asbestos materials in your home have been disturbed, contact us right away so we can evaluate and manage the risk to ensure your continued safety. If you think you may have damaged asbestos materials in your home do not attempt to clean it up yourself. Stop whatever you are doing and contact us immediately. Try to avoid moving debris around and leave any tools or equipment that you have been using. Do not use a domestic vacuum cleaner as this can make the situation worse.

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous material. It is resistant to heat, electricity, and chemical damage. Asbestos containing materials (ACMs) are versatile and were used extensively as building materials in the UK between the 1950s and 1980s. Asbestos use was banned in 1999, however asbestos-containing materials can still be found in many buildings built or refurbished before the year 1999.

Examples of asbestos containing materials include:

- **Texture coating (artex)**
- **Cement water tanks**
- **Asbestos insulating board (AIB)**
- **Corrugated cement roofing**
- **Toilet cisterns**
- **Vinyl floor tiles**
- **Pipe insulation**

The government advises that if asbestos materials are in good condition, then it is safest to leave them where they are. We have a duty to manage, not remove, asbestos in your home.



Damp and mould

Damp is the build-up of moisture. As well as causing damage, some types of damp can lead to mould growth. Damp can occur in homes for many reasons and affects both building materials (like walls, floors, ceilings, foundations) as well as fittings and furnishings (like carpets, curtains, wallpaper, furniture, clothing).

Types of damp: Rising damp



Occurs when water in the ground enters a property by travelling up through the pores in brickwork, usually due to a broken or missing damp proof course. Rising damp only affects basements/cellars and ground floor rooms. It usually leaves a brown 'tide' mark caused by salts from the ground. Black mould does not normally develop with rising damp because the salts prevent it growing.

Traumatic damp



Leaks from water and waste pipes in the home are common, especially in bathrooms and kitchens. With traumatic damp you will see an area or patch of damp that looks and feels wet. Black mould does not normally develop with traumatic damp because chemicals in the water prevent it growing.

Penetrating damp



Penetrating damp is caused by water passing through the external walls or roof of a house because of a problem such as missing roof tiles, damaged pointing to brickwork, or cracked render. It is only found on external walls and sometimes on ceilings if there is damage to the roof.

Condensation



Condensation is the most common form of damp. You will often notice condensation build up on windows, window frames and in the corner of rooms. Black mould often occurs with condensation.

Tips for reducing condensation

- If you notice condensation, wipe it away with a dry cloth
- Keep your curtains open during the day
- Use extractor fans in the kitchen and bathroom and clean them regularly
- Do not block air vents or trickle vents
- Open windows after a bath or shower
- Keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed to prevent moisture escaping
- Do not dry washing on radiators
- Open windows when using a tumble dryer and make sure they are vented correctly

Report damp and mould concerns

You can report damp and mould by:

Phone: 01268 882326

Email: dampandmould@castlepoint.gov.uk

(please remember to include your address and photos if possible)

Electrical safety

It is vital to look after your electrical equipment. Electric shocks and fires caused by electrical faults are a major cause of injury and can be fatal.

Checking your electrical items:



Cables

- Check cables for damage - there should not be any cuts or frays.
- Do not overload extension cables.
- Make sure extension cables are fully uncoiled during use.
- Do not 'daisy chain' extension cables.

Plugs

- Plugs should fit tightly into sockets.
- Plug casings should not be cracked or chipped.
- Do not use a plug if it has burn marks or signs of damage.

Sockets

- Check sockets for burn marks and signs of overheating.
- Make sure sockets are properly secured to the wall and not loose.
- Make sure the socket switches work properly.

Chargers

- Different devices require different levels of charge. Branded chargers are specifically designed for a particular device.
- Fake chargers often fail to meet UK safety regulations. Fake chargers may supply too much energy to a device, leading to overheating that can cause injury, electric shock and even fires.

E-bike and e-scooter charging



E-bikes and e-scooters can pose serious safety risks if used and charged incorrectly. If you own an e-bike, e-scooter, or mobility scooter, always follow the guidance for charging safely as most fires occur whilst charging.

E-bikes, e-scooters, and mobility scooters must be stored and charged inside your home rather than in communal areas. They should never be charged in your hallway where a fire might block your only escape route.

Top tips for keeping safe whilst charging e-bikes, e-scooters, and mobility scooters at home:

- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions when charging.
- Never leave the device unattended while charging.
- Only charge your device when you are at home and awake - avoid charging when you are asleep.
- Always unplug your charger once it has finished charging your device.
- Always use a charger approved by the product manufacturer and buy an official one from a reputable seller.
- Do not attempt to modify or tamper with the battery. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Check the battery for damage before charging. If there is any damage, do not use it.
- Do not dispose of lithium-ion batteries in general household or recycling waste.

Fire safety

Fires are more likely to start at home than anywhere else. We are doing all that we can to keep you and your home safe from the devastating effects of fire, and you can help too.

Smoke alarms save lives



Test your smoke alarms once a month. You can do this yourself by holding the button on the alarm for up to five seconds. If your smoke alarm goes off by mistake, wait for it to stop. Do not take out the batteries or cover the smoke alarm – it is in place for your safety. Please tell us if your smoke alarm doesn't work properly – it's our job to repair it or replace it.

Communal areas

If you live in a building with multiple flats, communal areas including: entrances, stairwells, corridors, landings and service cupboards, must be kept clear of personal belongings. In the event of a fire, items in communal areas can fuel a fire, block important escape routes, and obstruct firefighter access to emergency equipment. You must clear any items that you may have outside your home, in communal areas, or in service cupboards, including:

- Bikes including e-bikes.
- Pushchairs.
- Mobility scooters or e-scooters.
- Shoes or shoe racks.
- Plants and other decorations including picture frames, posters, Christmas or other religious decorations.
- Furniture, including white goods.
- Household rubbish.

Highly flammable items like barbecues, gas cylinders, petrol, diesel, or oil cans must not be stored anywhere in the building.

Know your escape route



If there is a fire in your home, you must leave immediately and call the fire service on 999. It is important that you know what to do in the event of a fire or other emergency and make sure children in the home know what to do.

If you live in a building with multiple flats, you should make sure you know where your building's emergency exits are. You can find Fire Action Notices around the building telling you what to do in the event of a fire.

Fire doors



Fire doors are one of the most important measures to keep you safe. They create a barrier from fire and smoke to prevent them from travelling through a building. Controlling the spread of fire and smoke is vital to allow residents to evacuate safely. If you live in a building with multiple flats, you will see fire doors in stairwells, corridors, and anywhere there is a risk of combustion, like electricity service cupboards and riser cupboards. Fire doors will have blue signage showing they are fire doors. Your flat entrance door is also a fire door. Flat entrance doors should never be adapted or replaced, unless by the council. It is vital that flat entrance doors are regularly inspected and maintained to make sure they work properly if a fire breaks out. Fire doors must either be kept locked shut or self-close completely into the door frame. Please let us know if you see any damage to or fault with any fire door including your flat entrance door.

Gas safety

We are legally required to make sure that all gas appliances and associated pipework provided by us in your home are safe to use.

The Landlord Gas Safety Record (LGSR)

It is important for your safety that we carry out a gas safety check, known as an LGSR, every year. If you have a gas cooker or hob, we will carry out a visual inspection. If you have a gas fire, we will check the flue. Even if you do not have a gas cooker or boiler, we will still arrange for an inspection if there is a gas supply to your property. As part of your tenancy agreement with us, you must allow access for our contractors to complete these checks. Unchecked properties risk a gas explosion or carbon monoxide poisoning.

If you suspect a gas leak



If you smell gas or suspect a leak you should immediately:

1. Put out all naked flames such as candles.
2. Do not turn electrical appliances or switches on or off.
3. Open all doors and windows.
4. Switch off your gas supply by pulling the gas lever down. This should be located next to or near your gas meter.
5. Leave the property and call the 24-hour National Gas Emergency Helpline on 0800 111 999.

Water safety

As your landlord, we carry out thorough checks of communal water systems to make sure water is safe for you to use and does not contain legionella.

What is legionella?

Legionella is a type of bacteria found in stagnant water. Legionella bacteria is generally not harmful in low concentrations. However, if it develops in your home water system it can cause a bacterial infection such as legionnaires' disease. The risk of contracting legionnaire's disease is very low, however, certain residents will be at greater risk. If your home does not have a stored water installation the risk is even lower.

If you breathe in tiny droplets of water containing legionella bacteria this will cause the infection. You cannot get legionnaire's disease by drinking water containing legionella bacteria or from people who have the infection.

How can I prevent legionella?



Legionella bacteria grows in stagnant water. If your home has been vacant for more than one week, we recommend the following to reduce the risk:

- Run the hot water tap for a minimum of 60 seconds.
- Remove the showerhead and run water for at least 10 minutes.
- Flush the toilet twice to circulate fresh water.

Get in touch with us

Maintenance:

Phone: 01268 882 326

Damp and mould:

Phone: 01268 882 326

Email: dampandmould@castlepoint.gov.uk

See something you feel is unsafe?
Report it immediately.
In an emergency, call 999

Gas repairs & LGSR: contact SureServe

Phone: 01702 415 891

Email: chelmsford.admin@sureserve.co.uk

Statutory safety checks in communal areas

We carry out legal inspections in communal areas regularly to keep you and your neighbours safe, secure, and protected. Here is what we check and why it matters:

What	Why	How often (communal areas only)
Communal area asbestos	To make sure any asbestos is safely managed and not a risk to your health	Annual (where asbestos has been identified)
Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR's)	As well as your homes, we check that all communal wiring and systems are safe and up to standard	5 years or annual depending on type of building
Fire Risk Assessments (FRA's)	FRA's are carried out in communal areas to make sure exits are safe, alarms work, and fire hazards are managed	Annual (sheltered schemes and hostels only). Every 2 years (general needs buildings)
Communal gas appliances and pipework	To ensure they are operating safely	Annual (where applicable)
Communal lifts	To ensure lifts and lifting equipment are safe to use	Monthly
Communal water storage tanks and pipework	To prevent harmful bacteria developing	Monthly

Further advice

[Health and Safety Executive](#)

[Citizens Advice](#)

[National Energy Action](#)

[Gas Safe Register](#)

[Electrical Safety First](#)

[White Goods Safety](#)

Register your white goods – it could save your life if a product is recalled for safety reasons.

[Essex County Fire & Rescue Service](#)

[NHS](#)

