

# Keeping you and your family safe



**A safety handbook**  
**February 2025**

# Keeping you and your home safe is our priority

**This handbook has been designed to give you lots of useful information to help keep you and your home safe**



## **Your safety handbook**

Please take the time to read your safety handbook carefully, and keep it in a safe, easily accessible place for future reference.

If you have any questions about this handbook or any of the advice contained inside it, please don't hesitate to contact our Housing Safety and Compliance Team by calling **024 7637 6555** or by sending an email to the address shown below.

**Thank you!**



### **Your Housing Safety and Compliance Team**

This friendly and approachable team plays an important part in keeping you safe and ensuring your home meets all the relevant health and safety standards.

The law requires there to be a designated Responsible Person for your building. As your landlord, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC) is your Responsible Person.

### **The best way to help us keep you and your neighbours safe**

The easiest, and by far the best way to help us is by replying quickly to our requests to visit your home, by keeping to any arranged appointments, and by letting us know when you won't be there to let us in.

## **Safety highlights**



**Know when to STAY PUT and when to GET OUT**



**Look after your fire door and ALWAYS keep it shut**



**ALWAYS switch off electrical appliances when not in use**



**Make sure you have a Carbon Monoxide (CO) alarm fitted**



**Regularly run water through taps and showerheads**



**If you are worried about asbestos contact NBBC**

**If you have any questions or concerns call our dedicated housing safety helpline**

# We're working hard to keep you safe

## Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC) buildings are designed to keep you and your neighbours safe in the event of fire

But that's only half the story. We also need your help, which is why we've produced this, our very first safety handbook for residents.

Over the following pages, it shows you how you can help yourself stay safe in your home so that, by working together, we have the very best chance of avoiding a tragedy.

## Here's what we're doing

Keeping you safe in your home, whether it's a house, a maisonette or a flat is important to us.

NBBC blocks of flats are purpose-built buildings designed from the outset to minimise the spread of fire.

### Fire doors

NBBC fits fire doors throughout our buildings as required – this includes the front doors to individual flats when necessary.

Fire doors and their frames save lives by delaying the spread of fire through a building, keeping you and your neighbours safe until

the fire service arrives – but they can only protect you if you protect them.

### Fire alarm systems

All NBBC homes are equipped with fire alarms which will sound an alarm if fire is detected in your home.

### NBBC operates a STAY PUT policy

In the event of fire IN YOUR HOME or in the room that you are in, GET OUT of the building immediately by following the emergency exit signs and then call 999.

If the fire alarm sounds in another part of the building and there is NO FIRE where you are, you must **STAY PUT** making sure that your front door is shut. You should only leave when the fire service tells you it is safe to do so.

This is the **SAFEST** way to protect yourself and your loved ones.

### Regular routine testing

To make sure our buildings continue to be safe, we carry out regular checks including site inspections to ensure walkways and stairwells are kept clear of obstructions, monitoring and maintenance of fire alarm systems and fire risk assessments.



## Here's how you can help

These fire prevention systems can only save lives if they are working properly, and you have a big part to play in ensuring they do.

### Don't tamper with your fire alarm

Do not paint or cover your fire alarm. Do not try to disconnect if you set it off accidentally. If there is a problem with it contact NBBC.

### Allow us access to do routine checks

You can help us by replying quickly to our requests to visit your home, keeping to any arranged appointments, and by letting us know when you won't be there to let us in.

### Don't do anything that might damage your fire door

Never hang anything from, or fix anything to your fire door or its frame with screws, nails or even self-adhesive tape. Don't ever paint or decorate your fire door or its frame. NEVER prop your fire door open – not even for a minute – and do not disconnect or disable the automatic door closer. These rules apply to all fire doors in your building.

### Keep walkways and stairwells clear

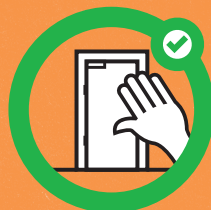
This will help minimise the spread of fire, enable people to get out quickly, and allow the fire service unobstructed access.

## Safety at a glance

**Don't tamper with your fire alarm**



**ALWAYS keep your fire door shut**



**Don't fix, screw or nail anything to your fire door**



**In the event of fire in your home get out and call 999**



**If you have any questions or concerns call our dedicated housing safety helpline**

# Everyday fire safety for residents

## Following these everyday fire safety tips will help protect you and your family from the risk of house fire

On average, there are around 35,000 house fires every year in the UK, and the majority of these could have been prevented by better fire safety awareness.

### Fire safety in the kitchen

Did you know, around half of all house fires in the UK start in the kitchen?

#### Keep flammable items away from your cooker and hob

Keep tea towels and other cloths away from the cooker and hob, and take extra care when wearing loose clothing as this could easily catch fire. It is a good idea to keep a fire blanket in the kitchen.

#### Switch off kitchen appliances

NEVER leave pans on the hob unattended, and always switch off kitchen appliances when not in use. Keep your hob, oven and grill clean and in good working order as a build-up of grease could easily catch fire.

#### Microwave safety

NEVER put anything metal inside your microwave oven, and do not leave anything on top of it that could block its air vents and catch fire.

#### Take care when cooking with hot oil

If it starts to smoke it is too hot, so turn off the heat and let it cool. Don't over fill the pan with oil or ingredients, and avoid splashing oil onto the hob as it could easily catch fire.

If possible, use a thermostatically-controlled fat fryer which can't overheat.

#### What to do if a pan catches fire

In the event of a pan fire, do not tackle it yourself. NEVER throw water over it, this will make the fire spread quickly. Get yourself and your family out and call 999.

#### Smoking safety

Careless use of tobacco products and vapes is a major cause of house fires, and every year sixty people die as the result of house fires caused by cigarettes.

NBBC has a no smoking policy in all communal areas of our buildings, but if you choose to smoke in your own home, please do so safely and responsibly.

NEVER smoke in bed or when you think you might fall asleep. Always make sure cigarettes and matches are properly extinguished and NEVER leave lit pipes

or cigarettes unattended. Keep lighters and matches out of the reach of children.

### Use candles safely

Do not place candles near curtains or soft furnishings, and make sure they are properly extinguished when finished with.

### TAKE CARE WHEN USING HEATERS

- Keep portable heaters away from curtains, soft furnishings and furniture
- NEVER dry clothes in front of electric heaters or gas fires
- NEVER cover the air vents on storage heaters or fan heaters as they may overheat and catch fire
- DO NOT use gas bottle heaters
- ONLY use heaters with an automatic safety cut-off feature

### Take care with electric blankets

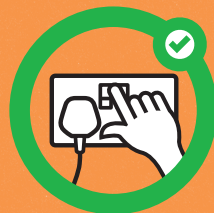
Always switch off electric blankets before you get into bed – unless they have a thermostat or timer that allows safe overnight use. Store them carefully when not in use to avoid damaging the heating elements.

### Use electrical appliances safely

Please read our electrical safety section on pages 10-11 for more tips and advice.

## Safety at a glance

**Switch off appliances when not in use**



**NEVER throw water over an oil pan fire**



**Don't dry clothes in front of heaters**



**NEVER smoke in bed or when you feel sleepy**



**If you have any questions or concerns call our dedicated housing safety helpline**

# General fire safety for residents

## The way you manage your home can have a significant impact on fire safety

We've talked about what you can do to prevent the risk of fire on a day-to-day basis, but there are things you can do over the longer term to make your home safer.

### Have an evacuation plan

In the event of fire IN YOUR HOME you should get yourself and your family out immediately and then call 999.

Make sure you know where the fire exits are and that everybody in your family knows how to follow the escape route. Memorise the number of doors you need to go through to escape so you don't get lost and confused if visibility is affected by smoke.

Remember, if the fire alarm sounds and there is no fire where you are, you must **STAY PUT** until the fire service says it is safe to leave.

### The danger of hoarding

Space for all our belongings can be a problem for everyone, but hoarding too many items in an untidy and chaotic way presents a real risk to life in the event of fire.

Hoarding too many flammable items such as newspapers and cardboard boxes means that fire could spread very quickly through



your home – especially if they prevent doors from being kept shut. An excessive number of possessions can block exit routes making safe evacuation more difficult, and could hinder emergency access for the fire service.

### Help with hoarding

If you are struggling with managing your belongings, contact Customer Services who can make a referral to our Tenancy Support Officers who can arrange help and support, and even advise the local fire service to be aware of hoarding in your home.

### Keeping escape routes clear

Keeping walkways and stairwells free of obstructions will help minimise the spread of fire, enable people to get out quickly, and allow the fire service unrestricted access.



# Safety at a glance

Don't leave items such as prams and pushchairs, scooters and bikes in entrance halls and doorways or in any communal areas.

Although it is NBBC policy to carry out routine inspections to ensure escape routes are kept clear, we can't do this every day, so your help here is invaluable and may save lives.

## Lithium-ion battery safety

Large rechargeable items powered by lithium-ion (Li-ion) batteries such as e-scooters, e-bikes and mobility scooters pose a significant fire risk if faulty or charged incorrectly. Li-ion battery fires are extremely dangerous as they can be very intense and very difficult to extinguish.

NEVER leave Li-ion batteries charging unattended – especially overnight or if you are away from home. Do not charge or store e-scooters or e-bikes near combustible materials or where they will impede safe evacuation.

Check your batteries for any damage such as dents, bulging and signs of overheating. If you notice any of these things STOP using the batteries immediately and replace them with genuine new ones.

**Know where the fire exits are**



**Do not hoard**



**Keep escape routes clear**



**In the event of fire in your home get out and call 999**



**If you have any questions or concerns call our dedicated housing safety helpline**

# Electrical safety for residents

## Using electricity in the home safely will help you avoid the risks of electric shock and electrical fire

This may seem like common sense, but the likelihood of electrical accidents occurring in the home can be significantly reduced by following these simple guidelines.

### Check your plugs and sockets

Regularly check the condition of plugs and sockets and replace any damaged or worn electrical cables. Plugs should be fitted with the correctly sized fuses and their cables clamped firmly into place so that no coloured wires are showing. If you see burn marks or hear any crackling or buzzing sounds when using plugs and sockets, or if they feel hot to the touch, stop using them immediately and contact NBBC Repairs on 024 7637 6344.

### Don't overload your sockets

We all need to use adapters and extension leads, but it is very important to do so safely.

NEVER plug an adaptor into another adapter and try to limit what you plug into extension leads to low current devices such as radios, TVs, computers and game consoles and hi-fi equipment. High current appliances such as kettles, irons and heaters should always be plugged directly into wall-mounted sockets where possible. Do not coil extension leads when they are being used.

Only use plugs, adapters and extension leads from reputable brands with the British Standard safety mark.

### Don't trail electrical cables across floors or under carpets or rugs

As well as the obvious trip hazard which itself can cause injury, cables may be pulled out from plugs leaving bare wires dangerously exposed with a high risk of electric shock and electrical fire.

When hidden under carpets or rugs, cables can get damaged and go un-noticed leading to an even higher risk of electrical fire.

### Switch off appliances when not in use

Switch off any electrical appliances that you aren't using at the wall, especially at night. If your socket doesn't have a switch, simply pull out the plug.

Take extra care with hand-held heated appliances such as irons, hair dryers and styling wands. Make sure they are switched off, unplugged and have cooled down completely before putting them away.

As well as helping you stay safe, this could save you money on your electricity bill.

### **Take care when charging mobile phones and other devices**

NEVER use a damaged cable to charge your phone or other rechargeable device. Do not leave items charging overnight or unattended, and NEVER leave them charging on the carpet, bed or on any other soft furnishings.

### **Water and electricity can be lethal**

NEVER take mains-powered appliances or extension leads into the bathroom or let plugs and cables get wet in the kitchen or garden.

NEVER use a plug or switch – or operate a mains-powered appliance – if you have wet hands as wet skin reduces the body's resistance to electric shock.

### **NEVER cover the air vents on electrical appliances**

The air vents on electrical appliances are there to stop them from overheating. If you cover them with anything, they may overheat and catch fire. This is particularly important with fan heaters and storage heaters.

### **Don't tamper with faulty appliances**

Don't use, or try to repair faulty appliances. Even when switched off and unplugged they can still cause an electric shock. Leave it to the experts and call a qualified electrician.

### **Leave plenty of space around your electric meter**

Always keep the area around your fusebox or electric meter easily accessible in case of emergency, and clear of all obstructions – especially those that could catch fire.

## **Safety at a glance**

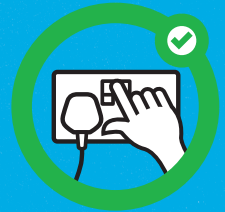
**Don't overload your electric sockets**



**Don't leave cables trailing across the floor**



**Always switch off appliances when not in use**



**NEVER touch electrical items with wet hands**



**If you have any questions or concerns call our dedicated housing safety helpline**

# Gas safety for residents

**Following these simple gas safety tips can help prevent the risk of gas leaks, fires or explosions, and carbon monoxide poisoning**

Gas is the UK's most popular fuel for heating and cooking. It's great when everything is working properly, but can quickly become dangerous when it's not. So these gas safety tips might save you and those around you.

## **Get your Annual Gas Safety Checks**

These are to ensure your gas appliances are safe and working properly, and NBBC will do these for you. Please be aware that these checks are a LEGAL requirement, so to avoid any court proceedings, costs and potential breaches of your tenancy contract, you should make it easy for us to carry them out.

Help us by replying quickly when we contact you to arrange a visit, by keeping to appointments, and by letting us know when you can't be there to let us in.

## **Be aware of the danger of Carbon Monoxide**

Carbon Monoxide can kill. It is a colourless, odourless and tasteless gas that can be emitted by faulty gas appliances. That's why NBBC are installing audible CO detectors in all your homes. If we haven't fitted yours yet, contact NBBC on 024 7637 6376.

## **Don't tamper with your CO detector**

Do not paint or cover your CO detector. Do not try to disconnect it or tamper with it.

## **Don't leave the gas switched on**

NEVER leave a cooker or fire switched on with the gas unlit. Make sure the flame doesn't go out whilst the gas is still turned on.

## **Check your gas appliances are working properly**

Healthy gas flames should be blue and crisp. Lazy yellow flames, dark sooty marks around appliances and unusual or unexpected sounds coming from your appliances are all warning signs that something isn't right.





If you notice any of these signs, contact NBBC immediately. DO NOT tamper with, or try to adjust or repair gas appliances yourself.

### What does gas smell like?

Natural gas is normally odourless, but for your safety Mercaptan – which is a non-toxic artificial smell – is added. This gives gas a strong and distinctive sulphur-like smell which is easy to detect, yet completely harmless.

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU SMELL GAS

- Open all doors and windows to ventilate the area
- SWITCH OFF all gas appliances
- EXTINGUISH all naked flames
- DO NOT SMOKE
- DO NOT operate any electrical appliances or switches – including light switches – as sparks may ignite leaking gas

### Report the gas leak

Call the 24-hour National Gas Emergency Helpline immediately on **0800 111 999**

For gas repairs, please call **024 7637 6344** and follow instructions.

### What to do if you feel unwell after a gas leak

If you feel light-headed, dizzy, nauseous or have a headache, get outside into the fresh air as quickly as you can and call your GP or the hospital and tell them you may have been exposed to Carbon Monoxide.

## Safety at a glance

**Don't leave the gas switched on without a flame**



**Make sure you have a CO alarm fitted**



**Don't use any switches if you smell gas**



**Report gas leaks IMMEDIATELY using the NGE 24-hour Helpline**



**If you have any questions or concerns call our dedicated housing safety helpline**

# Water hygiene for residents

**Following these golden rules is the easy way to keep the water supply in your home safe and hygienic for everyone to use**

Dirty water outlets and stagnant water can lead to health concerns caused by limescale and other unwanted deposits harbouring harmful bacteria. These health risks can be minimised simply by following good water hygiene practices.

## **Regularly run water through taps and showerheads**

Regular use of taps and showerheads prevents water stagnating. If not in regular use, you should turn taps and showerheads on for a few minutes every couple of days.

## **Clean your showerhead frequently**

Not only will this keep your shower in good working order, it will help prevent the build up of limescale. For additional safety, unscrew the showerhead and leave it to soak in disinfectant for a few minutes.

## **Turn on your taps when you return from holiday**

If you've been away for more than 48 hours, run water through all your taps for at least five minutes before using them. If you've been on a longer holiday, do this for ten minutes or so and soak your showerhead in disinfectant for several hours.

## **Take care using garden hose pipes**

Because hose pipes are used less frequently than taps, it is important to run water through them for at least five minutes before each use.

## **Do not alter boiler settings**

Do not change water temperature settings on your boiler as these will have been set at the best level to optimise the performance of your heating system whilst preventing harmful bacterial growth.

## **NBBC water management**

Throughout the year NBBC carry out water safety checks where necessary. If you have any issues with the quality of your water, please contact Severn Trent Water.



# Asbestos safety

## Exposure to asbestos poses a serious risk to health

Asbestos was widely used for its strength and fire-resistant properties to reinforce and protect building materials from heat up until 1999. So it's likely to be present in the construction of many of our buildings.

When mixed or sealed with other materials, asbestos remains safe, but if it is disturbed and its fibres are released into the air it can cause serious health risks if breathed in.

NBBC continues to work with tenants to provide up-to-date information on the location of asbestos in our buildings.

## Do not carry out DIY work which disturbs the fabric of the building

Painting and decorating, and hanging picture frames is perfectly safe, but anything that disturbs the fabric of the building – drilling into walls for example – risks exposing asbestos.

You should always contact NBBC before carrying out any such work.

## Report asbestos immediately

If you think you've disturbed asbestos in your home, do not touch it. Report it immediately to NBBC Repairs on **024 7637 6344**

# Safety at a glance

Use taps and showerheads frequently



Clean your showerhead regularly



Don't alter water boiler settings



If you find asbestos report it immediately



If you have any questions or concerns call our dedicated housing safety helpline



# Useful numbers

**customer services**

**024 7637 6376**

**housing safety and compliance helpline**

**024 7637 6555**

**repairs helpline**

**024 7637 6344**

**lettings team**

**024 7637 6406**

**national gas 24 hour emergency helpline**

**0800 111 999**