



Winter Home Safety Tips Frequently Asked Questions

My pipes are frozen

If your pipes are frozen but not burst then you should turn the main water off at the stop tap. Turn the cold taps ON (so that they are in the open position). Make sure the sink and bath plugs are out. Try and save some water for drinking. If you know which pipe is frozen, very gently warm it with hot water bottles or a hair dryer. Start from the end nearest the tap.

My pipes have burst

If a pipe has burst then you should turn the main water off at the stop tap. Turn the cold taps ON (so that they are in the open position). Make sure the sink and bath plugs are out. Try and save some water for drinking. Turn the immersion heater and central heating OFF if you have them. Turn the hot taps ON.

My boiler isn't working because the pipes are frozen

If you have a combination boiler with a condensate pipe that has frozen, (the condensate pipe is the one that runs from the boiler to an outside drain), try thawing out the pipe using a hot water bottle, hairdryer or by pouring hot (NOT BOILING) water onto the pipe. Never disconnect the pipe. If you use hot water, make sure you are safe. Never use boiling water and don't try thawing out any pipes above ground level.

What should I set my heating at?

To keep warm at home during the day try to heat your main living room to around 18-21°C (64-70°F) and the rest of the house to at least 16°C (61°F). [For more information click here](#)

I don't know how to work my Central Heating boiler and I don't understand the controls

This link will take you to a choice of booklets depending upon the heating system installed in your home.

http://www.enehl.org.uk/Home/Your_home_in_ENEHL/Repairs_Improvements_Regeneration/User_Guide_CH_Boilers_and_Controls.aspx

I don't know how to work my storage heaters

This link will take you to a choice of booklets depending upon the heating system installed in your home

http://www.enehl.org.uk/Home/Your_home_in_ENEHL/Repairs_Improvements_Regeneration/User_Guide_CH_Boilers_and_Controls.aspx

I have a prepay meter – how/where do I top it up

Make sure you have bought enough credit to see you over any bank holidays. Make sure you are aware of the opening times of the office where you can buy credit. Make sure you are aware of any changes to opening hours over bank holidays

Why have I got condensation and mould developing?

The way you use your home affects how much condensation you get. This does not mean that you should alter your habits drastically – just bear in mind these tips:

Heating

You'll get less condensation if you keep your home warm most of the time. Insulation will help you do this. But with fuel the price it is, try to remember this:

It's important that your heating system is checked annually so that it works efficiently. Try to leave some background heat on through the day in cold weather. Most dwellings take quite a long time to warm up and it may cost you more if you try to heat it up quickly in the evening.

If you can't afford to spend more on fuel because of high quarterly bills, ask your fuel supplier or your local gas or electricity supplier about their budget schemes, for example fuel saving stamps, which help to spread the cost of fuel.

Ventilation

The more moisture produced in your home, the greater the chances of condensation, unless there is adequate ventilation. Nobody likes draughts, but some ventilation is essential.

Windows

In winter, open windows a little, but only for as long as they are misted up. If you fit draught stripping, leave a space for a small amount of air to get through.

Chimneys

Never block these up completely. If you're blocking up a fireplace, fit an air vent to allow ventilation.

Drying clothes

Drying clothes indoors, particularly on radiators, can increase condensation unless you open a window to allow air to circulate. If you have a tumble dryer that is not vented to the outside you'll need to allow more ventilation when you use it.

Doors

Keep kitchen and bathroom doors shut, particularly when cooking, washing or bathing – otherwise water vapour will spread right through the house and condensation will probably reach other rooms.

Extractor fans

If you have an extractor fan use it when the windows get steamed up while cooking and when taking a bath.

Kettles and pans

Don't allow kettles and pans to boil away any longer than is needed.

Cupboards and wardrobes

Don't overfill cupboards and wardrobes. Always make sure that some air can circulate freely by fitting ventilators in doors and leaving a space at the back of the shelves.

Summary

Condensation is a normal product of living. But you can reduce its effects by:

Reducing the moisture at source

Heating and ventilating your home sensibly

[For more information on condensation and mould click here](#)

My windows and doors are draughty

As soon as its dusk, drawer your curtains, try to tuck them behind any radiators to help the heat get through.

Windows

For windows that open, buy draught-proofing strips to stick around the window frame and fill the gap between the window and the frame.

Consider self-adhesive foam strips – cheap, and easy to install.

Make sure the strip is the right size to fill the gap in your window. If the strip is too big it will get crushed and you may not be able to close the window. If it's too small there will still be a gap.

Doors

Draught-proofing outside doors can save a lot of heat and will only cost you a few pounds.

There are four main things to think about:

- the keyhole – buy a purpose-made cover that drops a metal disc over the keyhole
- the letterbox – use a letterbox flap or letterbox brush, but remember to measure your letterbox before you buy
- the gap at the bottom – use a brush or hinged flap draught excluder
- gaps around the edges – fit foam, brush or wiper strips like those used for windows.

Inside doors need draught-proofing if they lead to a room you don't normally heat, such as your spare room or kitchen. Keep those doors closed to stop the cold air from moving into the rest of the house. If there is a gap at the bottom of the door, block it with a draught excluder - you can make one stuffed with used plastic bags or bits of spare material.

Inside doors between two heated rooms don't need draught-proofing, as you don't lose energy if warm air circulates.

My rubbish hasn't been collected

If the weather conditions are extreme, please allow time for the bin wagons to be able to catch up with their routes. If you can, use a bin bag if your bin is full. Keep this in an outhouse if possible or on top of the wheelie bin to avoid animals ripping the bag open. Put your bin out as usual the following week.

What can I put on my path to make it less slippery

You can use rock salt, or any salt, grit or even cat litter.

Can we have a grit bin or our grit bin is empty

You can request a grit bin, however there is a process to go through so it is unlikely it will be in time for the current cold spell. You need to contact the ENEHL Partnership team or the Estate Management team. You can also ask your Housing Support Officer to make a referral for you. They will be able to decide whether it is our responsibility or that of Highways to provide a bin, if it is deemed appropriate for you to have one. They will do this by undertaking a risk assessment.

If your grit bin is empty. Please contact your Housing Support Officer or the ENEHL Partnerships team who will be able to see who is responsible for filling it up and can make arrangements for you.

How long will my repair take?

Emergency repairs are usually attended within 3 hours, although this can be up to 24 hours if conditions are severe

Priority orders will take up to 3 days

General orders will take up to 28 days.

At the time of booking the repair, you will be given information about the length of time it is expected to take.