

**Inspiring Housing
Community Land Trust**

Home Safety Policy



**INSPIRING
HOUSING**

**August 2024
V2**

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Date first adopted: August 2024

Review dates:

Date of review	Amendments/Updates made	Reviewed & accepted	Proposed next review
October 2024	Reflect new consumer standards		

Policy Statement

This Home Safety Policy contains useful information, as well as tips and advice, about how you can keep yourself and others safe in your home.

Health, safety and wellbeing of our customers and homes really matters to us and we work hard to ensure that all our homes are safe and great places to live.

In order to help keep you safe and ensure all our properties meet our high standards, we will carry out regular checks and safety inspections in your home. Some of these safety inspections are a legal requirement, and sometimes we may need to carry out essential repairs, so it's really important that you allow us access into your home when required.

For more information on your rights as a tenant and our responsibilities as your landlord, please refer to your Tenancy Agreement.

Introduction

If you do have a safety concern about your home, or want to raise any other issue or complaint with us, you can be reassured that we will listen to you and act upon your concerns.

There's many ways you can contact us - by phone, email or via our website. Just get in touch using the contact details you can find at the end of this leaflet.

Fire Safety

Fire safety is a priority for Inspiring Housing CLT, and we work closely with Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service to help minimise the risk and impact of fire in our properties. It's also crucial that you keep yourself safe and don't do anything which could put you or other people at risk of injury from fire.

Who is responsible for fire safety?

Everyone has a part to play. If your home has communal areas, such as in a flat or sheltered accommodation, Inspiring Housing CLT will ensure these are maintained to ensure we achieve the highest levels of safety. Regular safety audits on communal spaces will be carried out. As a tenant, you must live and behave in a way that does not increase the risk of fire or damage to your home or building.

Smoke alarms and heat detectors

As your landlord, we ensure we provide and have fitted smoke detectors in all our properties. Every home should have at least one working smoke alarm.

We recommend that all our properties have a smoke detector in the lounge and hallway, and a heat detector in the kitchen.

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service offer free Home Fire Safety Assessments, where they will visit your home and provide fire safety advice and equipment, depending on risk. To find out more, get personalised fire safety advice and check if you are eligible,
[HFSA - Greater Manchester Fire Rescue Service](#)

It is your responsibility to check regularly that your smoke and heat alarms are working, and we would advise you to test them monthly. If your alarm starts to bleep, it may have developed a fault or simply need new batteries, so please let us know if this happens.

If you do not have a working smoke alarm in your home, please contact us so we can arrange to have one installed.

Your smoke alarm could save your life in a fire, so please don't tamper with it. You should never disconnect or take the batteries out of your smoke alarm. Some smoke alarms are connected to your electricity supply and you could be injured if you try to disconnect it.

What to do if there's a fire in your home

If there is a fire in your home - Get out, stay out and call 999 - don't try to tackle the fire yourself, and never go back into a burning building.

- Keep calm and act quickly - alert everyone in your home and get out by your nearest exit, staying together where possible.
- Seconds count so don't waste time rescuing valuables.
- Before opening a door, check it first by using the back of your hand. If it's warm, don't open it.
- When moving through your home, remember to shut doors behind you to help contain the fire.
- If your escape route is blocked and you can't escape safely through a window, call 999 and find a room to wait in until the fire service arrive.
- Open a window in the room and put cushions and bedding around the bottom of the door to block out the smoke.
- If smoke starts to come into the room - keep low to the floor as this is where the air is cleaner.

Once you've escaped Don't go back inside your home, even if there is someone left inside. Wait for the fire service, and when they arrive, give them as much information as possible.

Stay Fire Safe – Top Ten Tips

We want all our customers to live safely in their homes. Fire safety is everyone's responsibility and there are plenty of precautions you can take to help keep you, your family and your neighbours safe from the risk of fire.

Tip 1 Test your smoke alarms regularly - at least once a month.	Tip 2 Don't block your escape route or store anything in communal areas that could cause an obstruction in an emergency.	Tip 3 Never leave cooking unattended and make sure you turn your oven and cooker off when you've finished	Tip 4 Don't overload the electrics - one plug for one socket.	Tip 5 Only use chargers and cables from reputable sources, which meet UK safety standards.
Tip 6 Always put candles on a heat resistant surface, away from curtains or furnishings, and always blow them out before you leave the room	Tip 7 Keep lighters and matches out of sight and reach of children	Tip 8 If you smoke, make sure cigarettes are stubbed out properly and disposed of safely, and never smoke in bed	Tip 9 Don't use a BBQ indoors or in an enclosed space, and remember balconies are not for BBQs.	Tip 10 Keep door and window keys accessible. If you need keys to unlock your front door, keep them in the same safe place so you can grab them easily in an emergency

Mobility scooters, E-bikes and E-scooters Mobility scooters

Mobility scooters can be a fire hazard if they are not stored and charged correctly. They will only be allowed in our buildings where they can be safely stored and charged without affecting the safe escape from the property in the event of fire.

If you have a mobility scooter, it's important that you let us know about it, so we can check there's sufficient space to store it safely.

E-bikes and E-scooters

If you own or use an electric bike or electric scooter, we want to make sure you're taking the necessary steps to ensure you're not putting yours or other people's lives or homes at risk.

E-bikes and e-scooters are powered by rechargeable lithium-ion battery packs; these batteries are used safely in everyday devices that most of us own like watches, laptops or mobile phones.

The problems arise in non-standard or faulty batteries, which aren't being charged safely. They're a major fire risk when over-charged, short circuited or damaged, and when they do catch fire, the consequences can be deadly.

Be wary of DIY kits to convert a standard bike into an e-bike

Most e-bikes and e-scooters on the market in the UK bought from reputable manufacturers meet the stringent safety regulations, but many of the safety issues are arising from converter kits, which are lithium-ion battery packs designed to convert a standard bike to an e-bike.

There are growing concerns about these converter kits sold online, which do not meet UK safety regulations and present an increased fire risk.

If you own an e-bike or e-scooter, please follow our safety advice. This applies to mobility scooters too:

- Never charge it while you're sleeping or not at home.
- Unplug your charger once it's finished charging.
- Never block your escape route with your e-bike or mobility scooter.
- Never tamper with the battery and always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Ensure your battery and charger meets UK safety standards and always use the correct charger.
- Never cover your charger as this could lead to it overheating or setting on fire

Gas safety

As your landlord, we have a legal duty to ensure that all gas appliances, fittings and flues owned by Inspiring Housing CLT and 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. We will notify you in writing when your Gas Safety Check is due and arrange an appointment. We will provide you with a Gas Safety Certificate within 28-days of the check being completed. If an appliance fails the inspection, we will work with you to advise and agree the next steps.

Your gas safety 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 registered Gas Safe engineer, and you must never attempt to do any gas related work or repairs yourself.

Smell gas?

If you smell gas in or around your home, you must call the National Grid immediately on 0800 111 999.

You should also follow this safety advice:

- Turn off the appliance you are using.
- Turn off the gas supply at the meter (unless the meter is located in a cellar, in which case you should evacuate immediately).
- Check to see if a gas tap has been accidentally left on or if a pilot light has gone out.
- Open doors and windows to allow the gas to disperse.

Carbon monoxide

If you have a faulty gas appliance, it can be dangerous and produce carbon monoxide gas. Exposure to carbon monoxide can cause headaches, dizziness, nausea, breathlessness and even death, so you should seek medical advice immediately if you have these symptoms.

Inspiring Housing CLT installs carbon monoxide alarms in our properties which have an opened flued appliance such as a gas boiler, gas fire or wood burning fireplace.

Please contact us if you think it may not be working correctly or believe you should have one installed, but it is missing.

Compressed gas

Unless it's for medical reasons, you must not use or store compressed gas within your home. Gas in cylinders can become a major hazard in a fire and must be stored safely at all times.

If you are required to use and store compressed gas for medical reasons, for example oxygen, you must inform Inspiring Housing CLT and the fire service.

You can call 0800 555 815 to arrange a Home Fire Safety Assessment with the Fire Service to discuss the safe storage of compressed gas.

Gas meter tampering

Worried about bills? We understand you may be worried about the cost of your energy bills, and other expenses. We can provide free advice and support if you're worried about your finances.

Just get in touch to see how we can help on 0161743624 or email office@inspiringhousing.co.uk

Tampering with the gas meter in your home, known as 'meter cheating' is illegal and incredibly dangerous. Damaging the gas supply risks dangerous leaks.

Leaking gas is also highly flammable and can be easily ignited - flicking a light switch is all it takes to cause an explosion.

You can find out more about the risks involved with gas tampering at www.stayenergysafe.co.uk/gas-theft

Electrical Safety

As your landlord, we have a legal duty to ensure that the wiring in your home and any equipment owned by Inspiring Housing CLT and provided for your use is safe.

We carry out periodic checks of the electrical wiring in your property and regularly test portable appliances in communal areas. However, you are responsible for any electrical equipment you have brought into your home and how you use it.

Faulty appliances are a major fire risk, so if any of your appliances, such as your fridge or washing machine, start making strange noises or aren't working properly, please don't ignore it.

If you're struggling with the cost of buying appliances, or can't afford replacements if they're broken, then we're here to help. Contact us to find out more

Your electrical safety responsibilities

Every five years, you must allow us access to your home to complete your Electrical Safety Check.

If you employ anyone to carry out electrical work in your home, you should ensure they are a registered electrician with one of the government approved schemes. You should also let us know about any electrical work you've had done in your property, in case we need to carry out an additional safety check.

To reduce the risk of an injury or fire caused by electrical faults, follow our safety advice:

- Only buy electrical appliances and chargers from a reputable source and always check for a British or European safety mark.
- Don't overload plug sockets or adaptors. Check your sockets regularly - if you see burn marks or they feel hot
- Don't put electric heaters near curtains or furniture and don't dry clothes on them or cover the air vents on heaters.
- Switch off appliances at the socket when not in use

Water Hygiene

We make sure that the water systems in our properties are installed and maintained to the highest standards. However, if your home has been empty for an extended period of time, perhaps if you've been away on holiday or in hospital, there is a chance that the quality of your water may be affected by the growth of bacteria, which occurs naturally in the water mains supply.

Legionella and Legionnaires' disease Legionella is a naturally occurring bacteria present in water. Although the risk is very low, there is a chance that Legionella bacteria can develop in stagnant or stored water in your home. Legionnaires' disease is a lung infection you can get from inhaling droplets of water containing the bacteria that causes the infection. It's uncommon, but it can be very serious for some people.

Visit the NHS website to find out more about symptoms and treatment.

www.nhs.uk/conditions/legionnaires-disease

Reducing the risk of Legionella

- Keep your hot water on your thermostat to at least 60°C, as Legionella bacteria can't survive high temperatures.
- Avoid stagnation by keeping your water moving. Run the tap or shower for around two minutes if they're not used regularly, and flush toilets that haven't been used in over a week.
- Shower heads and taps should be regularly cleaned to help kill off any bacteria.

Damp, Mould and Condensation

At Inspiring Housing CLT, we take the condition of our homes very seriously and we are committed to making sure you have a healthy home, free from damp, mould and condensation.

If you have concerns about damp and mould in your home, and the affect it could be having on the health and wellbeing of you and your family, then please let us know.

What is damp?

Damp is caused by excess moisture in your home. The most common types of damp are rising damp, penetrating damp, damp caused by a leak and damp caused by condensation. It can make your home feel cold and uncomfortable, and it can cause structural damage if it's not dealt with.

What is mould?

Mould is a type of fungi caused by excess moisture in your home. It looks like a collection of little black spots and can often be found on windows or in the corners and edges of rooms. Mould can grow in any home, so it's important to let us know if you spot mould in your home so we can help you.

What is condensation?

Condensation occurs when moisture in the air meets a cold surface like a window or wall. You may notice it when you are cooking or having a shower. If surfaces are left wet, a build-up of condensation can occur which can lead to mould forming. Wiping away this excess moisture can help prevent mould from forming.

Fuel Poverty

Fuel poverty is recognised as a causal factor in damp, mould, and condensation issues.

If you are unable to afford to heat your home effectively please contact us as we can sign post your to further support or advice

Why is it in my home?

Mould is usually caused by damp conditions like condensation that has been left on a surface for too long. Most homes have some condensation, like the droplets you see on windows in the morning or after a shower.

Some mould can be caused by damp from a leak, poor insulation or other factors, so look out for any wet or damp patches on your walls or floors.

While it's quite common to find mould in your home, it can be harmful to your health if it isn't removed, which is why it's really important you report it to us.

Asbestos Management

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral found in rock. It was used in building products in the UK particularly during the 1960s and 1970s because it is very strong and resistant to heat and chemicals.

The use of asbestos was stopped in 1999, but any building built before 2000 may contain asbestos. If you have asbestos in your home, you do not need to be worried. If it's not damaged, it is not usually a problem.

Asbestos only becomes dangerous when it is damaged or disturbed. This is because it releases invisible fibres into the air. If we breathe in these fibres, they can get stuck in the tissues of the chest or lungs and cause serious health issues.

Ask before you DIY

You must contact us first if you're planning any home improvements. We can check our records and see if your home is likely to contain asbestos and where it is located. If you or anyone else carries out work on your home without our permission, you may have to pay for the asbestos to be made safe or removed by a licensed contractor.

Remember, this is an important part of your Tenancy Agreement and if you don't let us know about your DIY plans, you will be in breach of your Tenancy Agreement.

How we deal with asbestos in your home?

Report asbestos

If you suspect you may have disturbed asbestos, or have found a suspected asbestos product, please leave the room where the material was found, close the door and contact us

If asbestos is not damaged, it's safest to leave it in place. Where asbestos is a hazard, we make it safe by enclosing it or removing it.

We also carry out surveys on our properties to find out if they contain asbestos and what condition it is in. We'll let you know when our trained asbestos surveyors are going to be carrying out these surveys at your home, and it's really important that you allow us access.

Equality and diversity

We will apply this policy consistently and fairly and will not discriminate against anyone based on any protected characteristics, including those set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Complaints

Any resident or other stakeholder who is dissatisfied with how we have managed their properties is able to submit a complaint using our Complaints process.

Once our Complaints policy is complete and if they remain dissatisfied, then they can contact the Housing Ombudsman.