

KEEPING YOU SAFE IN YOUR HOME

2025



Your safety and comfort at home are our priority.

This handbook contains useful information as to how we will help ensure your home is safe to live in for both you and your family.

As a landlord, we must meet and maintain all regulatory standards and requirements to ensure homes are safe and we do this through routine inspection programmes and undertaking works as required e.g. annual gas safety checks and servicing.

Our programmes are monitored, and we report our performance through our governance structure and to the Regulator of Social Housing.

We encourage you to explore this handbook and discover how we are committed to your safety. If you have any questions or feedback as to how we can make further improvements, we would love to hear from you.

Fire Safety

What LBR is doing to keep you safe

- All homes will have the required level of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms installed.
- We will carry out inspections on communal fire doors in blocks over 11 metres every three months and flat entry doors every year.
- We will carry out monthly checks on lifts and essential fire-fighting equipment in blocks over 11 metres.
- We will produce a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan for vulnerable residents.
- We will provide the fire service with the information they need to manage any fire in your building.
- We will carry out regular Fire Risk Assessments to make sure communal stairwells are safe to use in the event of a fire.

How you can help keep your home safe

You can help ensure the safety of your family and your neighbours by following these simple steps:

- Provide us with access to your home to undertake safety inspections on fire and structural safety maintenance.
- Do not store possessions in communal areas or block fire doors as this is a fire hazard.
- Identify and report hazards, including reminding neighbours of their responsibilities in helping to keep their building safe.
- Understand your building's action plan and follow this in the event of an emergency.

What's your plan?

Even with care, fires can happen. They can spread quickly. It's important that you, your family members and any visitors know how to exit the building quickly and safely.

Hint: Check your fire escape route regularly to ensure its clear and safe to use.



Fire Safety continued

What to do if a fire breaks out in your home

- Close the door of the room where the fire is.
- If you are in a house or a flat with an evacuation policy then get everyone out of the house, only if it's safe enough to do so.
- If you live in a flat with access to a communal area, you should follow the stay put advice that is set out in the advice letter produced by London Borough of Redbridge.
- If you need to break a window, the safest way is to break the glass in the bottom corner.
- Call the fire brigade – don't assume that someone else has.
- Warn/alert your neighbours, do NOT go back into the property.

Fire safety in communal blocks

If you live in a block with a shared stairwell or other communal areas, there are a few other things you need to think about.

- Keep communal electrical cupboards or other areas e.g. under stairs clear.
- Report issues of fly tipping, unauthorised storage, issues with door entry systems and any other communal issues promptly.
- Keep communal doors closed and do not wedge them open as this could affect the security of the block and/or allow fire to spread more easily.
- Keep bin stores tidy and take excess rubbish and unwanted household items to the recycling centre or tip.

Looking after your smoke alarm

- Check your smoke alarm weekly to make sure that it's working.
- If your alarm beeps intermittently this indicates a battery low fault or an alarm memory fault, which needs attention (contact us if you need help with this). A continuous beeping is an activation that requires immediate action to stay safe.
- Never disconnect the alarm if it goes off by mistake.
- Vacuum the grill area of the smoke alarm every 12 months.
- Never cover smoke alarms.
- Report any issues to us.

Remember to check your smoke alarms regularly



Prevent Balcony Fires – Know the Risks

Do you have a balcony?



Follow our top fire safety tips:

- Keep balconies free from clutter – these are an important access point for firefighters so, never use them for storage.
- Avoid smoking on balconies if you can, never discard cigarettes or smoking materials on or over the balcony. Use a sturdy ashtray and dispose of smoking materials responsibly.
- Barbecues, fire pits, patio heaters and chimeneas should never be used on a balcony – they pose a fire and carbon monoxide risk.
- Avoid storing combustible, flammable or hazardous material materials on balconies such as mattresses, gas cylinders, garden furniture and electrical appliances including white goods.
- Glass and mirrors could amplify sunlight to cause a fire, so never store on balconies.
- Do not modify your balcony or install combustible screening.
- Only use seats and tables made from non-flammable materials on balconies.
- Do not use or set off fireworks or sky lanterns from a balcony.

If your neighbours are using their balconies in a way that compromises fire safety, contact us and let us know.

Gas Safety

Our commitment to your safety

By law all landlords should carry out yearly checks and regular servicing to all gas appliances, flues and pipework to ensure they are safe to use. Gas appliances can become dangerous to use and can kill if they are not checked and serviced regularly.

To ensure your gas is safe at home we will:

- Carry out a service before the anniversary date expires on the previous gas certificate.
- Arrange to carry out your gas safety check each year. We will take all reasonable steps to get in touch with you to arrange this. If we are unable to arrange a suitable time with your consent, we will commence with our controlled entry process.
- Arrange an appointment to carry out any additional repair work identified during the safety check.
- Provide you with a copy of the safety certificate within 28 days of the check. Please keep this safe to help with future inspections.
- Carry out gas safety checks on all empty homes and cap the gas.
- Ensure all LBR operatives or contractors carrying out works in LBR homes are properly gas qualified for the works they are undertaking.
- Check that all gas cookers are fitted with a stability bracket. At each annual service a gas engineer will check that they have been fitted correctly.
- Look at all gas appliances in your home to check they are working correctly and repair any appliance that we own. If there is a problem with an appliance that belongs to you, we will not carry out any repairs. Our contractor may fix a warning label to your appliance to warn you that it's not safe to use. It is illegal to remove this label and use the appliance until it has been made safe to use. You are responsible for arranging any repairs that are necessary.

Act Fast: If you suspect a gas leak, follow these steps immediately to ensure your safety

1. Open all doors & windows.
2. Do not put off or on any electrical items or switches.
3. If any gas appliances have been left on, turn them off.
4. If the pilot light is still on and your gas appliances are all off, there may be a leak.
5. Turn off the gas at the mains.

Phone the National Gas Emergency Number immediately on **0800 111 999**. (This is a free phone number unless you are calling from a mobile phone).

Gas Safety continued



Your gas safety check

- Keep the appointment given for the annual safety check and service given by LBR's gas contractor. If you can't, call the gas contractor to re-arrange for a time that is suitable and before the anniversary date (i.e. within a year of the last service).
- If you have a prepayment meter, please make sure you have at least emergency credit available on your electric and gas meter for our gas engineers to complete a gas safety check.
- Ensure you have cleared the area surrounding your boiler to enable the engineer easy access to the boiler.

Staying gas safe – your appliances

- If you live in a flat, the law requires that any new gas cooker has a flame supervision device fitted to shut off the supply and prevent a gas explosion or a fire if the flame is extinguished.
- Any new gas cooker you have fitted must be fitted by a qualified gas engineer.
- No gas fires can be installed in the property by Tenants. Any works to gas system must be approved in writing by LBR before they are carried out.
- If you suspect any problems with your gas appliance, please call the repairs line on **0800 393 994**.

Gas Safety continued

Tips for boiler faults

If you have a problem with your boiler, please take the following steps before calling to report a fault:

1. If you have a pre-pay meter, check it is in credit.
2. Check there has not been a power cut and there is power to appliance.
3. Check to see if the pilot light has gone out.
4. Please try and reset the boiler – if you do not have an instruction manual, contact us and we will send you a copy.
5. Check the pressure gauge on the boiler when system is cold; it should be between 1 and 1.5 bar. Generally, this is indicated by a green zone on the gauge. Do not overfill past the green zone or 2-bar level. Check that the boiler has not been turned on to hot water only settings or on to a timer.
6. If you have a thermostat, check that this is set to the correct temperature or select 30 degrees to test the boiler. You can then adjust to a comfortable temperature once the boiler is running.
7. In cold weather your condensate pipe that comes from your boiler to the outside of your property can become frozen. This can cause your boiler to shut down. This can be fixed by pouring warm water over the pipe.



Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide is produced when fuels such as gas, oil, coal, and wood do not burn fully. The most common causes of accidental exposure to carbon monoxide are incorrectly installed, poorly maintained or poorly ventilated household appliances, for example cookers, heaters, and central heating boilers.

Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas that has no smell or taste. Breathing it in can make you unwell, and in some cases can cause death if you are exposed to high levels of carbon monoxide.

What LBR is doing to keep you safe

We will:

- Fit a carbon monoxide detector in homes with gas and solid fuel heating and ensure there is appropriate ventilation.
- Carry out annual carbon monoxide detector checks, identifying any faults and carrying out the necessary repairs.
- We will respond to reports of a carbon monoxide alarm activation as an emergency and if required replace the detector. Depending on the situation an LBR gas officer may attend and carry out an inspection to assess the fault. This may be escalated to our procured gas consultants to carry out a more thorough investigation where required.

What you can do to keep yourself safe

- Do NOT remove carbon monoxide detection alarms from your property – they are there for your safety and can save you and your family's lives.
- Report issues or activations promptly.
- Do not cover vents, they are there to ensure effective ventilation to prevent build-up of fumes.

If your alarm bleeps intermittently this indicates a battery low fault or an alarm memory fault, which needs attention. Please call LBR to have this rectified.

Do not install alarms that have replaceable batteries in your home.

Call LBR if you have any alarm issue you are not sure about.

Electrical Safety

We need to carry out regular electrical inspections and tests because electrical installations deteriorate due to issues such as damage, wear and tear, corrosion, excessive electrical loading, ageing and environmental influences.

Electricity is a major cause of fires and electricity can cause injury such as electric shock, burns and falls.

What LBR is doing to keep you safe

- Carry out an electrical safety check every 5 years on your home and undertake any works identified during the check promptly.
- Carry out an electrical safety check every 5 years in communal area of all blocks and undertake any works identified during the check promptly.
- Carry out an electrical check after major works on your home, this includes a kitchen, bathroom, or heating replacement.
- During the empty homes process we will ensure every property has a safety check and any required works completed prior to the property being let.
- Maintain a register of all electrical checks carried out to ensure the effective management and monitoring of the electrical safety process.
- Ensure any LBR Operative or contractor undertaking works in LBR homes are properly electrically qualified for the works they are undertaking.

What you can do to keep yourself safe

- Ensure you give access for all electrical safety checks.
- Do not overload power circuits with multiple extension cables.
- Do not attempt to carry out any electrical works yourself, except plug changes.
- Switch off chargers etc. when not in use and check for overheating.



Water Safety

There are several water-borne bacteria/diseases, but the most well-known is Legionnaires' disease (legionella) which is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia, caused by infected water droplets/mist. This disease can affect anybody, but mainly affects those who are more vulnerable because of age, illness, immunosuppression, smoking etc.

It is caused by the bacteria Legionella Pneumophila and related bacteria. It can be found in stagnant water taps or unused pipework with water enclosed, pipes, water tanks and shower heads. Breathing in small droplets of contaminated water is how the legionella bacteria infect your lungs.



LBR will regularly keep a check on communal water outlets

What LBR is doing to keep you safe

- Undertake a monthly check of communal water outlets in communal areas. Any resulting works found during these checks will be undertaken promptly.
- Carry out cyclical water checks to communal water tanks where required. This may require access to your property to access the communal tank. Any resulting works found during these checks will be undertaken promptly. Where applicable communal water tanks not required will be removed.
- During the empty homes process we will carry out a water pipework system flush and replace a shower hose and head prior to a property being allocated.
- Maintain a register of all water checks carried out to ensure the effective management and monitoring of the water safety process.
- Ensure any LBR Operative or Contractor undertaking works in LBR homes is properly trained for the works they are undertaking.
- We will ensure that your boiler is set at the correct temperature to prevent any risk of legionella.
- Any new baths that we fit will have a thermostatic mixing valve present to reduce the risk of scalding and distribute safe temperature water (under 44 degrees) at the tap directly.

Water Safety continued

What you can do to assist and keep yourself safe



- Grant prompt access where required to a communal water tank so the inspection and any works can be carried out.
- Ensure you run water through all your taps and shower heads regularly.
- Do not allow water to stagnate e.g. when water outlets are not in regular use.
- Unscrew your shower head regularly and immerse in disinfectant for a couple of minutes.
- If you are away from your home for more than 48 hours, upon your return run all taps and water outlets for 5 minutes.
- When you get back from longer holiday/breaks, you should run water through all your taps and shower heads for a longer period, say 10 minutes and immerse your shower head in disinfectant for several hours.
- Before using garden hose pipes, turn the water on without a spray nozzle attached and run for 5 minutes.
- Do not alter the settings on your boiler for water temperature as this will have been set to a level to ensure your safety.

Asbestos Safety

Asbestos is a strong, durable, non-inflammable fibre widely used for reinforcing many materials in buildings prior to 1999. It was also a good insulator, so it was used extensively to protect building structures from fire and excessive heat. Because of its many uses, materials containing asbestos can be found in all types of buildings, especially those built between 1950 and 1999 and was widely used in the construction and refurbishment of homes. Where asbestos remains mixed, bound, or sealed with other materials and not disturbed it does not pose a safety risk. If asbestos is disturbed and fibres released, serious health risks can arise in the long term from breathing in air containing asbestos fibres.

What LBR is doing to keep you safe

- We carry out surveys of communal areas in blocks to identify, monitor and maintain asbestos in these areas.*
- Where major works are required, we assess the asbestos information we have for the property and where required carry out a further asbestos survey to ensure as far as possible asbestos is identified and taken into account when planning.
- Where day to day repairs are required, we provide LBR operatives and contractors with the associated asbestos information for that property.
- We ensure LBR operatives and contractors undertake regular asbestos awareness training to identify issues on site.
- We carry out an asbestos check each time one of our properties becomes empty. A full survey will be carried out if the property has not previously received one.
- We maintain a register of all asbestos, identified and assumed, and where removals have taken place to ensure the effective management and monitoring of the asbestos safety process.
- If your home is known to have, or is at risk of having asbestos, we will let you know, and will tell you what you need to do to either ensure asbestos is not disturbed, or have it removed.

What you can do keep yourself safe

Contact us before undertaking DIY work which would disturb the fabric of the building. Standard decorative work, such as scraping wallpaper or painting, is perfectly safe.

You must however call us in advance of carrying out any work if you plan to:

- Remove, sand, drill or scrape any Artex coatings to surfaces.
- Drill (other than minor work, for example to put up a picture frame or a hook).
- Plan work which would disturb any material in the loft area.
- Plan work in the heating cupboard, on or around pipes which are lagged.

If you think you may have found asbestos in your home, you should:

- Report the matter to us without delay by calling **0800 393 994**.
- Make sure that the material is not disturbed.

** Asbestos surveys and removal are carried out by our approved and licensed contractor.*

Lifts

LBR has some passenger lifts and a stair lift in communal and Amenity Housing blocks. These lifts are vital for tenants who for whatever reason do not wish to or physically cannot use the stairs to access their home. LBR has a duty of care to ensure the lifting equipment is kept and maintained to a safe standard for use.

What LBR will do to keep you safe

- Carry out annual cyclical checks of our lifts and ensure any works identified during these checks are carried out promptly.
- Upgrade and replace lift parts based on their useful life.
- Respond promptly to reports of people getting trapped in lifts.
- Respond promptly to reports of issues affecting use and operation.

What you can do to keep yourself safe

- Follow the instructions that will be clearly displayed in each individual lift. Directions and emergency contact details will be shown.
- Please follow the weight restrictions that will be displayed.
- Promptly report issues affecting any lift.



LBR will carry out checks and repair lifts and stair lifts promptly

Understanding Damp and Mould

Damp and mould is a common problem area for landlords and their tenants, regardless of the age of the rental property. It's important that both parties understand the causes and best ways to prevent the problems from worsening. This useful guide is to help both landlords and their tenants deal with the causes of damp and mould.

Condensation

Condensation occurs in a dwelling when warm moist air produced by ordinary activities such as showering or cooking meets a cold surface such as an external wall or window.

The moisture laden air will remain internally if ventilation does not occur and will gravitate towards the nearest cold surface where it condenses.

Moisture is also naturally occurring in the air and when air temperatures drop it will release this water in droplet form. This is known as the dew point.

Condensation generally occurs during cold spells of weather. It will appear on cold surfaces and also in microclimatic areas where there is little movement; for example behind a cupboard. This will often lead to the formation of mould growth and mainly occurs in corners of rooms, in cupboards or on north facing walls, as these are generally the coldest.



Could damp be caused by something else?

Yes. Condensation may not be the only factor when mould growth occurs.

Rising damp can occur if the damp proof course or membrane within the walls or floors of your dwelling has been breached. Prevalent in ground floor flats as well as houses due to damp proof course failure, something that generally occurs over a long period of time.

Penetrating damp. Rain may also seep through cracks in brickwork or through missing tiles on external roof surfaces.

Blocked guttering may also mean water spills over and saturates external walls.

External plumbing which is cracked may allow seepage into internal parts.



It can be difficult to be certain of the exact cause of any dampness and so unless you are sure it may be wise to contact an RICS qualified surveyor or an experienced contractor who has experience working in this particular area.

Condensation will not be limited to certain areas and may cause growth in different areas of a room and you may also notice furniture and clothing becomes affected.

Understanding Damp and Mould continued



Examples of condensation

Lack of insulation at construction

Properties constructed during certain eras did not have the more stringent construction and insulation levels now required in new development. As a consequence they are potentially more susceptible to the development of condensation than modern buildings.

Areas where this can occur are areas of a property that were difficult to insulate at construction such as above or below balconies or under crofts.

Insulation causes a warming effect which helps to counteract the conditions under which condensation can develop.

Cold spots/bridging

Certain construction elements such as concrete beams by their very nature are cold and that insulating them to bring them up to modern standards can prove to be difficult.

As a consequence many properties have cold spots or suffer from thermal bridging. Equally, when properties are refurbished insulation can be removed which increases the possibility of cold bridging and the like becoming a problem.

Lack of ventilation

The development of condensation can be controlled in part by increasing ventilation throughout the dwelling. In tenanted properties there is a preconception that ventilation means higher heating bills and as such there are growing examples of condensation which is exacerbated by the blocking up of trickle vents (vents within window frames) or traditional air vents which are found individually within rooms.

Understanding Damp and Mould continued

Remedies and precautions

How to avoid condensation

With the correct balance of heating and ventilation, condensation can be avoided. The heating helps keep the property warm and the ventilation will enable excess moisture laden air to escape.

TIP: Improving heating (constant temperature space heating)

Using the thermostat. Set it on for long periods on a low setting or have it switched to operate automatically on shorter periods for at least seven hours a day. Do not adjust the thermostat manually when set but trust the system to regulate itself for you. Make sure there are no cold zones in the home by turning all radiators on.



Landlords and agents should tell tenants how to best manage any problems and provide the following information:

How to combat moisture production

- Cover saucepans.
- Dry clothing outside rather than on radiators.
- Wipe away condensation as quickly as it's spotted.
- Keep window trickle vents open constantly and open windows as much as possible (especially after cooking or showering) to allow a through flow of air whilst maintaining a heat balance.
- Ensure extractor fans are operational. You can test this by holding a sheet of tissue paper against it and seeing if it sticks.
- Turn on the cold tap of the bath first so that when the hot water hits it doesn't produce as much steam.
- Close doors in wet areas to stop the spread of moisture to other rooms.
- Where possible position cupboards and drawers etc. Against internal walls.

Understanding Damp and Mould continued

Interesting facts

How much moisture is typically produced in the home?

- Drying clothes produces ten pints of water in an unvented tumble dryer.
- Having a bath produces two pints of moisture.
- Washing clothes produces one pint of moisture.

Fighting mould

- Remove mould growth by wiping down walls and windows with a fungicidal wash recognised by a health and safety executive 'approval number'. Follow the manufacturer's instructions precisely. Dry clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets. Take care because disturbing mould can increase the risk of respiratory problems.
- After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould recurring.
- Ensure insulation to external walls is in place.

For landlords who want to take more intrusive measures to deal with structural problems consider:

- Increasing insulation (EWI, IWI, cavity fill, double glazing).
- Improving ventilation (fan installation, opening windows, trickle vents, Passyfier Vents).
- Improving heating (constant temperature space heating).



Contact Us

Health & Safety Executive www.hse.gov.uk

For more information about health and safety please visit our website at www.redbridge.gov.uk

To report a repair you can call on **0800 393 994** or use the repairs portal at <https://housingrepairs.redbridge.gov.uk/>

If you have any questions or concerns or would like to receive this information in an alternative format contact your Housing Officer on **0208 518 2400** or housing.enquiries@redbridge.gov.uk

Raising concerns

Residents who have a concern about building safety can contact our Housing Team on **0208 518 2400** or housing.enquiries@redbridge.gov.uk

If you are unhappy with our handling of your safety concern and you want to make a complaint (a service failure), you can raise it in the same way as a safety concern, as above; verbally to a member of staff (in person or over the telephone), submitted via the website or in writing (letter, email).

All complaints will be recorded within our Customer Relation Module systems (CRM). It will then be dealt with in line with our procedure.

Our formal complaints process can be accessed via [Redbridge – Tell us what's wrong](#)

Useful information – damp and mould

The following links are to recognised organisations that can provide advice in relation to dampness and condensation.

Royal Institution Chartered Surveyors www.rics.org/uk

Property Care Association www.property-care.org

