

Asbestos Safety

Keeping you and your family safe in your home



! Important information for residents

This leaflet provides key information and answers to your questions about asbestos in the home.

What is Asbestos and why was it used?

Asbestos is a natural occurring mineral which can be found in rocks all over the world. Asbestos fibres are strong and flexible with excellent fire proofing and insulating qualities, hence why they were commonly added to building materials. Most homes built between 1930s and 1990s feature some building products with ACMs (Asbestos Containing Materials). Its use in the construction industry was finally banned in the UK in 1999. So if your home was built after this date it is very unlikely to contain asbestos. The three types of asbestos which were used in the UK are crocidolite (blue asbestos), amosite (brown asbestos) and chrysotile (white asbestos). It is not possible to tell whether a material contains asbestos by simply looking at it.

Is asbestos in my home safe?

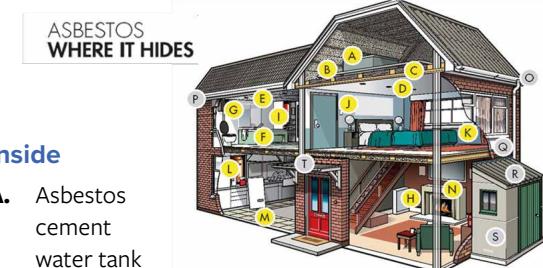
DIY work can result in brief but high levels of exposure and potentially further ongoing exposure over time. If ACMs (Asbestos Containing Materials) are in good condition and positioned where they will not be disturbed or damaged, then it is safer to leave them where they are and ensure the risks are managed. The greatest risk arises when ACMs are sawn, drilled, sanded or scrubbed causing the release of fibres. Asbestos fibres released during these activities cannot be seen with the naked eye. DIY work can result in brief but high levels of exposure that can put your family at risk.

Why is asbestos a health risk?

If breathed in, asbestos fibres can remain in the lungs for a substantial amount of time and cause long term health problems, such as thickening of the lung lining which causes breathing difficulties, or serious diseases such as lung cancer, mesothelioma and asbestososis.

Where might I find asbestos in my home?

Asbestos in your home is most likely to be found in old vinyl floor tiles or in textured coatings (Artex or similar). However, it may also be found in other parts of your home as shown below. The list here is by no means exhaustive.



Inside

- A. Asbestos cement
- B. Pipe lagging
- C. Loose fill insulation
- D. Textured decorative coating e.g. Artex
- E. AIB ceiling tiles
- F. AIB bath panel
- G. Toilet seat and cistern
- H. AIB behind fuse box
- I. AIB airing cupboard or insulation to H/W cylinder
- J. AIB partition wall
- K. AIB interior window panel
- L. AIB around boiler
- M. Vinyl floor tiles
- N. AIB behind fire

Outside

- O. Gutters and Asbestos cement downpipes
- P. Soffits - AIB or asbestos cement
- Q. AIB exterior window panel
- R. Asbestos cement roof
- S. Asbestos cement panels
- T. Roofing felt

AIB: Asbestos Insulating Board

Source: www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/building.htm

Modern loft or cavity insulation is a man-made fibre and unlikely to contain asbestos, however there may be asbestos debris in some loft spaces originating from old water tanks or flues.

What is Folkestone & Hythe District Council doing about asbestos in my home?

We are committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all our residents, visitors, contractors and staff, by identifying and managing the risks of asbestos materials in our buildings.

We are doing this by:

- Collating information through surveys, testing and regular re-inspections, to determine the presence, type and condition of asbestos. These works will be carried out by licensed and UKAS accredited consultants.
- Recording all asbestos information on our Asbestos Database as part of F&H DC's comprehensive management plan and complying with HSE requirements.
- Assessing and managing the risk from materials containing asbestos in all of our properties.
- Providing information, when asked, about the condition and location of materials containing asbestos to anyone who could be exposed to them.
- Ensuring all our repair operatives are fully trained and equipped to carry out repairs and maintenance work safely without disturbing ACMs
- Checking the asbestos database to identify any ACMs prior to undertaking any planned maintenance in your home.
- Removing or encapsulating ACMs identified in poor condition. These works will be carried out by licensed and UKAS accredited contractors.

Encapsulating can be a safer alternative especially if the asbestos is only slightly damaged or cannot be removed. The procedure involves treating the asbestos with a sealant that forms a protective layer between the material and indoor environment. This ensures wear-and-tear won't cause microfibers to be released into the air.

Generally if the asbestos is in good condition and is not likely to be disturbed or damaged when worked on or near, then its best left in place. This is in line with current Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidelines.

What safety measures can I take when carrying out DIY in my home?

Check if the repair is your responsibility first, this can be found in the 'Keeping your home in good condition' section of this Handbook.

Always...

- ✓ Allow access for us to carry out surveys to identify asbestos and if necessary, removal by licensed contractors.
- ✓ Obtain permission from your Housing Officer before you undertake any DIY (you should not carry out any alterations or improvements to your home, other than cleaning or basic decorating).
- ✓ Take every precaution to avoid damaging building materials as they may contain asbestos.
- ✓ Contact the Housing Compliance Team if you believe you have damaged or discovered asbestos that may be a health risk.

Never...

- ✗ Remove materials that may contain asbestos or dispose in the dustbin or skips.
- ✗ Saw, sand or drill holes in any material that contains asbestos.
- ✗ Remove old floor tiles, linoleum or the glue affixing them.
- ✗ Dust, sweep or vacuum debris that you think may contain asbestos.
- ✗ Try to scrape, sand down or remove textured coatings from walls and ceilings.
- ✗ Jet wash or clean down asbestos cement roofing materials such as corrugated garage or shed roofs.

What about appliances and household items that may contain asbestos?

Very old items such as cookers, ironing board pads, fire blankets and oven gloves may contain asbestos. If you are planning to dispose of any of these items and think they may contain asbestos, please contact the Housing Compliance Team for advice.

Should I worry if I have asbestos in my home?

There's no need to panic – it's unlikely to be a danger to your health as long as it's undamaged, or hasn't been disturbed. If it has, contact the Housing Compliance Team, who will advise on appropriate action.

Textured Coatings (Artex or similar)

Homes constructed prior to year 2000 may contain asbestos in textured coatings. The quantity of asbestos in Artex is relatively low but you should never sand down, scrape, remove or plaster over without seeking professional advice.

Cement Roof Sheets

Some older sheds or garages may have corrugated roof sheets made of asbestos cement. Asbestos cement is very durable and roof sheets can remain in place, if in good condition.

Vinyl Floor Tiles

Floor tiles and the adhesive used may contain a relatively low amount of asbestos in homes constructed before 1980. They can also remain in place if undamaged or undisturbed.

How do I get more information on asbestos in my home?

You can request a copy of the asbestos survey for your home, identifying the presence of ACMs.

Leaseholders will need to arrange and pay for their own asbestos survey and removal if necessary, by an approved and licensed contractor.



If you require further information and advice please visit the Health & Safety Executive's website: www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos

Always provide access to maintenance and service contractors responsible for electrical safety.

Report all faults and repairs immediately to:

housing.compliance@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

01303 853300

Electrical Safety

Keeping you and your family safe in your home



! Important information for residents

This leaflet provides advice on how to keep your family safe when using electricity in the home.

It will also give you contact details to ensure the supply to your home is adequately maintained.

What are the dangers of electricity in my home?

- Damaged plugs, sockets and flexible cables can cause electric shocks, burns and fires.
- Faults with appliances and electrical installations can cause fires.
- Electricity can potentially ignite flammable gasses in the atmosphere.
- Contact with live electrical parts can cause serious burns and be life threatening.

What are the signs that fittings and appliances may be a safety risk?

- Discoloration, burn or scorch marks on plugs, leads and fittings.
- Fraying appliance leads or exposed internal wires.
- Loose cord grips in plugs or appliances.
- Sounds of 'arcing' (buzzing or crackling), smell of burnt plastic or if it feels hot to touch.
- Lights flickering or flashes coming from power sockets or light switches when you turn them on.
- Fuses blowing or circuit breakers (RCDs) continuously tripping is a good indicator that an appliance could be faulty.

What is Folkestone & Hythe District Council doing to keep my family safe?

- We carry out an electrical safety check before you move in and continue to maintain the installation in a safe condition throughout the tenancy. Installations include things like plug sockets, consumer units, light fittings and electric heating systems.
- All electrical works and upgrades will be carried out by a NICEIC approved contractor in accordance with current British Standards and certified upon completion.
- A periodic inspection of the electrical installation in your property is tested for safety every 5 years, by a NICEIC approved electrical contractor and a copy of the report made available to you on request.
- All installations will have a Residual Circuit Device (RCD) installed within the consumer unit (fuse box) to provide additional protection against electric shock.



What happens during the safety inspection?

The 'fixed' electrical parts of the property, like the wiring, power sockets, light fittings and consumer unit will be inspected. This includes permanently connected equipment such as showers and extractors.

The inspection will find out if:

- Any electrical installations are overloaded
- There are any potential risks of electric shock or fire hazards
- There is any defective electrical work,
- There is a lack of earthing or bonding – these are 2 ways of preventing electrical shocks that are built into electrical installations.

Where additional remedial works are required, the electrician will arrange and complete these works before a satisfactory electrical certificate for the installation is issued.

What safety measures can I take to keep my family safe when using electricity?

- Carry out regular checks of the condition of your cables, switches, sockets and other accessories. Replace damaged parts immediately and before use.
- Carefully remove plugs from sockets. Pulling out a plug by its cable puts strain on it and can result in damage to components. Wires that become loose can potentially cause an electric shock.
- Keep electrical leads, plugs and appliances away from water and never use electrical equipment and switches with wet hands.
- Never wrap cables around equipment while it is still warm, allow sufficient time for it to cool.
- Never “double up” on sockets and stick to one appliance - one socket rule.
- Avoid overloading adaptors and extension leads, particularly with high current appliances such as kettles, irons and heaters.
- Never use multiple extension leads to run appliances. They should be completely unwound to avoid overheating.
- Only use adaptors, extension leads and appliances showing the British Standard or European Standard kite marks pictured below. Avoid cheaper alternatives.



British Standards Kitemark



CE European Standards

- Keep children and pets away from trailing cables and leads. Fit safety blank plugs to stop children putting objects into the wall outlets and avoiding the risk of electric shock.

What safety measures can I take when carrying out DIY?

- Seek advice from a professional before carrying out DIY in the home. Electrical work should be carried out by a registered qualified electrician, and certification provided to your housing officer.
- If you’re doing any work near electrical wiring or power supplies, where possible, shut off the power in your fuse box/consumer unit and use battery powered tools.
- When hanging pictures or shelves, check there are no cables or pipes within the wall where you are fixing.
- When using power sockets outdoors, only use suitable weather-safe electric sockets with a minimum rating of IP56, but an IP rating of 66 or 68 is preferable.
- Fully uncoil power leads and extension reels to equipment to prevent overheating.
- Do not mow the lawn in wet conditions and keep the cable clear of the cutting area.



What safety measures can I take when charging my devices?

- Always use the charger that came with your phone, tablet, e-cigarette or mobile device or an approved replacement.
- Don’t leave items continuously on charge (after the charge cycle is complete).
- Do not cover devices in use, or batteries that are on charge to avoid overheating.

What safety measures can I take when using electrical appliances?

- Only use appliances with a recognised kite mark and as advised in the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Only use the correct rating and size of fuse as stated for the appliance. Using the wrong fuse can cause a cable to overheat and the appliance may no longer be protected against an electrical fault.
- If an appliance appears faulty, do not use it. If in doubt get the appliance checked by a qualified electrician.
- Keep appliances clean and good working order. Never clean an appliance while it is still plugged in.
- Unplug electric blankets before you get into bed, unless it has a thermostat control for safe all-night use.
- Hair straighteners/dryers get extremely hot. Always switch them off and let them cool on a heatproof surface.
- Power down appliances at the plug when you’re not using them. Not only does this save you money, but it significantly reduces the chances of a fire starting.
- Electricity and water can be a deadly combination; do not use appliances such as hairdryers in bathrooms, unless suitable and stated in the manufacturer’s user instructions.
- Ensure a second-hand appliance has passed a safety test by a qualified electrician before usage.
- When using portable electric heaters, never dry clothes over on them, leave unattended or turned on overnight. Always place the heater upright on a flat smooth surface.

Always provide access to maintenance and service contractors responsible for electrical safety.

Report all faults and repairs immediately to:

housing.compliance@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

01303 853300

Fire Safety

Keeping you and your family safe in your home



! Important information for residents

This leaflet provides you with key information to help keep your family safe in the event of a fire and also reduce the risk of a fire occurring in your home.

What is Folkestone & Hythe District Council doing to keep my family safe from the risk of fire in my home?

- Smoke alarms installed to provide an early warning and detection of a fire, are tested annually and replaced before expiry.
- Heat detectors and smoke alarms in communal areas are tested weekly and serviced regularly.
- Gas boilers, pipework and other gas appliances are safety checked annually and before you move in.
- Fire sprinklers systems installed in flats within high-rise blocks are inspected and serviced annually.
- The electrical installation in your home is inspected every five years and where required upgraded in line with current standards.
- Emergency lighting installed in communal areas to provide additional lighting in the event of an evacuation is tested and serviced on a regular basis.
- Flat entrance fire doors are maintained to ensure they function correctly in the event of a fire and protect the common areas, allowing people time to escape.
- Fire Risk Assessments are carried out within communal areas of all blocks of flats and sheltered housing. Their aim is to remove/reduce the risk of fire hazards and to determine what safety measures are needed to ensure the continued safety of everyone in the building.
- Fire Extinguishers where located in communal areas are inspected and serviced annually. Their purpose is to put out a small fire whilst waiting for the emergency services to arrive and should only be used by trained individuals.

What fire safety measures can I take to keep my family safe?

Smoke Alarms

Your property should have a working smoke alarm. If there is a fire, a smoke alarm will alert you, giving you and everyone in your home time to escape to safety.

- You should test your smoke alarm at least once a month to ensure the alarm is audible (loud enough to awaken a sleeping person).
- Should the smoke alarm beep intermittently, the battery or smoke alarm requires replacing. Never remove or tamper with your smoke alarm. Report immediately to the Housing Repairs Team.

Smoking & Candles

- Never leave lit cigarettes, candles, incense burners unattended or place near furniture or curtains. Always ensure they are properly extinguished after use.
- Never smoke in bed and keep matches and lighters well out of the reach of children.

Kitchen Safety

- Consider using dry or air fryers over deep fat fryers, as they are deemed much safer to use.
- Never fill a deep fat fryer/pan more than 1/3 of oil or put food in the fryer/pan if the oil begins to give off smoke.
- Never leave cooking unattended on the hob or grill, keep saucepan handles and matches out of the reach of children.
- Never allow fat or oil to build up in ovens, hobs or grills and always ensure they are turned off after use.
- Never put water on an oil fire as it could create a fireball. Turn off the burner immediately and put a heavy metal lid on the pan, cutting off the oxygen to the fire. Safer still, consider having a fire blanket in your kitchen.
- Never put anything metal in a microwave and ensure toasters are kept clean and not placed to anything that can catch fire.
- Use spark devices to light gas cookers – they are much safer than matches or lighters.

BBQ's & Open Fires

- Never use BBQ's on balconies, near buildings, fences, trees or shrubs.
- Never use petrol, paraffin or any flammable liquids on your BBQ – firelighters are a much safer option.
- Keep a fire extinguisher or bucket of water/sand nearby in case of emergencies.
- Keep children and pets away from BBQ area and never leave unattended.

Electrical Appliances

- If faulty or used incorrectly, electrical appliances can start fires. Look out for warning signs like fuses that blow for no obvious reason, flickering lights, hot or scorched plugs and worn/damaged cables.
- Make sure all appliances are used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and turned off after use, especially portable heaters and electric blankets.
- Never overload sockets or extension leads. Remember – 'one socket, one appliance' is safest.
- Always use chargers and cables supplied by the manufacturer and avoid using cheap alternatives as these can overheat.
- Never place portable heaters near furniture or curtains and never place anything on top of them, such as to dry clothes.

Escape Plan

Think ahead; make an escape plan so that everyone in your home knows what to do in the event of a fire.

- Take everyone into account when making your plan - it is important to think about any children, the elderly or people with particular needs who may require extra help to get out.
- Make sure you know where keys to any doors or windows are. (Never use a window to escape if you live in high-rise block – unless advised and assisted by the Emergency Services)
- Keep all routes clear of anything that may hinder your escape, like furniture, clothing, prams, bicycles and ensure there are no loose floor coverings that could present a trip hazard.

I live in a block of flats, what further fire safety measures can I take?

Communal Areas

Communal passageways and stairways form part of the escape routes for everyone in your block. What you do in the communal areas will affect other residents.

- Ensure they are always clear of items such as rubbish bags, prams, bicycles, mobility scooters or furniture. These may block your exit and emit toxic smoke/gasses during a fire.
- Always report items blocking exits and your route of escape to the Housing Repairs Team.
- Never wedge open fire doors. These are designed to close behind you and effectively slow the spread of smoke and fire.
- Ensure you keep meter cupboard doors closed and cupboards are free of flammable items.

Flat Entrance Doors

Your flat should have a self-closing fire door complete with fire rated hinges, sleeved letter box including internal and external flaps, smoke and fire seals.

- Never remove or tamper with the door closer. The closer must be capable of closing the door securely into its frame from any open position.
- Always report missing items or any damage to the front immediately.

Fire Sprinklers

If your flat is fitted with a fire sprinkler system, in the event of a fire the temperature is raised to a level that activates the fire sprinkler head, releasing sufficient water spray to extinguish a small fire.

- Never tamper, obstruct, paint or wallpaper over sprinkler heads.
- Never attempt to turn the sprinkler system off and always report any damage or leaks as soon as possible.

Balconies

- Never use a BBQ on your balcony. They are especially dangerous and can get out of control, set light to the building or release poisonous carbon monoxide gases back into your home.
- Never store combustible items on your balcony or use it as a fire escape, unless it is part of the official escape route.

What to do if a fire breaks out in your house or flat?

- Always ensure you know the evacuation procedure for your home
- For residents in a block of flats information will be displayed on the Fire Action Notice, located in the communal area or near the main entrance.
- Alert everyone else in your house or flat and leave the building, closing doors behind you. Use the stairs to exit – never be tempted to use the lift.
- Never open doors looking for the source of the fire, stop to gather personal belongings or go back into the building until you have been told by the emergency services, it's safe to do so.
- If you have to move through smoke, keep as low as possible where the air is cleaner to help with breathing.
- Find a phone and call 999 when you are safely out of the building.

What to do if a fire breaks out elsewhere in your block of flats.

It should be safe for you to stay in your own flat, however if your flat becomes affected by smoke or you think you may be in danger, leave at once, closing windows and doors behind you.

Always provide access to maintenance and service contractors responsible for electrical safety.

Report all faults and repairs immediately to:

 housing.compliance@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

 01303 853300

Gas Safety

Keeping you and your family safe in your home



! Important information for residents

This leaflet provides key information on Gas Safety including how to keep your family safe from a gas leak and the dangers of Carbon Monoxide.

What is Folkestone and Hythe District Council doing to help keep my family safe?

As your landlord, we have a legal duty of care to repair and maintain the gas pipe work, flues and appliances within your home, in a safe condition. We will carry out an annual Gas Safety Check and Service in your home, performed by a qualified gas engineer.

What are the risks of unsafe gas appliances?

Three main risks can arise from having an unsafe gas appliance in your home:

- Gas leaks – During a gas safety check, the engineer will inspect the gas pipework, check appliances are working safely and perform a pressure test to confirm there are no leaks.
- Fires and explosions – Gas is highly combustible. Should gas leak from an appliance or pipework there is a risk of it igniting causing a fire or explosion.
- Carbon monoxide poisoning – Carbon monoxide (CO) is a highly poisonous gas that can be especially deadly because you can't see, taste or smell it. CO detectors fitted in your home will sound an alarm when they sense dangerous levels of the gas in the atmosphere.

I don't use gas or have a gas supply, why do I still need a Safety Check?

We still require access to ensure you are still not connected to the gas supply, check any existing pipework and record these details. At the same time the engineer will inspect and test your smoke alarms and if you also live in a high-rise block, carry out a visual inspection of the fire sprinklers in your home.

How is the Gas Safety Check appointment made?

Our registered contractor, Gas Call Services Limited, complete gas safety checks on our behalf. When it is due, they will write to you with an appointment date.

If the appointment is inconvenient, you can phone them directly or email Gas Call direct to change it. kentcustomerservices@gascall.co.uk

If you are not home when they call, a card will be left showing another appointment for the following week and the option to re-arrange if inconvenient.

What happens if I don't allow the gas engineer access?

Failure to allow access is a breach of your tenancy and if necessary, legal action will be taken to gain access to the property.

You will be recharged for the costs of obtaining a warrant (£80) and if access to the property is still denied further costs will charged for forced entry.

If you have an external gas meter and we have made repeated unsuccessful attempts to gain access, for your safety, we will isolate the gas supply so that it cannot be used until the safety check has been completed.

How can I prepare for a Gas Safety Check?

The check takes approximately an hour and in preparation for your gas safety check, please:

- Have enough credit if you have a pre-payment gas and/or electric meter to allow the safety check to be completed.
- Ensure the engineer can easily access the boiler, radiators and airing cupboard.
- Turn off the gas boiler and all other gas appliances at least 2 hours before the engineer is due to call, to ensure the system has cooled down sufficiently to be worked on.

During the visit an adult should be present and children and pets should not enter the areas where the safety checks are being completed.

What will be checked during the Gas Safety Check?

A gas appliance safety check ensures an appliance is:

- Properly set and adjusted so the gas burns correctly.
- Suitable for the room it's located in.
- Physically stable, securely fitted and properly connected to the gas pipework.
- Provided with adequate and permanent air supply, suitable for the appliance installed.

The engineer will also ensure:

- All safety devices are functioning properly.
- Any flues, chimneys and air vents are operating correctly.
- The installation is in good condition by visually inspecting the pipework as far as reasonably practicable.
- The gas pipework is tested to ensure there are no leaks.

In addition to the above, the engineer will service the gas boiler as detailed in the manufacturer's instructions. These may include:

- Analysis of the combustion exhaust gases to ensure the appliance is burning gas safely
- A check of the appliance's condition including signs of heat or distress, effectiveness of seals and gaskets, and cleanliness of heat exchangers.
- Ensuring a working CO detector is fitted in each room that has a gas appliance ensure the system has cooled down sufficiently to be worked on.

If new parts or further repairs are required, Gas Call Services Limited will arrange another appointment to carry out the services.

How do I know if the gas engineer is Gas Safe registered?

All Gas Call engineers carry a Gas Safe register ID card with a unique licence number and details of what they are qualified to work on.



We instruct third party auditors, Gas Contract Services Ltd (GCS), who complete regular quality audits to ensure engineer qualifications are up to date and standards of work and documentation are maintained. They may contact you after a safety check or a new boiler installation, to carry out an on-site inspection.

How can I reduce the risk of Carbon Monoxide poisoning?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is produced during the combustion of natural gas, oil and solid fuels such as coal or wood. It can increase to dangerous levels when a gas appliance has been incorrectly fitted, badly repaired or poorly maintained.

There are steps that you can take to reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning in your home:

- The most important thing you can do is to ensure that your gas appliances are safety checked annually by a Gas Safe registered engineer.
- Swale Heating will inspect your CO alarm during the safety check and replace with a new unit should it be defective or due to expire. Never tamper or remove the alarm from its location.
- Gas cookers, hobs and burners produce a blue flame which signifies they are burning safely. A yellow or orange flame could signify a fault and the appliance should be turned off and checked by a gas qualified engineer.
- Ensure ventilation holes or air bricks are not obstructed or blocked.
- Never use any room with an open fire place or gas fire to sleep in.
- Never use portable gas heaters or BBQ's inside.

What should I do if I can smell gas?

If you think you can smell gas, it's important that you follow these steps:

- Turn off the gas at the meter using the emergency control valve (ECV).
- Put out all naked flames, including cigarettes
- Open windows and doors to air the property.
- Do not use any electrical appliances by turning them on or off. This includes doorbells, phones and light switches.
- Call the National Gas Emergency number on 0800 111 999

National Gas Emergency Freephone 0800 111 999

They will talk you through their safety procedure and arrange for their SGN engineer to visit within an hour. If your home has a door intercom system please open the door manually when the engineer arrives.

The SGN engineer will ensure that the gas supply is safe but they will not carry out any repairs.

After their visit it is important that you report the problem to our registered heating contractor.

Swale Heating Freephone 0800 987 4034

An engineer will then be booked in to carry out the necessary repairs. Please note, Swale Heating can only send out an engineer after SGN has attended to ensure that the gas supply is safe and there is no gas leak.

Always provide access to maintenance and service contractors responsible for electrical safety.

Report all faults and repairs immediately to:

housing.compliance@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

01303 853300

Stair Lifts & Through Floor Lifts

How to ensure your lift remains safe to use



! Important information for residents

Having a lift installed in your home should make a real difference to your life – giving you the freedom to enjoy parts of your home that may have become a struggle.

This leaflet provides information on how to look after your lift to ensure it continues to operate safely and details on who to contact if the lift breaks down or requires a repair.

What can I do to ensure my lift operates safely?

- Always ensure your lift is regularly serviced by one of our engineers on behalf of Folkestone & Hythe District Council.
- Ensure the stairs are free of obstruction and there is nothing that could cause the lift to get stuck.
- Never use your lift to transport items between floors.
- Never allow children to play on or use the lift.
- Never carry or allow animals to climb up onto the lift.
- Replace batteries in your remote control regularly
- Never attempt to fix the lift yourself, you may do more damage or injure yourself in the process. Leave it to the experts.

What should I do if my stairlift will not move and the power light is OFF?

- Firstly, check the on/off switch, (usually located on the arm) is ON.
- Then check that the master power switch is ON (usually located under the seat on the carriage, either at the front or back).
- Finally, check that the key is inserted and turned to the ON position (usually located under the seat on the carriage at the front side).

What should I do if my stairlift will not move and the power light is ON?

- Check that the chair is fully swivelled back to its travelling position and that the swivel levers are in the correct position.
- Check whether there is anything obstructing the safety edges – if there is move the stairlift in the opposite direction, remove the obstruction and then you can continue your journey.

If your stairlift still does not move:

- Turn the power key to the off position and then back on.
- Move and hold the control in the direction of travel for a few seconds after which the stairlift should start.
- If the stairlift still doesn't work at this point call the service and maintenance contractor, RJ Lifts.

Why is my stairlift making a beeping noise?

Your stairlift will beep if the batteries are not being charged.

- Check the wall switch is on.
- Check that the power has not tripped.
- Check the stairlift is parked correctly at the top or bottom of the stairs.

If you have checked these things and your stairlift continues to beep switch your stairlift off and call RJ Lifts.

Will my stairlift work in a power cut?

In the event of a power cut, your stairlift will continue to work for up to seven trips using its back up battery, with this in mind it is essential that the power supply to your lift is kept on at all times.

Stair lift batteries typically last between 3-5 years depending on usage and whether or not the batteries are left without power for extended periods of time.

What if I no longer require my stairlift or through floor lift?

If your circumstances have changed or a member of the family no longer requires the assistance of a stairlift or a through floor lift, please call Folkestone & Hythe District Council to discuss your options.

How often will my lift be serviced?

Your lift is serviced annually if you have a stairlift and every six months for a through floor lift by our servicing and maintenance contractor, RJ Lifts.

RJ Lifts will contact you directly to arrange a service appointment at your convenience.

How often will my lift get a safety inspection?

Your lift will also be inspected annually for a stairlift and every six months for a through floor lift by a RJ Lift inspector, to ensure the lift remains safe to use and meets current guidelines.

RJ Lifts will contact you directly to arrange a safety inspection appointment at your convenience.

Contact us

If you have any questions about your stairlift or through floor lift please contact

Folkestone & Hythe District Council

 **01303 853300**

To report a breakdown, repair, or to arrange a service, please call

**Lift Services Ltd
(Servicing & Maintenance)**

 **01782 342225**



Water Hygiene

How to prevent Legionnaires' disease



! Important information for residents

This leaflet tells you about the risks of contracting Legionnaires' disease, and gives you some simple tips to help you safely prevent it.

We need to ensure you are aware of the causes and symptoms of Legionnaires' disease so you can identify any problems and report concerns to us.

Who is at risk?

Anyone can get Legionnaires' disease, but it most commonly affects the elderly, or people with chest, lung or other serious health problems. Not everyone exposed to Legionella bacteria will become ill. It is not contagious and you can't get it from drinking water.

The symptoms of Legionnaires' disease are similar to those of flu:

- high temperature
- fever or chills
- headache
- tiredness
- muscle pain
- dry cough

Where is Legionella found?

All hot and cold water systems in homes are a potential source for Legionella bacteria growth.

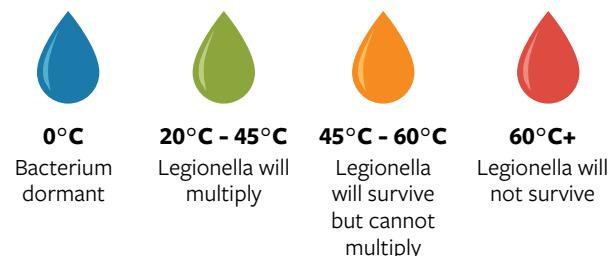
The main areas of risk are where the bacteria can multiply and increase to dangerous levels and then spread, e.g. in spray from showers and taps, even in dishwasher and washing machine pipes.

Bacteria will grow where water is between 20°C and 45°C and where there is sludge, rust and scale for the bacteria to feed upon and multiply.

What is Legionnaires' disease?

Legionnaires' disease is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia, which can affect anyone.

It is caused by the inhalation of small droplets of water from contaminated sources containing Legionella bacteria.



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What is Folkestone & Hythe District Council doing to reduce the risk of Legionella bacteria developing?

- Carry out regular risk assessments to identify the level of risk and implement a suitable maintenance and monitoring regime on all shared water systems.
- Regularly collate and monitor temperature readings, carry out sampling and disinfection treatment.
- Ensure risk assessors and water management contractors are experienced and accredited having specialist knowledge on Legionella and water treatment services.
- Identify, improve and upgrade water systems in order to remove or reduce the risk of legionella bacteria developing.
- Provide health and safety advice to all our tenants and leaseholders on how to reduce the risk with good housekeeping.

The following good housekeeping advice will keep your family safe:

The biggest risk is if your home has been empty for more than one week without running water and these simple steps can reduce that risk:

- Run the taps for at least three minutes
- Hold the shower head over the drain, to reduce the risk of inhaling water droplets and run the water for a few minutes
- Flush the toilet twice with the lid down.

Other tips to reduce risk:

- Keep all shower-heads and taps clean and free from build-up of lime scale, mould or algae growth.
- Regular cleaning with bleach or an anti-bacterial cleanser every three months will help sterilise and kill any bacteria.
- Report any rust or any unusual matter flowing from your water outlets to us or your local water authority.
- Heat the water in your hot water tank and use it immediately at least two to three times a week.
- Hot water should be stored at a temperature of 60°C or greater (immersion tanks etc.).
- Drain hosepipes after use and keep out of direct sunlight. Flush through for a couple of minutes before filling paddling pools etc.
- Hot Tubs and Spa Pools bring a heightened risk of legionella bacteria and manufacturer's advice on maintenance and cleaning should always be followed.
- Ensure that you turn on taps (including any in your garden) each week for at least two minutes.
- Raising the temperature of warm water is one way to control Legionella growth, but could also increase the risk of burns and scalding. Please take care especially if you have children.

Useful websites

Q www.nhs.uk/conditions/legionnaire/disease

Q www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires/index.htm

Always provide access to maintenance and service contractors responsible for electrical safety.

Report all faults and repairs immediately to:

 housing.compliance@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

 **01303 853300**