

# Staying safe in your home

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This leaflet contains advice about gas, electricity, water, asbestos and fire safety in your home.



# Gas Safety

## If you smell gas you should:

- Put out all naked flames
- Open doors and windows
- Shut off the gas supply at the meter
- Immediately call the national gas emergency number on free-phone 0800 111 999
- Go outside

## Do not:

- Use electrical switches – they might cause a spark
- Smoke

## Top tips for gas safety:

- Always follow the user instructions for your gas appliances
- Make sure you know where and how to turn off your gas supply
- Never install a gas appliance yourself - get a 'gas safe' registered engineer to do it

- Ensure that FHDC's gas contractor tests and services your boiler every year
- Get your appliances regularly checked by a 'gas safe' registered engineer
- Never use a gas appliance if you think it isn't working properly
- Ask to see a valid 'gas safe' card and identification of anyone working on a gas appliance in your home
- Never cover an appliance or block the air vents
- Never block or cover an outside flue pipe
- Never sleep in the same room as a gas fire.

## If you suspect Carbon Monoxide poisoning:

- Stop using all gas appliances immediately
- Get outside to a source of fresh air
- Contact your gas supplier straight away
- Visit doctor or GP and advise of symptoms so that they can be tested
- Report the incident to FHDC

# Electrical Safety



## Electrical safety tips:

- Don't plug too many appliances into electrical Sockets. You can use this easy online calculator to check if you're overloading your sockets. Just click and drag the electrical items to plug them into the socket – the calculator will tell you if it's safe or warn you if it's overloaded  
<https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/guidance/safety-around-the-home/overloading-sockets/>
- Don't use electrical appliances in the UK that were made to be used in other countries. They might operate at a different voltage, so they could overheat the plug or cable
- When you buy an electrical appliance, check it has a  mark. This shows that the appliance meets European Safety Standards
- Don't repair damaged electrical wiring or appliances yourself
- Don't take mains-powered electrical items into the bathroom
- Don't touch electrical appliances or switches with wet hands
- Don't plug adaptors into other adaptors
- Don't store personal items in electricity meter cupboards.
- Know where your electric fuse-board is and how to turn it off in an emergency
- Ensure that FHC test your homes electrical installation at 5 year intervals.
- Ensure that you test your smoke detectors regularly

# Water safety

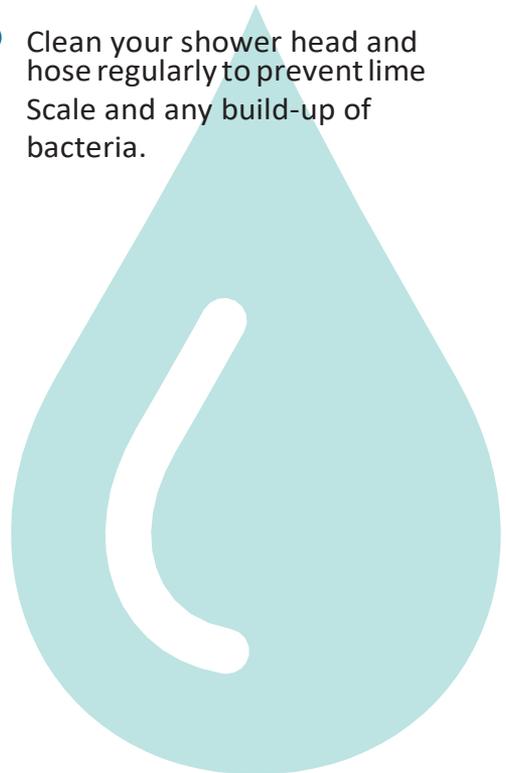
- Ensure that you know where your stopcock is and how to turn off your main water supply in the event of an emergency
- If water sources aren't used regularly, like shower heads and outside taps, then harmful bacteria can develop, including Legionella.

## What is Legionella?

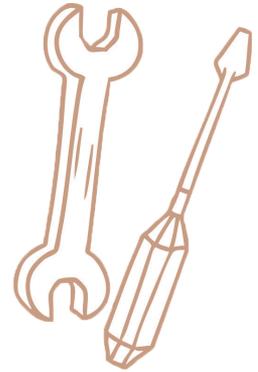
Legionnaires' Disease is a form of pneumonia which is caused by inhaling the Legionella bacteria which can be found in water systems. The likelihood of legionella being in your home is very low as most households do not store huge amounts of water. They also use water regularly so it's not standing still in pipes.

## Tips to make sure the water in your home is safe:

- If you have any water outlets you don't use regularly (shower, bath, internal/external taps and hose pipes), or have been away for a few weeks, run the water for around five minutes to help prevent water becoming stagnant
- Clean your shower head and hose regularly to prevent lime scale and any build-up of bacteria.



# Asbestos Safety



Asbestos is a building material. If materials containing asbestos are in good condition and are unlikely to be disturbed or damaged then it is safer to leave them where they are.

Asbestos material can become damaged through decorating and DIY work in your home such as drilling, sanding and sawing.

Please contact us if you want to carry out any DIY work to your property that might affect materials which contain asbestos. Asbestos can

sometimes be found in insulation, flooring, textured coated ceilings and walls, cement products like corrugated roofing panels, roof tiles, storage radiators, water tanks, garage and shed roofs, and panels on the bath, fireplace and sinks.

## **If you think asbestos containing materials in your home have been damaged:**

- Leave it in place and untouched, leave the room and close the door, contact us for advice.

# Fire Safety



**In an emergency, please call 999.**

**Remember smoke alarms save lives.**

Many fires in the home are caused by simple accidents or carelessness, so please make sure you read our fire safety advice, provided in partnership with Kent Fire & Rescue Service.

## **Things you can do**

- Everyone you live with must know what to do if a fire breaks out, so you can all escape as quickly and safely as possible. Plan your escape route together, so everyone knows what to do.
- Make sure passages and stairways are always clear of Things like rubbish bags, prams, bikes, mobility scooters or furniture. Fire smoke makes it difficult to see ahead, so these big objects could stop people escaping.
- If you live in an independent living scheme or in high rise accommodation, make sure you know the fire safety procedures and evacuation plans for your specific property.

## Electrical goods

- Electrical items can start fires if they're faulty or used Incorrectly
- Make sure USB chargers for e-cigarettes, smartphones, tablets, laptops and other devices are used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
- Watch out for warning signs like flickering lights, hot plugs or worn cables

## Portable heating

- Ensure portable heaters Stand on a stable surface
- Never use portable heaters to dry clothing

## Cooking

- Never leave cooking unattended
- Never fill a chip pan more than a third full of fat or oil

## Smoking

- Don't leave lit cigarettes unattended and make sure they are stubbed out
- Never smoke in bed
- Keep matches out of the reach of children

## Safe storage

- Always store motorcycles or petrol cans in a safe store or garage

## Before you go to bed

- Unplug all portable heaters
- Make sure all cigarettes are put out. Leave ashtrays Outside if you're unsure.
- Close the doors to all rooms. This should slow the spread of fire and smoke if a fire does break out.

See further advice and information about fire safety in the home on the Kent Fire & Rescue Service website: <https://www.kent.fire-uk.org/your-safety/home-safety/>

# Further home safety information and advice

If you have any questions about safety in your home  
please contact us using the details on our website:

[housing.service@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk](mailto:housing.service@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk)