



**Health
and Safety**
in your **home**

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Fire safety

In case of fire
call the
emergency
services

 **999**

To speak about any fire safety concerns you have with your home, please call **0333 400 8222** or email firesafety@aster.co.uk. Fire safety information is available on your local Fire and Rescue Service website. You can also find out more about fire safety on our website: [Health, Safety and Fire Information | Aster Group](#)

Easy steps for fire safety

- Test your smoke alarm once a week by pressing the test button and holding it until the alarm sounds
- Make a fire action plan so everyone in your home knows how to escape if there's a fire
- Keep all communal areas and stairwells clear of any personal items i.e. pushchairs, bikes and shoes
- Doormats/welcome mats should be placed within your property and not in communal areas
- Keep doors and escape routes clear. Make sure the keys to doors and windows are easy to find
- Don't tamper with door closures or self-closing doors.

Reduce risk of fire by doing the following:



Keep lighters and matches away from children



Don't leave lit candles unattended



Don't smoke inside your home



Don't store gas canisters or fuel inside your home



Turn off appliances when leaving your home



Don't cover smoke alarms and report defective alarms



Don't leave cooking unattended



Don't overload sockets or use chain extensions



Don't charge e-bikes and e-scooters inside your home



Don't charge mobility scooters inside your home



Don't charge e-cigarettes or vapes inside your home



Make sure all batteries and chargers are safe



Customers living in a block of flats

In line with the Fire Safety Regulations 2022 we'll be writing to you every year to let you know:

- How to report a fire incident
- A reminder of what the fire evacuation strategy is for your building
- Any other instruction that tells you what you need to do if there is a fire based on your building's evacuation strategy
- The importance of fire doors in the building.



An example of a Fire Action Notice is shown here.

A Fire Action Notice is displayed in your communal areas with information about what to do if there is a fire.

If there isn't a Fire Action Notice in your communal areas, please let us know on **0333 400 8222**.

Make sure you're familiar with the building layout, all escape route(s) and know what you need to do if there's a fire.

The evacuation strategy for your building

Your building will either have a stay put at home or a simultaneous evacuation strategy.

To find out more about this please refer to your **Fire Action Notice**.





The importance of fire resisting doors

Fire doors are vital to the evacuation plan and to resist fire/smoke spreading. They are designed to hold back a fire and smoke for at least 30 minutes.

Your flat front door is a fire door and critical to your safety and others. You may also have fire doors in your communal area(s) and storage/service cupboards within your block. There are some basic checks you should do to ensure that your flat fire door is effective:

- Ensure your flat entrance door is kept shut at all times
- Do not tamper with the self-closing device
- Check for any obvious signs of damage to the door which may affect its performance
- Do not fix anything to the door.

We will continue to check and inspect fire doors on a regular basis; however, if you see something that does not look right, report it to us, **0333 400 8222.**

High Rise buildings

If you live in a high rise building, visit our dedicated safety pages to find out more about the steps in place to keep you safe: **Building safety information**.

Mobility scooters/electric bikes and electric scooters

If you have a mobility scooter you must make your own plans to store and charge it. If you have a mobility scooter, please inform your neighbourhood officer so that a mobility scooter form can be completed. Any cables must be PAT tested as safe to use.

Due to Aster's zero tolerance policy, you must not store or charge any mobility scooters, e-bikes or electric scooters in communal areas, including landings, lifts, foyers, stairwells, walkways and community rooms, or run extension leads into corridors or outside communal areas to charge them.

This is because most are powered by lithium-ion batteries which are a potential fire hazard. They can also cause trip hazards and obstructions in the event of a fire.

Electrical safety



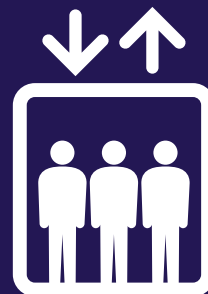
We will test electrical installations, like wiring, lights and sockets every five years. An inspecting electrician who has been specially trained will carry out a test to check their safety.

Tips on electrical safety

- Don't plug too many appliances into one socket
- Appliances are your responsibility but we will make sure the wiring and sockets are safe
- Use short, undamaged flexes
- Check flexes and fittings on a regular basis
- Avoid overloading adaptor plugs with too many appliances
- Don't use extension leads to charge items outside of your home in any communal areas.



Lifts



Passenger Lifts and Communal Lifting Equipment

Passenger lifts and other lifting equipment in our communal spaces are regularly inspected and serviced by our lift contractor to make sure they are working correctly. Passenger lifts have an alarm button and an entrapment procedure to follow to get help if the lift breaks down.

If you notice a fault or something not working, please report it on **0333 400 8222**.

Domestic Lifting Equipment

Domestic Lifting equipment may be installed in your home and maintained privately, subject to permission or installed and maintained by the local authority or installed via grant and maintained by our contractors.

It's important all domestic lifts are routinely inspected and serviced. The equipment should have a service labelled completed by the installer/those maintaining.

If you notice a fault or are concerned the equipment is not being maintained or have any questions regarding equipment in your home, please report it on **0333 400 8222**.



Heating and hot water



Ways to manage your home heating

- **Maintain a steady background temperature**
Ideally 18-21 degrees
- **Heat all rooms in use**
Avoid leaving some rooms unheated for long periods
- **Keep radiators clear**
Leave radiators clear of curtains and furniture.

Hot water systems safety advice

There are several different types of heating systems installed in the homes we maintain, including combination boilers and systems with separate hot water cylinders.

If your home has a hot water cylinder, it will usually also have an immersion heater, which provides an alternative way of heating your hot water. While immersion heaters are generally reliable, faults can occasionally occur, and in rare cases the immersion heater may fail and stop heating the water.

What to look out for :

- Very hot water coming out of your hot taps
- Warm or hot water coming out of your cold taps
- Unusual noises from your hot water tank, like banging or bubbling
- Steam or moisture in the roof space.

What to do:

- Turn off the immersion heater straight away
(the switch is usually near the hot water tank in the airing cupboard)
- Call us any time of day on **0333 400 8222**.



Gas safety

When gas leaks from a heating appliance or doesn't burn properly, too much carbon monoxide is produced. Carbon monoxide is a gas with no smell, taste or colour but it's poisonous. It can kill with no warning in just a few hours.

That's why you must let us service the gas appliance in your home once a year. It's the law and part of your tenancy agreement.

People at risk

Carbon monoxide poisoning could happen to anyone, but babies, children, pregnant women and people with a heart problem are most at risk. You're especially at risk when you're asleep because you might not wake up and notice the symptoms.

The danger signs

You might feel tired, drowsy or sick or have headaches or tummy pains. These symptoms are like many common illnesses and could easily be confused with flu or tiredness. Get urgent medical advice if you or your family have any of these symptoms and you think carbon monoxide might be the reason.

If you suspect a gas leak:

- Open doors and windows to get rid of fumes
- Check to see if the gas has been left on unlit or if a pilot light has gone out
- Exit your home and call the **National Gas Emergency Service** on **0800 111 999**. Using a phone inside, even a mobile, could cause an explosion
- Turn off the gas at the meter
- Don't use switches or anything electrical
- Don't smoke or use naked flames.

How to stay safe:

- Always have your gas appliances serviced by our contractor who only uses Gas Safe-registered engineers. It is against the law for someone who is not Gas Safe registered to install or service a gas appliance
- Always allow us to carry out a gas service every 12 months
- Never cover an appliance or block air vents or grills, air bricks and outside flues
- Always use a carbon monoxide detector or alarm. Test it regularly by pressing the test button until it beeps.

Do you know where to turn off the gas supply in your home?
If you are unsure, please get in touch with our Contact Centre.

Radon and asbestos



What is radon gas?

Radon is the biggest source of radiation in our lives and is found at varying levels across Britain. Outdoors, it disperses harmlessly into the air, but once it finds its way indoors, through gaps and cracks in floors and walls, it may build up to potentially harmful levels.

How do we test for radon gas in your home?

Radon gas is invisible and odourless, so the only way to know for sure if levels in your home are too high is to test the air. We will use radon maps provided by the Health Protection Agency to identify if your home is likely to be affected by radon and, if necessary, install a detector for three months. We will then be sent a report about the radon levels in your home. If levels are high, the report will include advice and information on bringing them down.

Asbestos

If your home was built before 2000, it might have asbestos in it. Asbestos is a natural mineral made up of lots of small fibres. It was used in buildings for many years but it's banned now. If someone breathes in asbestos fibres, they can get stuck in their lungs. This could potentially cause diseases, especially cancer.

If you want to carry out DIY, such as drilling holes to fix shelves or removing bath panels and you're not sure whether they've got asbestos in them, call us for advice before doing the work.

What happens if I think there's asbestos in my home?

There's no need to panic. Just let us know and we'll send an asbestos surveyor to your home to take a look and a sample. If there's asbestos but it's in good condition and not damaged, it's safer to leave it where it is.

We'll keep an eye on it and then remove it when we do planned work on your home. If our surveyor says the asbestos must be removed, a specialist company will do it without any risk to you or your family.

Water hygiene

and Legionnaires' disease



What is **Legionnaires' disease**?

It is our responsibility to make sure you know the possible causes and symptoms of Legionnaires' disease so you can quickly spot any problems and report any concerns to us.

Legionnaires' disease is a quite rare form of bacterial pneumonia. There are only around 500 cases reported in the UK each year and the risk is low. It is caused by the inhalation of small droplets (mist) of water from contaminated water sources. If you have a weak immune system or an underlying health condition, smoke or are over 50, you are at a higher risk, but anyone can catch it.

How is **Legionnaires' disease** spread?

Legionella bacteria may be in small droplets (mist) of water, typically spray from a shower or tap and is breathed in. You cannot get it by drinking the water.

What are the **symptoms**?

Cough

Fever

Chills

Aches

Shortness
of
breath

Where is **bacteria present?**



Shower heads



Plumbing systems



Hot tubs



Air conditioning
systems



Water
feature

Treatment:

A course of antibiotics will
be given by your doctor.



What can I do to **prevent Legionella bacteria**?

Keep water circulated

- Flush taps, showers, garden taps and spare bathroom facilities regularly
- If you have recently been away, run your taps or shower for 10 minutes to flush through stagnant water
- Ensure that all taps and outlets are run weekly for three minutes
- Flush toilets with the lid down following a period of non-use
- Only use water butts with a watering can or bucket
- Drain hose pipes after use and keep out of direct sunlight, run and flush before filling paddling pools etc.

Hot water in the system must remain hot

- Hot water tanks and cylinders should be at minimum of 60C (combination boiler 50C)
- Raising hot water temperature is one way to control Legionella but beware of scalding
- If you are concerned that the water is not at the correct temperature, call our contact centre.

Cold water must be kept cold

- Bacteria will not multiply in temperatures below 20C. Using the cold water regularly should ensure that the temperatures stays below 20C.

Keep all shower heads and taps clean and free from a build-up of lime scale, mould or algae growth

- Bacteria feeds on scale, sludge and rust
- Regular cleaning with a descaling solution, available from supermarkets, every three months will help sterilise and kill any bacteria
- Run and flush the water from your shower on full hot and then full cold for five minutes each, after a time of non-use like a holiday
- When flushing your shower try not to make any spray. The best way to do this is to remove the shower head and place the hose over the plug hole.

How do we manage and **control Legionella**?

We regularly inspect, monitor and test communal water systems to make sure that the water is clean. This includes our extra care schemes, sheltered and supported housing where there are communal heating and hot water systems, guest rooms, communal bathrooms and kitchens.

Mould and Condensation



How to **reduce moisture** and **prevent condensation**

- Dry clothes outside or in a ventilated room such as your kitchen or bathroom with the door closed
- Stop Kitchen/Bathroom steam escaping to other rooms during and for 30 minutes after use. Use extractor fans or open windows
- Fill baths with cold water first, then add hot – to reduce steam by up to 90%
- Keep furniture away from external walls by 5–10 cm for better air flow
- Ventilate your whole home daily for 10–15 minutes
- Keep the trickle vents open on your windows
- Use pan lids on your saucepans when you are cooking.



Aster will investigate, treat and provide support to prevent issues from **coming back**. If you are concerned about any of the issues discussed above, please contact us either by telephone on **0333 400 8222** or via the website **www.aster.co.uk**.

General advice

Security

Keep all entrance doors to blocks shut to keep the area secure.

Please do not wedge doors open or give access to anyone you do not know.

Most blocks of flats have a door entry and intercom system. These are normally operated using a key fob. If you lose your key fob, please contact us on **0333 400 8222**.

Play areas

We'll carry out regular routine and technical inspections to any playgrounds we manage but if you visit and spot faulty equipment, or the bin area is unsuitable or unclean, please report this to us. **Small children should always have adult supervision on the playground.**

When we visit your home

For your own personal safety and peace of mind, always ask a caller for proof of their identity (they should all carry ID cards) and if in doubt, ask them to wait whilst you phone us on 0333 400 8222 to check.

When we carry out work, we take all necessary precautions to keep you safe. At times it may not be safe for you to be in the area where a contractor is working, and we ask you to follow any advice and instruction they may give you. We have a safeguarding policy and will not be able to work in a property where there is an unaccompanied child under 18.

- **Any trades people that carry out work in your home need to be qualified.**
- **Make sure you've got home contents insurance (For example: Thistle Insurance)**

12.

Aster customers: 0333 400 8222 C&C customers: 020 7922 5300

Enham Trust customers: 01264 345 800 or via MyAster.

ASTER
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SINCE 1926

