



Protecting your Home.

Cold Weather Precautions: every winter many tenants face the consequences of burst pipes and frozen cisterns and basins. As water freezes, it expands, causing pipes to split or crack. As the weather improves and the thaw begins, water floods through the cracks and can cause serious damage to the property and your belongings. The damage to the property will be repaired, but unless you are properly insured it could prove very expensive for you to replace items such as carpets which have been ruined by the water.

So, at the onset of any cold spell, it is advisable to take the following precautions:

- Keep your home as warm as you can.
- Make sure you know where the stopcock is and how to use it to turn off the water.

Hopefully, these simple precautions will prevent any bursts. But if you do have a burst pipe, take the following steps:

- Turn off the water immediately.
- Turn off the central heating and do not use the system.
- Turn on the taps to drain the water from the system to stop it flooding.

Let us know straight away. It is advisable not to use the water supply until the plumber arrives, but if you must use the supply, you should be able to carry out a temporary repair. For example, if the burst is from a pulled joint, try to put the pipe back into the joint and tie it tightly with a piece of rag. If the pipe is split or has a hole, you can try to fill it in with a soft substance such as plasticine, cork or soap and bind it tightly with tape. Place a container underneath the leak and then turn on the water to check if your temporary repair has worked. If you have been successful, it should be safe to use the supply but make sure you regularly check the repair.

Finally, if you leave your home for a few days during cold weather, it is always sensible to:

- Drain off the water from the system.
- Flush the toilet cistern to empty it and put salt in the toilet pan to stop the water freezing.

Household Security: burglary can be as devastating as weather damage. Here are precautions:

- Never leave your home empty without making sure the windows are secure and the doors are locked. Mortise locks and window locks discourage, so it is a good idea to have them fitted.
- Don't invite thieves by having curtains drawn in the daytime or leaving notes for callers.
- Never leave cash or valuables around.
- Lock up before you go to bed and make sure that the windows are secure, particularly those on the ground floor or near drainpipes and flat roofs.
- Have a chain fitted to your front door, particularly if you live alone.
- If you go on holiday, cancel the delivery of milk, newspapers, etc.
- Never let callers into your home without requesting identification.
- If you live in one of homes which has external security lighting, make sure it's working and contact us if there is any problem.

Fire Precautions: although your home is built to fire safety standards, you should always safeguard against the risk of fire. For instance:

- Make sure all fires are guarded.
- Try to make sure that children's night-clothes are tight fitting pyjamas are much safer than night-dresses.
- Avoid putting mirrors above fires. They encourage people to stand close to the fire and clothes easily catch alight.
- Always turn down gas fires and close the door when leaving the room.
- Never overload electrical sockets, and do not run electrical appliances from light fittings and make sure all appliances have the correct fuse fitted.
- Never run flex under carpets or lino.

- Do not use electrical appliances in the bathroom, except an infrared wall heater.