

# Health and Safety Handbook for Tenants



**Scottish Borders Housing Association**  
**Keeping you safe**



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Welcome to your Safety Manual.

This booklet has been put together to help raise awareness of health and safety in the home.

Keeping Tenants safe in their homes and neighbourhoods is a top priority for SBHA. In this booklet, as well as lots of hints and advice on home safety, we have set out the steps that SBHA will take to keep you safe in your home, and what you need to do to help.

Please take some time to read through it, and if you have any questions, don't hesitate to get in touch. Working together with you, SBHA will keep you safe.

Caroline Purcell,  
Director of Property  
Services

# Fire safety

## What SBHA is doing to keep you safe



- ✓ All individual homes will have the required levels of smoke and heat alarms installed, appropriate to both the home and the needs of the Tenant.
- ✓ Communal fire alarm systems in amenity housing blocks will be tested weekly and serviced annually by a member of our team.

**Let us know if you have a hearing issue which may make it difficult for you to hear an alarm - we can provide specially-enhanced equipment to help you.**

- ✓ Fire extinguishers and blankets in communal areas of amenity housing blocks and Houses in Multiple Occupation will be visually checked weekly and serviced annually.
- ✓ Flats in enclosed communal blocks will be fitted with an approved 30-minute fire door. These doors can hold in a fire for at least 30 minutes, allowing time for either escape or the Fire Service to respond.

**Please do not tamper with fire doors – they could save your life**

- ✓ If you live in a block with a communal stairwell, we will also carry out regular Fire Risk Assessment to make sure that are kept clear of flammables and obstruction.
- ✓ Emergency lighting in blocks will be tested regularly.

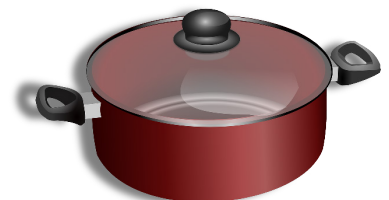
## Fire safety in your home - what you can do

The major causes of domestic fires are; cooking, candles, smoking, heating and use of electrical gadgets. Fires can start suddenly and spread quickly, damaging your home and belongings and putting lives in danger. There are a few simple steps you can take to prevent a fire from starting:

- > Don't leave chip / food pans unattended.
- > Be careful not to overload electrical sockets.
- > Use chargers for devices (e.g. mobile phones, laptops etc) supplied by the manufacturer of the device. Cheap replacements have an increased risk of catching fire.
- > Close living room and kitchen doors at night. In the event of a fire this will help to hold back smoke and flames giving you vital time to escape or call for help.
- > Keep matches out of reach of children.
- > Keep portable heaters away from curtains and furniture. Only use the type with safety cut out which will turn them off if they should fall over.
- > Never dry washing in front of an open fire.
- > Ensure your furniture is heat resistant and kept away from any heat source.
- > Keep an eye on lit candles - they should be on a stable surface, away from flammable items e.g. curtains, and kept out of reach of children.

### **Did you know...**

Around 48% of domestic fires start in the kitchen, and are most commonly caused when cooking is left unattended.



## 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, unwanted household items to the recycling centre or tip.

### What's your plan?



Even with care, fires can happen. They can spread quickly, so you need to have a plan of how you would get out of your home, and make sure that everyone who lives there, as well as any visitors, are aware of it.

You can find an example of a fire escape plan on the Scottish Fire and Rescue web page <https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-safety/for-householders/escape-plans.aspx>

### If a fire breaks out in your home

1. Close the door of the room where the fire is.
2. Get everyone out of the house if possible.
3. If you need to break a window, the safest way is to break the glass in the bottom corner.
4. Call the fire brigade - don't assume that someone else has.
5. Warn your neighbours & do NOT go back into the property.

If a fire breaks out in your home,  
call 999 - don't assume  
that someone else has.

### Looking after your smoke alarm

- > Check your smoke alarm weekly to make sure that it's working.
- > If you hear a beeping sound coming from the smoke alarm it's warning you that the battery needs replacing. (Contact us if you need help with this)
- > 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 SBHA.



- ✓ SBHA are actively replacing all alarms to 10 year sealed for life battery backup or battery alarms for your safety. Do not install alarms that have replaceable batteries in your home.

# Gas safety

## What SBHA is doing to keep you safe

By law Landlords must make sure that all gas appliances, flues and pipework are safely maintained and checked once a year. This is to ensure your home is safe to live in. Unless gas appliances are serviced regularly, they can become dangerous and can kill. SBHA must carry out a service before the anniversary date expires on the previous certificate.

- ✓ SBHA's gas contractor will 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. These checks are essential for your safety and required by law. If we are unable to arrange a suitable time with your consent we will commence our controlled entry process.
- ✓ If additional works are identified during the safety check the contractor will call you to arrange an appointment to have the repair carried out.
- ✓ A copy of the safety certificate will be sent to you within 28 days. Please keep this safe next to your appliance if possible, to assist with any inspections.
- ✓ We will carry out gas safety checks on all empty homes, and cap the gas.



**Gas safety checks are vital for your safety and are required by law.**

- ✓ All SBHA operatives or contractors carrying out works in SBHA homes are properly gas qualified for the works they are undertaking.
- ✓ All gas cookers will be fitted with a stability bracket. At each annual service a gas engineer will check that they have been fitted correctly.
- ✓ The gas inspection will look at all gas appliances in your home to check they are working correctly. We shall repair any appliance that we own such as boilers or fires. 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.

### If you think you have a gas leak

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).**

## What you can do to help keep yourself gas safe

### Your gas safety check

- > Keep the appointment given for the annual safety check and service given by SBHA'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.
- > 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

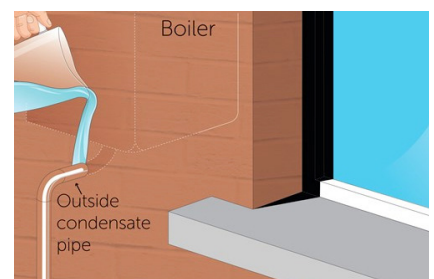
- > If you live in a flat, the law requires that any new gas cooker has a flame supervision device fitted to shut off the supply and prevent a gas explosion or a fire if the flame is extinguished. Make sure you check with us before you buy a new cooker.
- > Any new gas cooker you have fitted must be fitted by a qualified gas engineer and a certificate forwarded to SBHA.
- > No gas fires can be installed in the property by Tenants. Any works to gas system must be approved in writing by SBHA before they are carried out.
- > If you suspect any problems with your gas appliance, please call the repairs line on **0800 0193 222**.



### 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 degree 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.



## Solid fuel safety

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Solid fuel appliances such as open fires, multi stoves and Charnwood heating stoves produce poisonous gases that will require a clear and unobstructed flue to carry them away from the property. The property also needs to have an adequate ventilation system such as air vents that are appropriately sized to serve the appliance. Solid fuel appliances need to be serviced annually, including a chimney/flue clean to ensure they operate correctly.

### What SBHA is doing to keep you safe:

- ✓ We will ensure an annual service is carried out on the appliance and flue.
- ✓ We will ensure there is adequate ventilation for the correct burning of the appliance.
- ✓ We will ensure a carbon monoxide alarm is sited near to the appliance for your safety.

If you suspect any problems with your solid fuel appliance, please call the repairs line on 0800 0193 222.



### What you can do to assist and to keep yourself safe:

- > Make sure the ventilation is not obstructed.
- > Empty and check the ash can every day.
- > Always use the correct fuel.
- > Never leave an open fire unattended without a secured fireguard.
- > Never let children near a fire and use a secured fireguard for their safety.
- > Allow us access to carry out your annual service.

If your appliance begins to burn slowly, goes out frequently or if you smell or suspect fumes:

1. Open doors and windows.
2. Carefully put out the fire, or allow to burn out itself.
3. Do not stay in the room any longer than necessary.
4. Do not attempt to relight the appliance until it has been checked.

**Do not attempt to relight  
the appliance  
until it has been checked**

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 it can kill if you are exposed to high levels.



### What SBHA is doing to keep you safe:

- ✓ We will ensure homes with gas heating appliances and solid fuel heating are fitted with a carbon monoxide detector and appropriate ventilation.
- ✓ We will carry out a check of your carbon monoxide detector during your annual gas or solid fuel check and service. Where a fault is identified a temporary alarm will be left in place until the repair can be carried out. Do not move alarms fitted by SBHA.
- ✓ 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 SBHA 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 fumes investigation where required.
- ✓ When a carbon monoxide detector is triggered in amenity housing, a message will be relayed to our monitoring partners, who will get in touch with you directly through the handset. If there is no response the emergency services will be sent to your home.

### What you can do to assist and 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 SBHA to have this rectified. SBHA are actively replacing all alarms to 10 year sealed for life battery backup or battery alarms for your safety. Do not install alarms that have replaceable batteries in your home. Call SBHA if you have any alarm issue you are not sure about.

## Electrical safety

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We need to carry out regular electrical inspections and tests because electrical installations deteriorate due to factors 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 SBHA 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 SBHA Operative or contractor undertaking works in SBHA homes are properly electrically qualified for the works they are undertaking.



### What you can do to assist and 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.



### Tips for Loss of power

Lost power? Here are a few things to try before you call to report a fault:

1. Check your trip-switch or fuses to make sure you do not have a fault with an appliance:
  - If the trip switch is on, turn the switch off and back on again.
  - If the supply is not restored, push the "test" button. If the switch trips, there is a fault with one of your appliances. You should then turn off all appliances and turn the switch back on. Now switch your appliances on one by one and if the power trips when you turn on an appliance, that is the faulty appliance. It may be as simple as a light bulb needs replaced.
2. Check with your neighbours, if they are having a problem it may be a power cut. You should call your electricity supplier to advise them, and to ask if they are aware of the problem and how long the power may be off for.

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 present in stagnant water taps or unused pipework with water enclosed (dead legs), pipes, water tanks and shower heads. Breathing in small droplets of contaminated water is how the legionella bacteria infect your lungs.

### What SBHA is doing to keep you safe:

- ✓ Undertake a monthly check of communal water outlets in communal areas of amenity housing blocks and Houses in Multiple Occupation. 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 SBHA Operative or Contractor undertaking works in SBHA homes is properly trained for the works they are undertaking.



### 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 showerheads regularly.
- > Do not allow water to stagnate e.g. when water outlets are not in regular use.
- > Unscrew your showerhead and immerse in disinfectant for a couple of minutes.
- > If you are away from your home for more than 48hrs, 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 showerheads 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.
- > Make sure your hot water is stored at 60 degrees or higher and distributed at 50 degrees or higher. Your bath or other outlets may have a thermostatic mixing valve present to reduce the risk of scalding and distribute safe temperature water (under 46 degrees) at the tap directly.

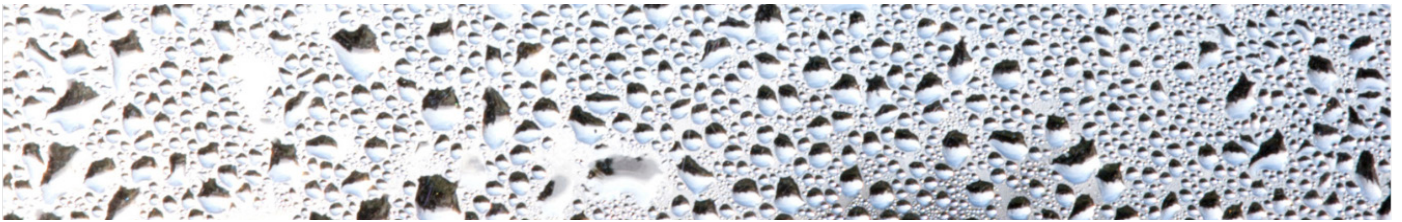
## Damp and mould

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Damp and mould can be a serious problem for your home and health. It affects almost one in five homes in the UK no matter the age of the property. If you notice any damp and mould it needs treating quickly as it can make asthma and other respiratory illnesses worse due to inhalation of mould spores.

We take damp and mould very seriously. It's important to let us know if you see signs of damp or mould in your home. We will identify the cause, treat the issue and follow up to ensure that the steps taken have been effective.

In some cases, there may also be some steps you can take to help reduce moisture in your home and avoid the risk of damp and mould forming.



### What SBHA is doing to keep you safe:

- ✓ As damp and mould can be caused by several factors, when you contact us, we'll need to ask you a few questions to help us understand the problem and to allow us to agree the next steps. Similarly, if you report the issue via our online form, there will be a few questions for you to answer that will help us to identify the cause.
- ✓ We will arrange an inspection and, where damp is identified, we'll ensure that remedial works are carried out as quickly as possible. This may include repairs to:
  - leaking internal pipes
  - broken heating systems
  - missing roof tiles or faulty guttering
  - cracked walls or rotten window frames
- ✓ We will also replace any damaged plaster, skirting boards or floorboards, and advise on re-decoration.
- ✓ We will also follow up works to ensure that they have treated the issue effectively. If repairs do not resolve the issue, we will look at further improvements, for example installing a damp proof course.
- ✓ We're proactively identifying those homes which may have an increased risk of developing issues with damp and mould, so that we can take steps to prevent this.
- ✓ We're ensuring that front-line staff are equipped with the skills to identify causes and arrange treatment for damp, making use of specialist advisers where required.
- ✓ We've trialled damp sensors, which monitor temperature and humidity, allowing us to identify issues and take preventative steps. We're now looking at the results of this trial, and how this technology could be used more widely.
- ✓ We're providing more and clearer information on the steps you can take to help reduce the risk of mould in your home (see opposite).

Damp and mould can be caused by a range of factors, including issues with the fabric of the building, defective plumbing and condensation.



## Penetrating damp

Caused by rainwater penetrating through the external structure, this is usually recognisable by a damp patch or discolouration on the internal wall, or flaking paint or wallpaper. Look out for broken or for blocked gutters or downpipes, or damaged roofs. Mould may begin to grow.



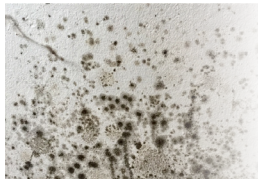
## Rising damp

Rising damp is less common as most homes have damp proof coursing (DPC) to prevent rising damp occurring. However this can fail due to debris in the cavity, or the external ground level being raised above the DPC level. Signs in the home of rising damp are similar to that of penetrating damp, but it usually only affects basement and ground floor rooms.



## Defective plumbing

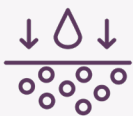
Such as leaking pipes, wastes or overflows. Plumbing defects usually look and feel damp to the touch and remain damp whatever the weather conditions.



## Condensation

Created by high levels of moisture in the air. Condensation is the most likely cause of any damp problems occurring in the home, and appears as pin-point black spots.

## What you can do to assist and keep yourself safe



How much moisture is created by daily living activities.



Temperature of the home and how cold or warm the air is.



How well ventilated the home is.

## Top tips for reducing condensation in your home:



Dry clothes outside if you can. If drying inside, put them in the bathroom with the door closed and window open/fan on. Any tumble drier vents should go outside (unless it's self-condensing).



Keep furniture away from walls, particularly external walls to allow air to circulate around them. Allow room in wardrobes and cupboards for circulation.



When bathing or cooking, use any extractor fans you have and open windows to remove the excess moisture from the air. Keep the doors closed to stop moisture travelling through your home. Keep lids on pans when cooking.



Very cold rooms encourage mould to grow. It's recommended that you don't allow the temperature in your home to fall below 14°C.



Use trickle vents if you have them (see picture) and dry the windows and window sills of your home every morning where condensation has formed. If the weather allows, open your bedroom windows for 10 minutes in the morning to let moist air escape.



## Asbestos safety

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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 SBHA is doing to keep you safe:

- ✓ SBHA operates an asbestos register with all **known** properties that contain some form of asbestos. This is continually being updated as information becomes available.
- ✓ SBHA uses several accredited asbestos surveyors who are licensed to carry out asbestos surveys across all SBHA properties.
- ✓ If a survey requires to be carried out to your home, we will then know whether there are any materials that contain asbestos and, if so, what condition they are in.
- ✓ SBHA will inform you of any survey results. We will also inform you and keep you updated as to what is considered to be the best and safest course of action if any asbestos-based materials are discovered.
- ✓ If any asbestos-based materials are in a dangerous condition, SBHA will arrange for them to be removed as soon as possible.
- ✓ SBHA uses accredited asbestos removal contractors who are licensed to carry out asbestos removal across all SBHA properties.

Asbestos materials which are not in a dangerous condition will not always be removed. This is because it is very disruptive. SBHA will, however, arrange for them to be sealed (we call this "encapsulated") so that they can't release fibres, and they will be effectively managed.

### What you can do to assist and 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 telephoning 01750 724444
- > Make sure that the material is not disturbed

Contact us in advance if you plan to carry out any DIY that may disturb the fabric of the building.



Communal safety is important to reduce unwanted access to the block and to keep communal areas (internal and external) free from hazards which much cause injury, catch fire or obstruct escape in an emergency. Our Officers carry out regular health and safety inspections of the common parts of our properties. If you have any health and safety concerns, please report them to us as soon as possible. Tenants are encouraged and welcome to accompany officers on estate and common area inspections.

### What SBHA will do to keep you safe:

- ✓ Where blocks are fitted with door entry systems these will be maintained to ensure they are in good working order.
- ✓ Carry out visual inspections of the blocks to identify and remove hazards.
- ✓ Provide a bin store for household day to day rubbish.

### What you can do to assist and keep yourself safe:

- > Only 'buzz in' people you know or are expecting where a door entry system is fitted to avoid unwanted access to the block.
- > Keep communal passageways free from obstruction to avoid trip and fire hazards.
- > 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 compromise the security of the block and/or allow fire to spread more easily.
- > Keep bin stores tidy and take excess rubbish, unwanted household items to the recycling centre or tip.

### Safety in lifts

SBHA 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. SBHA has a duty of care to ensure the lifting equipment is kept and maintained to a safe standard for use.

### What SBHA 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 all parts based on their useful life.
- ✓ Respond promptly to reports of trappings.
- ✓ Respond promptly to reports of issues affecting use and operation.

### What you can do to assist and 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.

## Radon gas

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Radon is a radioactive gas, which impacts a small number of our properties. We cannot see, smell or taste it. You need special equipment to detect it. It comes from the rocks and soil found everywhere in the UK. The radon levels we breathe outside are extremely low but can be higher in certain areas inside due to a lack of ventilation under the floor.

SBHA is committed to monitoring homes in areas which have been identified as having a potential risk of Radon. We follow the official guidance from Public Health England who are responsible for monitoring Radon throughout the UK, including in Scotland, as well as guidance from [www.ukradon.org](http://www.ukradon.org). Any high levels of radon identified will be managed to acceptable levels.

### What SBHA will do to keep you safe:

- ✓ Ensure properties in identified areas defined by UKradon maps are tested to ensure adequate ventilation is available to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.
- ✓ We will notify you of any identified radon risk in your location requiring further investigation.

### What you can do to assist and keep yourself safe if your property has been identified as being impacted by Radon:

- > Allowing any mobile monitoring equipment to be installed in your property for a small period until returned for analysis.
- > Do not block any ventilation installed in your floors or walls - these are designed to allow any potential gases to escape into the fresh air.



Each year, more people are killed or injured by accidents in the home, than any other type of accident. Here is a checklist to help remind you to avoid some of the more common risks:

- > Keep floors and floor coverings in good condition.
- > Replace used or broken light bulbs at once.
- > Keep stairs well lit.
- > Use non-slip polishes and mats.
- > Do not put mirrors above fires.
- > Keep children away from cookers and turn pan handles away from the front of the cooker.
- > Keep all medicines and cleaning products out of children's reach.
- > Avoid long flexes and replace worn flexes immediately. Keep away from cookers.
- > Do not mix toilet cleaners and bleaches as this can cause harmful gasses.
- > Do not leave matches or lighters around if there are young children about.



### Lofts

Loft spaces are not designed for storage purposes. Any articles you store in your loft are at your own risk. If we need to get access to your loft for maintenance work, you may be asked to remove any items you have stored there. If you vacate the property, ensure the loft is clear of items or you may be recharged by SBHA for disposing of items. Be aware there is potential fire risk in attics if you cover electric cables with combustibles.

### Pests and vermin

Common pests which can be found in and around the home include rats and mice, wasps, fleas, bees, and bats.

Rats can spread disease such as Weil's disease, salmonella and rat bite fever.

Mice are a nuisance and can cause considerable damage to plumbing (causing flooding) and cabling (causing fires).

Traps for rats and mice can be bought from most hardware stores - follow the instructions for their use carefully.

Pest control is the Tenant's responsibility but for infestations of rats, mice, bees, cockroaches please contact us to seek further professional advice and treatment as these can be difficult to eradicate on your own.



### Bats

Bats are mostly harmless and classed at worst as a nuisance. Most people live happily beside bats, not noticing they are there most of the time. There is only one known disease associated with bats in the UK, which is Lyssavirus, a rabies-type virus. It has only ever been found in a very small number of bats. There is no risk to you if you do not handle bats.



All bats are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside act 1981. It is an offence to kill, capture, keep bats, destroy or obstruct their roosts.

It is a legal requirement to consult Scottish Natural Heritage before you do anything to disturb or affect bats or their roosts. See [www.snh.org.uk](http://www.snh.org.uk)

Please contact us if bats are causing a nuisance to you for further advice.

All the topics in this booklet have potential risks which potentially can harm tenants and damage property. Please follow the guidance given to help keep you and others safe.

### Contact Us

In Person: Head Office - South Bridge House,  
Whinfield Rd, Selkirk TD7 5DT

By Phone: **01750 724444** for general enquiries or  
**0800 0193 222** for repairs and out of hours

By Email: [enquiries@sbha.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@sbha.org.uk)

### Repairs

You can report certain types of repairs via the Customer App, MySBHA, or via the report a repair form on our website, [www.sbha.org.uk](http://www.sbha.org.uk): this will be sent directly to SBHA's Repair Team.

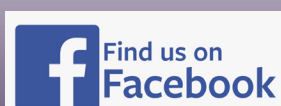


### Other Useful Numbers

**If you smell Gas** If you have or suspect a gas leak or loss of supply, call the National Gas Helpline on **0800 111 999** (24hrs, 7days)

**Power cut** If you have or suspect a power cut, call the National Power Cut helpline on 105 (24hrs, 7 days a week) South of Scotland electric distributor SP Energy Works helpline on **0800 092 9290**

**Bat helpline** **0345 1300 228**  
[www.bats.org.uk](http://www.bats.org.uk) [www.snh.org.uk](http://www.snh.org.uk)



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