

# INFORMATION



# WINTER 2020



- Winter-proofing your home
- H&S: Stay safe in icy conditions
- Working from home - a property managers perspective

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Property Services



## FEATURE: Winterproof your home

### How to love your home through the cold winter months



#### *Am I doing the right thing?*

According to the Energy Saving Trust (EST);

***"65% of people report pulling on a jumper to stay warm indoors, while 42% wrap up in a blanket – but only 15% draught-proof their homes"***

Also ***"less than 30% of people bleed their radiators"***.

Are you skimping on draught-proofing?

Do you bleed the radiators?

This is food for thought - it may be easier than you think to achieve a warmer home this winter.

***Winter is coming, and there is no telling what harsh weather might be headed our way. Prepare early and reap the rewards of extra warmth in your home through these coming months – and most importantly, avoid the Heating Bill Monster.***

***Here we provide a few 'obvious' tips that most of us don't do!***

- **Windows** - Check windows for any cracks or leaks, now is the time to get them caulked. You may even need to replace any 'blown' panes.
- **Walls** - Line radiators on external walls with aluminium to reflect heat back into the house. Bleed your radiators regularly, this will avoid cold spots, and worse - expensive plumber bills if you get a blockage.
- **Boilers** - Energy.Gov say "non-insulated hot water pipes reduce water heat by 2-4 degrees" – meaning your energy usage increases in trying to keep your water hot. Not only do bare hot water pipes waste your money, but they also make you wait longer for hot water – wasting precious water resources. Update that boiler! If it is more than six years old, it's likely to be sitting at ~60-70% efficiency, whereas new boilers reach ~95%. Pipe insulation consists of foam tubing on the pipes between your hot water cylinder and boiler, and costs as little as £5.
- **Carbon Monoxide detectors** – with less fresh air in the building you don't want the batteries to run out when you might need it the most! Get them checked.

# Health & Safety

Keeping people & property safe

## STAY SAFE ON THE SNOW & ICE



### Issues affecting the Gritting Process

Whilst we will endeavour to do our utmost to keep roads on an incline safe during the winter months, no guarantee can be given that they will always be completely clear of ice or snow, this is because:

- It takes time for grit to become effective after roads and paths are gritted.
- Rain can wash grit off roads, leaving them prone to re-icing.
- In severe cold weather (below -8C) even grit will not prevent roads from icing if frost follows rain, gritting must be done after the rain has stopped to avoid grit being washed away.
- Some Leases may have a restriction or particular requirement for gritting.

**If you spot an area on the estate that you feel is a danger to residents or visitors due to snow or icy conditions please alert your property manager.**

**Our H&S policy and guidance covering adverse ice and snow conditions is aimed to help the roads on your estate remain hazard free.**

#### Here's a brief summary of this policy:

In preparation for snow or icy conditions, the Property Manager for your estate will:

- Undertake a rolling daily check of the Met office 5-day weather forecast
- Check stores of grit (if supplied) regularly and ensure that the grit bins are re-filled as required to ensure that you can have use of them should you wish.

The property manager will also check that the grit bins, if provided by the developer, are maintained.

Gritting of roads will only be undertaken with icy conditions and by a competent contractor, selected from our approved list. Contracts issued for this activity must include an appropriate level of maintenance, to stop the clearance of snow or ice from creating additional hazards. We will always require Client or RMC approval before commencement of this service.

**Please note:** there may be times when the weather is so severe that gritting is deemed unsafe to be carried out. Our full policy is available from your Property Manager.

#### WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU:

- Protect external water pipes during adversely cold weather
- Purchase or keep a shovel to hand to clear pathways
- Apply grit or salt to steps or inclines on your property



## FOCUS ON: Working from home

### A property manager's viewpoint

*We asked our staff to tell us in their own words what these challenging times have meant to them in the way they work now.*



***"We're working from home - but still working for you!"***

...a mantra that has been adopted by our entire workforce as we continue to provide 'business as usual' in the best way that we can.

Everyone has had to adapt to new conditions and those who are able to work from home have evolved the way in which they carry out daily tasks in order to maintain residents' safety and to keep business moving.

**We'd like to thank you for your continued patience during 2020 and into 2021.**

**As property managers, our role has had to change. Government has made it clear from the outset that properties must continue to be maintained to a safe standard, especially with health & safety and emergency equipment.**

Our focus remains on doing what is possible - and to keep information flowing on what may not be. We continue to prioritise urgent maintenance requests and ensure all of our site staff are adequately protected when carrying out essential tasks. Now it is ever more important to ensure that outdoor spaces remain clean and a nice environment to look out onto and visit. With this comes the challenge - fewer contractors available, and areas not managed by us that are not being looked after. We're doing what we can, where we can.

We asked our staff to tell us in their own words what these challenging times have meant to them in the way they work now. Here, some of our Property Managers reflect on life working from home, and the battles we are all trying to win...

*"Communication is now more than ever the most important aspect of our job. With postal services under pressure, we are actively encouraging correspondence via email or phone. A conversation is worth so much more these days."*

*"The fear wasn't about change, it was about the consequences of not changing even as the parameters kept being redefined."*

*"I feel more empathy for residents who are enduring the same hardships as I am."*

*"On the day-to-day work front, it is great to see our developments performing well under the stress-test of what may account to 100% occupancy together with services being used for longer periods and by more residents at a time."*