

INFORMATION

WINTER 2019



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Property Services

FEATURE: Stay safe this winter

Hints and tips to get you prepared for the colder season ahead



It has been a wet and warm summer and autumn and you may be feeling relief from the stuffy air, but it can come as a shock to the system when the first frost and snow hits. So, here's our tips for winter:

Keep an emergency kit in your car, including:

Ice scraper and de-icer

Torch

Warm clothes and a blanket

A pair of boots

First-aid kit

Battery jump leads

A shovel for snow

Food and a warm drink in a flask

Sunglasses to help you see in low winter sun

A fully charged mobile phone and charger

Watch the weather reports

It's wise to take a few precautions before the weather warning hits, and whilst the roads and paths are still clear. Keep an eye on weather reports daily and be kind to neighbours by sharing any updates.

Order prescriptions early

Typically, over the colder months, pharmacies experience an influx of demands, so try to avoid that by ordering any repeat prescriptions that you may need in plenty of time.

Keep a good grip

Wearing boots or shoes with good grip on the soles is essential during icy conditions. The Met Office advises buying salt, grit or cat litter to put on paths and to reduce the risk of accident. Please contact your Property Manager should you see any hazardous areas on the estate, or if you have a grit bin on site, they will be able to advise on how to safely administer grit.

Driving away from your home safely

The RAC guidelines for de-misting your window in super quick time are:

Start the car heater off cold, then gradually increase the temperature

Turn on the air-con to get rid of excess moisture. If you don't have air-con, open the windows.

TIP: Cleaning the inside of your car windows with shaving foam will help to stop it misting up.

Health & Safety

Keeping people & property safe

News and information from the H&S team



Contractor Management

Who counts as a contractor? A contractor is anyone working in the common, or communal areas of your building. Contractors may be asked to perform a variety of jobs – maintenance, repairs, installation and gardening to name but a few. Contractors present a large risk because of the frequency they attend site and how they interact with other contractors and the public. Our role is to think about how their work may affect these parties.

The costs of getting it wrong. No one plans to have an accident. No one wants to become ill as a result of their work. Yet there is no shortage of examples – some major, or fatal – all serious and costly.

You may have heard the saying: ‘If you think safety is expensive, try an accident!’

There may be compensation to pay and other legal penalties. Recovery can take many years and sometimes involves civil law claims. Insurance premiums may increase, or cover might be refused because of a poor claims record. If the enforcement authorities judge that a criminal act has been committed, insurance is void, and the company instructing or appointing the contractor may face a custodial sentence or fine.

Beware. Weigh up the costs. Saying ‘It can’t happen to us’ or ‘Why should we think about all this – we’ve never had an accident with a contractor!’ is asking for trouble. You’re in danger of not doing anything until after the problem. Then it could be too late.

Our solution. We maintain a list of contractors that have been approved to work within the properties we manage. The checks we complete are proportionate to the complexity of the task and level of risk that the contractor is likely to be exposed to. Our approval process follows current HSE guidelines which would help us present a robust defence if questioned by the enforcement authorities.

Vetting is done by a team of employed H&S professionals.

FOCUS ON: Charges

Why do I have to pay a service/estate charge and council tax?



Typically, the total service or estate charge provides funds to cover the following:

Paying contractors for ongoing maintenance and repairs including their time and third-party costs.

Payment of cyclical, longer-term redecorations or maintenance.

Insurance policies.

Payments relating to services provided by the managing agent such as Health & Safety obligations, statutory reporting, billing and information provision.

VAT and IPT (insurance premium tax) as applicable on all the above.

If you have any queries, please contact welcome@remus-mgmt.co.uk

If you're wondering why you pay a service or estate charge as well as council tax, here we explain it for you...

The service or estate charge that we collect from you pays for the costs of the services provided to keep common parts of your development or apartment block safe and clean. The terms of the lease determine what the charge covers specifically for the development for example maintenance of any roads not adopted by the local council and costs relating to the apartment building(s), such as lift maintenance.

Why do I pay council tax and a service or estate charge?

The service or estate charge pays for the services that benefit your development which may include outside lighting, maintenance of any common areas and any roads that have not been adopted by the local council. These services are laid out in your lease (for apartment owners) or title (for freehold house owners).

Your council tax pays for the services provided by the council to the wider community, including refuse collections, social services, schools and the police. So, to clarify, they cover different services to ensure that you have a nice place to live. If your estate did not have a managing agent (such as us) looking after these areas, they would not be maintained.