



Drake & Co Estate Agents

Drake & Co's Guide to **Appliances, Maintenance and Living in your Property**



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Tenant Advice Hub:

www.drakes.co.uk/tenants/tenantadvicehub-dcmcr2134/

Report a Problem:

www.drakes.co.uk/tenants/repair-request/



Contents

This guide has been created to assist you during your time renting with us. It contains a variety of information and advice ranging from how to find your gas and/or electric meters, how to use and maintain your appliances, what to do if you're locked out, as well as other **frequently asked questions**.

Don't forget to check out our **Moving in Guide** and **Moving out Guides** too, which are available on the **Tenant Advice Hub** on our **website**. The hub includes various different topics, some are included below.

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If your query has not been answered within this guide, please check the **Tenant Advice Hub** or contact our office on 0161 224 2134, email us using **info@drakes.co.uk**.



Moving in

www.drakes.co.uk/tenants/tenantadvicehub-dcmcr2134/moving-in-guide/

The Moving in Guide explains all of the moving in procedures which you will need to follow, including topics such as:

- Setting up your utility accounts
- Registering for council tax (or applying for exemption)
- Setting up a contents insurance policy
- Moving in essentials - What items do you need to bring?
- Applying for a parking permit
- Planning your finances for rent payments
- Familiarising yourself with Drake & Co's procedures
- Key collection procedure (keys can be collected from 2pm on 1st July)
- Keys and burglar alarm codes
- What to expect when arriving at your property
- How to notify us of any issues (cleaning and/or repairs)
- Submitting your meter readings to your utility company
- Completing and submitting the Property Condition Report
- Testing and getting to know your appliances, alarms, boiler, programmers
- Getting to know your bin collection days

If you haven't already, **[CLICK HERE](#)** and read through the information provided.

Property Condition Report

Each group will need to complete a Property Condition Report (PCR) and submit this by the 30th September, to document the condition of the property at the beginning of your tenancy.

[CLICK HERE](#) for a copy of the document, this can also be found on the **[Advice Hub](#)**.

This is your opportunity to make a record of any pre-existing cosmetic issues such as marks, stains, scuffs, scratches, burns or any other minor issues that may have occurred prior to you moving into the property.

DO NOT USE THE PROPERTY CONDITION REPORT TO REPORT REPAIRS - this is for minor/cosmetic issues only. See the following page for information about reporting repairs.

Staff will use these reports to compare against the condition in which you leave the property at the end of your tenancy, to determine if any damages have occurred during your time at the property, and to consider whether any deductions need to be made from your deposit for rectifying any damages caused.

The PCR includes detailed instructions, explaining how to complete and submit the document along with evidence to support your notes (photos etc).



**For Out of Hours
Emergencies,
CLICK HERE**

Reporting a Problem

www.drakes.co.uk/tenants/repair-request/

www.drakes.co.uk/tenants/out-of-hours-emergencies/

Any/all maintenance issues or problems that require a contractor's attention must be reported to us via our **online portal** (also known as the **Repair Request** / **Report a Problem** Form), as stated in the Tenancy Agreement.

Do not call the office to report a problem unless this is an **emergency**. If you call our office to report a problem, you are still required to **submit a form online**, in order to follow the correct procedure and ensure that the issue is correctly logged on our system so we can appoint a contractor and track the progress.

How to Report a Problem

1. Take a look around the property and **GENERATE A LIST** of repairs. Work together and communicate with your housemates as they may also be aware of some issues they would like investigating.
2. Communicate with your housemates and **nominate ONE PERSON to report the issue(s)**. Multiple tenants reporting repairs at the same time becomes very confusing and is unnecessary.
3. Report **ALL ISSUES in bullet point / list format on ONE FORM**. DO NOT submit multiple individual forms. Maintenance can look at all of the issues during one visit, rather than going back and forth.
4. **Be specific!** State which room(s) each issue relates to and explain what the problem is clearly. Try to avoid using words like "broken" - How is it broken? What is wrong with it? Staff may need to request further information from you if you have not provided enough detail, which can delay the repair.

****Remember to read the "General Information" and "Tips and Advice" sections on the website beforehand.****

5. If you experience further issues after we have arranged for a contractor to attend, please let us know as soon as possible so we can look into this further. Otherwise, we/the contractor may be under the impression the issue has been resolved.

Repairs are dealt with in order of priority, see example time frames below.



Priority One- Emergency Repairs: any disrepair that poses a risk to the health and safety of the Tenant(s), serious damage to the property or serious damage to belongings, will be responded to within 24 hours of the defect being reported. For example: gas/water leaks, electrical failures, faulty door locks.

Priority Two- Urgent Repairs: defects which materially affect the comfort or convenience of the Tenant(s), will be attended to within 5 working days of the defect being reported. For example: blockages (shower/sinks), broken window(s).

Priority Three- Non-Urgent: day-to-day repairs, reactive repairs not falling within the above categories will be completed within 28 working days of the defect being reported. For example: re-decoration, broken furniture, changing a light bulb.

All **contractors** will collect keys to the property before attending a repair (unless informed otherwise). They will have a photo ID badge which you can request to see before they enter your property, to verify their identity. **Please do not allow anyone access to the property if you are unsure who they are.**



Locks, Doors and Windows

It is essential that you use ALL security measures installed in the property, at all times.

Did you know, 1 in 3 burglaries are a result of an open window or unlocked door?

Front Door Locks

All of the properties Drake & Co manage have locks installed on the front and back doors. Tenants must not tamper with or damage any of the locks in the property. The most common lock used is a euro barrel with a thumb turn fitted to meet the requirements of HMO legislation. A thumb turn allows tenants to unlock the door from the inside without the use of a key. Some properties will have a yale latch installed at the top of the door which means the door will lock automatically when closed. It is likely that there will also be a deadlock on the door, which is used for additional security and must remain locked at all times.



Back Door Locks

Back doors may have a thumb turn fitted, or a standard lock which requires a key. Drake & Co do not provide back door keys to unlock the rear door from the outside. Back doors are **only to be used as an emergency exit**, not to gain entry to the property. Some properties have french doors fitted which have a handle and lock on each door. If a thumb turn has been fitted on one side, there may be a key in the other lock. **Do not leave keys in the door.** French doors have glass panels fitted, opportunist thieves can see in from the outside and will be able to see the key has been left in the lock. Thus, providing them with easy entry as they will be able to smash the glass, reach in and unlock the door. Hide any spare keys in a safe place which is easily accessible, like a kitchen drawer so all tenants know where it is.



Bedroom Door Locks

The majority of properties which Drake & Co manage have bedroom door locks installed, this depends on the landlord and number of bedrooms in the property. Most bedroom door locks have thumb turns, so tenants can lock and unlock the door from the inside and the door will require locking from the outside before leaving the property. However, there are many different types of locks including roller, sash, yale and more. Entrance locking handles have a locking mechanism installed on the handle itself. There is a button/knob on the handle inside the room which can be used to lock and unlock the door. **Tenants often find themselves locked out** as they accidentally turn this when leaving or slam the door which causes it to lock.



Windows

Do not leave a window open in the property unless you are in the room at the time, otherwise this provides burglars with easy access. There are a variety of different windows installed in all of our properties. If you have a window with a handle like the image above, you must close the handle down fully to lock it, you will hear a click and be unable to open this without pushing the button in. If the handle is left up, this can be seen and opened easily from the outside. Some windows have a mechanism to leave on the night vent / **secondary locking position**, which is an in-between setting that can be used to allow some airflow whilst the window is closed. The handle needs to be left down with a slight gap, listening for a click, you will be unable to open or close the window without pushing the button. However, it is most secure to have the window closed, so we would recommend only using this if you are in the property at the time.

You must **clean windows regularly** (internally and externally) to prevent a build up of condensation and mildew.

Blinds/Curtains/Frosted Windows

Close any blinds/curtains before leaving the property/room to prevent people from "window shopping." This stops anybody from seeing any valuables (computers, games consoles, TVs, stereos etc). Be particularly careful if you have french doors, usually in the lounge/kitchen where valuables like a TV can be seen from the outside.

The **beaded weights at the bottom of blinds** can sometimes become tangled and/or unclipped. If this happens, you will need to detangle and reattach these to prevent them from snapping, causing permanent damage.

Some properties have "**frosted windows**" which is a sticker that has been put on the window to provide the occupant with privacy and allow natural light into the bedroom.



Drake & Co Estate Agents

Keys / Locked Out

www.drakes.co.uk/tenants/out-of-hours-emergencies/



**For Out of Hours
Emergencies,
CLICK HERE**

PLEASE KEEP YOUR KEYS WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES.

Some doors will lock themselves when the door is closed.

If you become locked out of the room/property and you do not have your keys with you, you will be responsible for any costs associated with regaining access.

Consider buying a lanyard so your keys are always with you. Or, have an extra room key cut and leave it in a safe place within a communal area so if this happens, you are able to unlock your bedroom hassle free.

Spare Keys and/or Replacement Keys

If you lose your keys, you can borrow ours to get yourself another set cut. If you would like to have yourself a spare key created, you can do this too. There is a key cutting shop across the road from our office which we recommend, although there are plenty of other places you can have a new key cut. You will be required to return our keys to the office no later than 5pm the same day you borrow them.

Please note, some keys have special coded locks installed which you may not be able to cut without the landlord's permission and these keys tend to be more expensive (around £25-30 per key). You must return any/all keys at the end of the tenancy.

What to do if you become locked out:

You will be responsible for any costs associated with regaining access, as per the terms of your Tenancy Agreement. This is non-negotiable.

If the Drakes office is open and/or you are able to wait until we reopen, you can **attend the office** and **borrow our keys FREE OF CHARGE**, to let yourself back in. Please **contact the office** to arrange this. You will need to provide photo ID or pass security questions in order for us to release the keys to you. **Do not lose our keys**, otherwise locks must be changed, and you would be responsible for this cost. You will be required to return our keys to the office **no later than 5pm the same day** you borrow them.

If the office is open but you are unable to visit to borrow our keys and you require a **contractor to attend the property during working hours** to let you back in, a **call out charge** would apply (around £35).

If you are unable to wait for the office to re-open and you need an emergency out of hours contractor to attend the property, a call out charge will apply (starting at £60). You will need to contact the emergency contact to arrange this, their details can be found on our **website**, on the office answering machine and by clicking the "**Out of Hours Emergencies**" tab at the top of this page. You will be required to follow these step by step **INSTRUCTIONS** and arrange for the relevant payments to be settled. The contractor will need to collect keys from Drake & Co's office before attending the property to let you back in, so bear in mind that their arrival times will vary.

Some local locksmiths charge around £150+ to attend an emergency call out and change locks etc. It is much more cost effective to either wait until the office opens or use the Drake & Co approved emergency contacts as they have access to our keys.

Under no circumstance should you force your way into the room/property. You would be responsible for the cost of rectifying any damage you cause to locks, doors, doorframes/architraves and windows etc. Many of our properties have fire doors installed which are very expensive to repair and/or replace (approximately £200+).



Burglar/Security Alarms

If the property is empty for any period of time (whether this is for a couple of minutes or a couple of weeks), you MUST make sure that it is properly secured and protected by setting the burglar alarm.

Don't forget to place valuables out of sight, close blinds/curtains, and lock all doors and windows too. **If you fail to utilise the security measures installed at the property, you will invalidate any/all insurance policies in place** (your landlord's buildings insurance and any contents insurance you/your housemates have in place).

Burglar alarm panels/key pads tend to be located in a communal hallway, by the front door or under the stairs.

To operate the alarm system, a **four digit code** is required (this will be **provided with your keys at the start of your tenancy**). DO NOT share the code with anyone else (besides your housemates). If you forget or lose the alarm code, please contact Drake & Co via the [online portal](#).

How do you set a burglar alarm?

This may differ depending on the type of alarm you have installed in the property. Most alarm panels will follow the instructions below and some alarms will have directions written/printed onto the keypad itself. Always remember to search the make and model of your alarm online to find a digital manual and/or video tutorial to walk you through this if you are unsure.

1. **First, check the property is empty and all doors and windows are closed/locked. The green 'day' indicator light should be lit.**
2. **Enter your code (for example 1234) and check the system is clear (none of the zone indicators are lit).**
3. **The system will then produce an exit beep tone (a steady beeping sound), this may continue for a few minutes, to allow you time to leave the property and lock the door etc.**
4. **The day indicator light will then go out. You should wait until you hear that the exit beep has stopped, before assuming that the system has set.**

Some keypads (like the one to the right) have a "full" button on it. You will need to press "full" after entering the four digit code to set it.



How do you un-set a burglar alarm?

If the alarm starts beeping when you enter the property, this means that it was set by the last person to leave and you will need to un-set the alarm.

1. **Go to the keypad and simply enter the four digit code.**
2. **The beeping should then stop and the green 'day' indicator light should be lit.**



Why is my alarm flashing outside/won't set?

Sometimes, if you aren't quick enough to un-set your alarm after entering the property this will cause the alarm to sound (siren-like) and the box on the wall outside will begin to flash. This means that **you must reset the alarm before you are able to set it again**. Resetting the alarm will depend on the alarm panel installed in the property. You will either need to **click the "x" or "reset" button a few times** to deactivate it, which will stop the alarm from flashing and sounding. You usually hear a little beep and the day indicator light will turn green again.

DO NOT alter any settings or codes on the panel. If you think there is a fault, you must report this.

Fob Alarms: Some burglar alarms require a fob to activate and deactivate them. This will be provided to tenants when collecting keys. We may be unable to give each tenant their own fob if there is a limited amount. Therefore, we recommend leaving the fob somewhere hidden in the property, but easily accessible to other housemates to allow them to switch the alarm on/off depending on who is in the property.



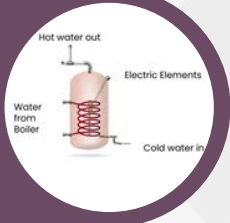
Plumbing and Heating

Check the appliances within the property to find whether you have gas or electric heating. If you have gas appliances, you will have received a copy of the annual gas safety certificate for your records.



Electric Only

Most properties that are electric only will have storage or wall mounted convector heaters. Both can have their own settings and timer systems on the heater itself, make sure you check the settings on the heater and adjust these where necessary. Or, they may run at certain times if an Economy 7 Meter is installed. The cheaper economy 7 time period usually runs either 11.00pm to 6.00am, 12.00am to 7.00am or 1.00am to 8.00am.



Immersion Heaters

An immersion heater is an electric water heater that is found inside a water cylinder. **Immersion heaters can be installed within properties which have gas central heating as well as those with electric only.** The main advantage of having an immersion heater is that it's separate from your boiler and radiators. This means if your boiler/heaters breaks down you can still generate hot water.

Immersion heaters are similar to kettles and require a period of time to heat the water before it is ready. Therefore, tenants will need to be patient in between using hot water e.g. just after someone has showered, as it will require time to refill and reheat the water before it is able to produce again. This will depend on the size of the cylinder, how much hot water has been used and the temperature of the water.

Leaving immersion heaters on constantly will provide a steady stream of hot water, however, can be **extremely costly**. This can also cause the immersion to burn out and need replacing which is also expensive and ultimately preventable. More information about immersions on conventional systems can be found on the following page.

Citizen's Advice have a useful calculator to estimate the cost of electrical appliances in your home. When adding an immersion heater and entering that it is used for 24 hours per day, the following figures are provided (June 2023).

Appliance	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly
Immersion heater	£24.48	£171.36	£734.40	£8,935.20



If you have an inclusive bills package, consider your Fair Usage Allowance, as leaving the immersion on will quickly drain your allowance and you would be responsible for any additional costs. There will be a timer/controller for you to set the time you require hot water, please ensure that this is used. Advice about setting timers and programmers can be found on the following pages.



Gas Central Heating

The majority of properties Drake & Co manage have gas central heating.

There are two types of boilers installed within our properties, combination (combi) and conventional.

Combi Boilers

These heat water straight from the mains. This generally means that it is quicker to heat up and produce, however, if you use more than one tap on at once, the pressure decreases.

Conventional Boilers

These send lots of water to all taps at once and the pressure is not affected. There is generally a hot and/or cold water tank installed along with the boiler, which means if the boiler fails, the water is still able to warm up. These are usually found in larger properties (five bedrooms+) with more than one bathroom so the pressure is better. Immersion heaters are usually fitted to water tanks and the **immersion must be left switched off** unless the boiler has broken down. They are extremely expensive to run constantly and will overheat and break down (see previous page).

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information about different types of boilers.



Where is the boiler and/or water cylinder located?

These could be anywhere within a property. They are most commonly found within a communal area, but they could also be in a bedroom. They may be clearly visible, although most tend to be within a cupboard/utility room.

- Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Lounge
- Bedroom
- Cellar (if applicable)
- Hallway



Why is my heating/hot water not working?

There are many errors/issues which can cause a boiler to stop working, for example:

- **Incorrect use and/or settings.** There are a variety of different controls on boilers, timers, programmers and/or thermostats, and human error can result in the boiler not functioning correctly. **It is essential that you familiarise yourself with the heating system in the property to ensure that you know how to operate this.** If tenants request for an engineer to attend and the issue has been caused by negligence (e.g. incorrect use), **tenants will be responsible for the cost of the contractor's visit.**
- **Low boiler pressure.** The boiler may show an error code e.g. low pressure, E119, F75, F1 etc depending on the type of boiler, how modern it is, and the display it has. Some boilers have **pressure gauges** to monitor this, the dial **should always be in the green zone between 1 and 2**. If it exceeds this and goes into the **red zone**, the boiler may be **overheating** which must be reported immediately. If the dial falls below 1 and eventually goes to 0, it has de-pressurised and the heating and/or hot water will stop working. In some cases, this may indicate there is a leak in the property, which could be on a radiator valve, or a pipe under the floor.
- **Radiator(s) need bleeding.** If some of the radiators in the property are lukewarm, only heat halfway up, or do not heat up at all when others are working normally, this can indicate that they need bleeding (to remove any excess air within them). If the boiler has had low pressure recently this is a common fault to follow. Although, it is standard practice for contractors to bleed the radiators after the pressure has been topped up to prevent this from happening.
- **No power.** Although boilers are heated via gas, they are powered by electricity. Check to see if someone has accidentally **switched it off at the wall** (which is more common than you would think) and/or if the **fuse has tripped** on the consumer unit.



Timers and Programmers

Never leave your boiler set to constant! It is very expensive to keep it running all of the time, and will cause damage and the boiler to overheat. You must choose what time you would like your heating and/or hot water to come on, and set this to come on/off automatically, using the timer and/or programmer. There are a variety of central heating timers, the type you have will depend on the make and model of the boiler installed.



Mechanical Timers

Mechanical timers are generally **circular** and labelled with the **24 hour clock** around them. There will be a setting somewhere near the timer with the three options: off, on/constant and timed.

1. Make sure that the **switch** is at the **timed setting** (clock icon, usually in the middle) so the correct programme has been selected.
2. Locate the **small triangle/arrow** on the timer and **ensure that the boiler timer is set to the current time**. For example, if it is 1:30pm, spin/turn the timer so the triangle is pointing at this time. Make sure to choose the correct time, as the times you set your boiler to switch on will not be synced properly if you don't.
3. Set the times you would like the heating to come on by pushing the pins in and/or out (*this will depend on the type of boiler you have). On most timers, **each pin usually reflects 15 minutes**.

Click [HERE](#) and [HERE](#) to see an example of how to set a mechanical boiler timer. Each timer differs and if you are struggling, it may be beneficial to search the make and model of your boiler timer online to find a tutorial.

Digital Timers

Digital timers are increasingly popular and tend to be installed with most modern boilers. **They can be found on the boiler itself (there may be a flap which you can open), on the wall, or be handheld (wireless).**

There is usually a small digital screen along with various buttons. The screen may display the date and time, current pressure, error codes if any faults occur and the temperature of the heating/hot water etc.

We are unable to provide generic instructions for using digital timers/programmers as they will vary depending on each type. **The easiest way to discover how to operate the one installed within the property is by searching the make and model** (usually found on the front of the device) online. You should find the **PDF instructions/manual** or a **useful video tutorial** which you can follow step by step and adapt to your preferences. Remember to **make sure that the date and time on the device is correct, otherwise it will not work properly.**

Example instructions/tutorials can be found [HERE](#).

Click the images to the right for links to tutorials for specific devices.



DT20RF Digital RF Thermostat with Twin Channel Programmer



EPH CombiPack4 CH Programmer & Thermostat



Honeywell ST9100S



Honeywell 9400C



Drayton LP522



Vokera



Heating and Hot Water Dials

Some boilers (with digital or mechanical timers) have individual dials to control whether both the heating and hot water are on, or the hot water only. Other dials may control the temperature of the radiators as well as the temperature of the hot water which can be adjusted. See the built in 'built in boiler controls' section on the next page for more information.



Thermostats and TRVs

A thermostat is a device that is used to control the temperature in the home by monitoring the ambient temperature. You would need to set the thermostat to the desired temperature, then once the property has reached this, the thermostat would switch the central heating system off. If the temperature falls below the desired temperature, it will turn the heating back on.

IMPORTANT! The heating will not work if the thermostat has switched the heating off (it has reached the set temperature). If you have a water cylinder, the boiler will not heat the water if the cylinder thermostat detects that the water has reached the correct temperature.

Built in boiler controls

Some boilers have built in controls which allow you to set the timer as well as the temperature. This means that there will be a thermostat built into the boiler that can be adjusted using the settings/dials on the face/display of the boiler. See the 'Heating and Hot Water Dials' section on the previous page.



Room thermostats with a dial

These allow the occupant to set the desired temperature of the heating and will switch off once it has been met. They will be installed on the wall and may be in the hallway, kitchen, lounge, or a bedroom (although this is less likely). Please note that room thermostats can be installed on a different floor to the boiler, therefore tenants will need to check the property thoroughly to find it.



Digital programmable room thermostats

These allow the occupant to control the timer and temperature of the heating/hot water via a digital interface. Some will be fixed on to the wall e.g. underneath the boiler, in the hallway and/or cellar, others are wireless and mobile (can be moved around the property). They can be battery powered (AA or AAA), so you must remember to check the batteries regularly as loss of power can cause a lack of hot water and heating.



Thermostatic Radiator Valves (TRVs)

Thermostatic radiator valves are a little different to the usual thermostats - these do not turn your heating on or off. These are fitted to some radiators throughout properties and enable the occupier to control the temperature of that individual radiator or switch the radiator off completely.

There is a common misconception that switching off the TRV(s) turns the heating off and/or saves energy - this is false.

The TRV only controls the temperature of the individual radiator. If the boiler is still on, it will still be using energy and pumping water around the rest of the system/pipes. It is actually a waste of energy to keep the boiler on whilst the TRVs are off, as the boiler is pumping water around the system for no reason and the rooms aren't being heated. **Even if every TRV has been turned off, you must ensure that the boiler timer/boiler itself has been switched off** to prevent the heating from pumping out and the boiler overheating.



Electrics

If your electricity (plug sockets and/or lights) cuts out at any point, there could be a couple of reasons for this.

If the problem is also affecting neighbouring properties, this could be an area-wide fault.

Drake & Co and our contractors will be unable to assist with this. You will need to check with **Electricity North West** to see if the problem has been reported to them. **Search your postcode on the [ENW website](#)** and see their **fault tracker** which will give you live updates about when they have arranged for an engineer to attend and when they expect the problem to be resolved.

Contact **[Electricity North West](#)** on their 24hr emergency line 0800 195 4141, or call 105 from a mobile.

If the problem is only affecting your property, this likely means that your electrics have tripped.



Are you overloading your circuits?

Using too many appliances at once is a common cause of fuses tripping. If you are making toast, whilst boiling the kettle, using the microwave, washing your clothes and watching TV simultaneously, it's not surprising that the fuse may overload. Another risk is **plugging too many things into one socket/outlet**.

Alternatively..you could have a faulty device/appliance plugged in.

Most of the time, **you will be able to get your electrics back on yourself**, by following these steps: This may be a long process and will require patience, ask housemates to help to shorten the time this will take.

1. **Locate your fuse box/consumer unit.** This could be anywhere inside of the property, such as near your electric meter, in the hallway, under the stairs, in a cupboard/cabinet, in the cellar, a bedroom etc
2. You will see lots of fuses/switches on the consumer panel which are labelled e.g. first floor, kitchen, lounge etc. These should all be switched on (in the upward position).
3. **Check if any (or all) of the fuses have tripped** (tripped switches will be in the downward position).
4. Try **switching them back on again**. This will either fix the issue, or, the switches will immediately trip again.
5. If it trips again, this indicates that the item/appliance causing the problem is still plugged in/switched on. You will need to go around the property room by room, unplugging all of the appliances and turning off lights and isolator switches for extractors and showers. First, try unplugging the last item used before the electrics tripped, as this may be the culprit. Don't forget things like the fridge, freezer, kettle, toaster, washing machine, dryer, oven, iron, lamps, phone/laptop chargers, etc.
6. After everything is off, return to the consumer unit and flip the fuse back on.
7. If it trips again, you may have missed something and will need to take another look around the house making sure everything is off and unplugged.
8. Once you manage to get the fuse back on, you can carefully begin to plug appliances back in one by one.
9. Continue to do this until you plug something in that causes the electrics trip again (if at all). This will allow you to identify the problem. Keep the problematic item/appliance unplugged/switched off to allow the rest of the electrics to work.
10. If the problematic appliance is provided by the landlord (e.g. oven, fridge freezer, microwave) please report this to us immediately using our [Report a Problem](#) Form. If it belongs to you/your housemates (e.g. toaster, kettle, hairdryer, charger, lamp etc) you will need to have this repaired or replaced.



During any type of power cut, keep the fridge/freezer doors closed to retain the cold air/temperature.

You may also need to reset your burglar alarm afterwards as this can detect a fault during a power outage.



Appliances

We understand that **living away from home can be daunting**. You have lots of new responsibilities and it can be confusing when trying to use appliances that are different to those you are used to. Some of you may not be familiar with using the appliances back home either, so it may be your first time seeing some of these.

It is important that all tenants get to know the appliances installed within the property and understand how to use them correctly, as you are responsible for the way the appliances are used and keeping them maintained throughout your time renting.

There are basic things you will need to know, which some of you may not have done before. This guide has been created to provide you with as much support as possible with these types of tasks. **As the appliances differ in each property, the information we can provide is generic and may not be specific to the model of the appliance(s) within your house.**

Please do not contact Drake & Co to enquire about how to use an appliance; staff employed at Drakes are letting agents, we manage hundreds of properties and may not be familiar with the specific appliance in your property either. Ultimately, it is your responsibility to know how to use and maintain the appliances in the property you are living in and to acquire the knowledge if you are unsure of this.

When an appliance is installed, they usually come with an instruction manual. However, due to the footfall in rented properties, these can get lost over the years. **Most appliances will have downloadable/PDF instruction manuals on their website, [search the make and model of the appliance online](#) to find this.** It may also be beneficial to find a useful video tutorial to walk you through step by step.

Where might you find the make and model of the appliance?

Ovens



Fridge/Freezers



Washing Machines



If you feel that an appliance is not working correctly, it is imperative that you check the appliance to the best of your ability before reporting this to Drake & Co. Should you report a problem to Drakes and we arrange for an engineer to attend, **if the engineer finds that tenants have caused or could've resolved the issue** (e.g. incorrect settings, improper use or maintenance), **you would be responsible for the cost of the appointment.**

Tenants must ensure that all appliances are cleaned and maintained regularly to avoid them becoming damaged, stained and/or possible fire hazards.

Appliances included with the property: Oven, hob, microwave, fridge freezers, washing machine or washer dryer, dryer (if applicable), dishwasher (if applicable), Hoover. Any smaller appliances like kettles, toasters, cleaning accessories etc do not belong to the landlord. If any of these have been left in the property, these may have belonged to the previous tenants and can be disposed of.



Fridge and/or Freezers

Here you can find some examples of common problems you may experience with a fridge and/or freezer and how you can resolve these independently.

Temperature settings

Most fridges and/or freezers are controlled using a thermostat dial that is labelled from 1-5. Please set this to 3 as it will chill your food rather than freezing it. If this isn't cold enough, you can adjust it. However, be aware if you set it on to 5, your food and drinks may freeze whilst in the fridge.

Other appliances may have a screen displaying the temperature which can be adjusted.



Why is my food not staying cold?

You may need to adjust the temperature settings (see above).

-The fridge and/or freezer may be overfilled - if the appliance has been filled to the brim with food/drink, the cold air won't be able to circulate properly and chill the items.

-The door may be unable to close properly - the doors must be closed flush against the seals to ensure that the temperature can regulate, otherwise, this will cause the cold air to escape and/or the freezer to defrost.

-The freezer may be over frozen - if you have a fridge freezer and your freezer is over frozen (see below), this may cause the temperature in the fridge to fluctuate as it cannot regulate throughout the appliance.

Why is my fridge/freezer leaking?

If you find that your fridge/freezer is leaving a pool of water on the floor, you will need to work out what is causing this. This could be a spillage inside the appliance, the door might not be closing properly, the appliance could be overflowing, there could be a puddle of water inside the fridge and so on.

Why is there a pool of water in the bottom of the fridge?

Something is blocking the drain hole. Every fridge has a drain hole, which is usually located inside the fridge, on the back wall. This allows any liquid/condensation to drain correctly. If this becomes blocked, the water will build up, pool inside the fridge and eventually leak.

You must regularly clean/unblock the drainage hole of any debris.



Why is the door not closing properly?

Check that the appliance is not over-filled and/or whether there is anything obstructing the door. If the freezer door is not closing properly, this could be due to a build up of ice (below). Check the door seal for any damage.

Why is there a build up of ice in the freezer?

Most freezers need de-frosting on a regular basis (every few months) to remove any excess ice. If there is a large amount of ice/frost in the freezer, this means that it is over-frozen.

Leaving the door open and/or overfilling the appliance can encourage the ice to build up quicker than usual. If you find that your freezer is over-frozen, follow these steps:



- Firstly, turn off and unplug your freezer at the wall.
- Remove all frozen food from your freezer. To prevent food from thawing, place items in an insulated cooler bag or in another freezer.
- Remove all drawers and shelves. Do not force any drawers/shelves out of the freezer as this can cause damage to the appliance.
- Place hot water (in bowls or glasses) inside your freezer, making sure you have put down plenty of towels and a suitable container to catch the water that will be created from thawing ice.
- Wait for the freezer to defrost. This can take a number of hours. Do not try and speed up the process, it is important to leave the appliance to defrost on its own. Using sharp objects to remove ice can cause damage.
- Once the ice has defrosted, make sure to dry the interior of the appliance before turning your freezer back on. This will prevent ice-build up when the appliance is turned back on.
- Switch your appliance on and wait for the temperature to return. This may take a number of hours.
- Return any frozen food back to the appliance, but make sure to use/discard any defrosted food.



Washing Machines & Dryers



Washing Machines and/or Washer Dryers

Don't worry if you aren't familiar with doing laundry and/or using a washing machine, its more common that you'd think! [**CLICK HERE**](#) for some useful tips and advice.

Problem with the appliance? [**CLICK HERE**](#) for advice on some other common issues.

Always check you are using the correct settings. Try turning it off for a few minutes to clear a fault.

The most common problem to occur on a washing machine/dryer is a **blockage in the filter**. Remember to empty all of the pockets on your clothes before washing them, to prevent objects like hair clips and coins from blocking the filter. If your filter is blocked, your washing machine may leak water that can damage the machine and the floor. The appliance may not be able to drain properly, which could cause the door to lock as a safety precaution, to avoid water pouring out and flooding the room. **DO NOT pull on a handle/door if it is locked**, otherwise this can break the door/mechanism which is expensive to replace and you would be responsible for this cost.

How do you clean the washing machine filter?

1. TURN THE APPLIANCE OFF, ELECTRICITY AND WATER DO NOT MIX!
2. Place a container and/or towel on the floor to catch excess water.
3. Locate the filter (this is usually at the bottom of the appliance) and remove the plastic cover.
4. Unscrew the filter cap. Water may then pour out (which is why you need the towels/container)
5. Remove any objects that have been caught up within the filter.
6. Check down the hole (where the filter is located) using a torch to search for any further blockages.
7. Replace the filter once this has been done, ensuring that it is screwed back securely and not leaking.

[**CLICK HERE**](#) for a video tutorial, although please remember that your appliance may be slightly different.



Condenser vs Vented Dryers

Some properties have washer/dryers, which means there is a dryer feature on the washing machine. Some may have a separate/tumble dryer installed. This will be either a vented or condenser dryer - it's important to know the difference as one appliance requires more maintenance than the other.

Vented dryers feature a long, flexible hose which drains the water to the outside of your home. You must ensure that the lint (fluff) is removed from the filter in-between each load of drying as it is a fire hazard.



Condenser dryers collect moisture from your wet clothes in a container/tank, which is located within the dryer itself. Once the dryer has been used multiple times, water builds up within the tank. This needs emptying often/when full otherwise there is nowhere for the water to escape to and your clothes will remain wet. Most appliances have a warning light on the settings panel, displaying "empty water". The water tank can be stored in different places on a tumble dryer. It is usually found at the top left hand side, inside the door, or at the bottom of the appliance.



How do you empty the water from a condenser dryer?

1. Make sure the dryer has finished the cycle and switch the appliance off (water and electricity do not mix!)
2. Locate the water tank. Is it in the top left corner, inside the door or at the bottom of the appliance?
3. Have a bucket and towel ready to catch any excess water collected.
4. Carefully remove the tank and carry it to the nearest sink/drain to dispose of the water.
5. Unscrew or lift the lid/cap at the end of the container and release the water.
6. Replace/close the lid back on to the unit and carefully re-fit it back into the dryer.

[**CLICK HERE**](#) for a video tutorial, although please remember that your appliance may be slightly different.

If you are unsure where the water tank is located or require further instructions, try searching the make/model of the appliance online to find the PDF manual. We've included some useful links below:

[Indesit](#)

[Beko](#)

[Hotpoint](#)

[Miele](#)

[Which? Tips and Maintenance](#)



Other Kitchen Appliances

Regular cleaning of appliances is essential to ensure that they are able to work properly, and to avoid causing damage and potential fire hazards.

Ovens, Hobs and Extractor Hoods

Remember to **check the settings** (including the time) on your **oven** and **clean this regularly** to remove any debris and/or build up of grease, otherwise this can become a fire hazard. There are various oven cleaners which are recommended and can be purchased from local retailers, e.g. [Oven Pride](#), [Elbow Grease](#), [Mr Muscle](#).

Properties will have either **gas hobs, electric hobs, or induction hobs**. Induction hobs require specific pans, so be sure to search the make and model if you are unsure whether this applies to you. Knobs on the hob require regular cleaning as these can become stuck with debris/grease. Be careful with open flames on hobs.

Extractor hoods (usually above the hob) may have filters which you can detach and clean to remove any grease that has built up. Some extractors may be hidden behind a cupboard door which must be opened and switched on whilst cooking on the hob. Using your extractor whilst cooking will help minimise [condensation/mould](#).



After cooking any food, be wary about placing hot pots and/or pans on the **kitchen worktop** as this can damage the surface and you will be responsible for rectifying this.

Microwaves

Each property will have a microwave included, most are grill-microwaves, to provide tenants with additional cooking facilities. You must regularly clean microwaves to avoid them becoming stained from food spillages/splashes, and mouldy or rusty from a build up of moisture/condensation. If microwaves become rusted or damaged due to improper maintenance, this is irreparable and tenants will be responsible for the cost of replacing the appliance.



Dishwashers

Not every property will have a dishwasher included, this depends on the landlord and whether there was one present when you secured the property.

Maintaining a dishwasher:

- Clean the filter weekly. You can find this inside, on the base of the dishwasher. Debris often gets clogged within the filter which can cause the machine not to clean dishes properly and eventually leak.
- Wipe the door seals clean weekly. Food can get stuck on the rim during a cycle, which can cause the metal to rust, preventing the appliance from sealing and in turn, producing a leak.
- Top up salt and/or rinse aid levels monthly/whenever indicated. Salt stops limescale building up and softens the water - dishwasher detergents only work effectively in soft water. Rinse aid helps dishes to dry without streaking. Most dishwashers have indicators showing when to top these up. You can purchase salt and rinse aid from most supermarkets and retailers.
- Remove and clean the spray arms every six months. The arms at the base of the dishwasher must be able to circulate fully in order to complete a cycle. These can often become clogged with excess food, which will prevent the appliance from cleaning properly.



[CLICK HERE](#) to see Finish's dishwashing guide.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more advice about cleaning a dishwasher.



Vacuum Cleaners

Each property is supplied with a vacuum cleaner (also known as a Hoover), the brand of the appliance may vary. These are the three most common types provided within our managed properties, all of which can be used to clean wet and dry areas.

Click the names of each Hoover to find the manual for the appliance. Click 'Hoover Bags' beneath to see some examples of where you can purchase replacement Hoover bags from.



Silver P

Hoover Bags



Karcher

Hoover Bags



Henry / Hetty

Hoover Bags

What comes with the Hoover?

The Hoover should come with a long hose, a floor attachment and a small nozzle attachment.

Using the Hoover

You must check that there is a bag inside the Hoover before attempting to tidy up, the bag will collect any dust/debris. Pick up any larger objects off the floor beforehand such as: bottle tops, coins, food wrappers etc, otherwise this may cause the Hoover to become blocked and stop working. Hoovering up large and/or sharp objects can also cause the hose or bag to tear and you would be responsible for replacing this.

Why does the Hoover have no/poor suction?

The most common cause of poor or no suction is from a blockage in the hose/pipe or a full Hoover bag.

- Check the attachments/hose are clear of any **blockages**, otherwise the Hoover won't work at full capacity. If you find that this is the case, you will need to remove the blockage.
- **Hoovers need emptying** to remove the dust/debris that has been hoovered up and collected within. Check whether the bag inside the appliance has enough room to collect the debris/dust and empty or replace the bag if necessary.
- **The filter may be blocked.** [CLICK HERE](#) and follow the step by step instructions to empty the filter.

When emptying or cleaning the filter, make sure you put the grey clip back in place. Without the clip, the Hoover will not function correctly. If you lose the clip, replacements cost approximately £8, depending on which retailer you purchase spare parts from. [CLICK HERE](#) for an example.

How do you empty the vacuum bag?

Once the bag becomes full, this will need emptying. Some vacuum cleaner bags are re-usable, this depends on the type and where they are purchased from. If they aren't reusable, you will need to replace the bag with a new one. There are clips on the side of the vacuum which need to be unfastened to access the bag, remove the bag and empty the waste. Replace the bag with an empty one, attach the opening of the bag to the tube inside the drum, re-fit the lid and fasten the clips at the side. [CLICK HERE](#) for further instructions if you are struggling.



Light Bulbs



Changing light bulbs in the property is the tenants' responsibility.

Bulbs vary depending on the fitting and wattage required. Despite tenants being responsible for replacing the bulbs, we do not expect you to know how to replace them in peculiar or tricky light fittings. See below for advice.



Bayonet (two prongs) Bulb



Edison Screw Bulb



Pendant Fitting

The above are standard light fittings and the bulbs are easy to change, following the steps below:

1. Turn off the power (light switch).
2. Wait for the bulb to cool before removing it.
3. Ensure you can safely remove the bulb (no dangerous gymnastic acts!)
4. Remove the bulb. This process will vary depending on the light fitting. **Screw fittings** can be removed by gently turning them anti-clockwise. **Bayonet fittings** are different; you must push the bulb up gently and then turn the bulb anti-clockwise to remove it.
5. Fit the new bulb by turning it clockwise until it feels secure (make sure it isn't loose).

If you aren't sure what type/wattage bulb you need, remove the old bulb first and take it with you to the store/retailer. You can then compare the options or ask the store staff to identify the correct product for you.

Our rule at Drake & Co is: **"If you can reach it, you can change it"**. We don't want you to overexert yourself, or attempt something dangerous to change a light bulb in the property. If you cannot safely change a bulb, please report this to us via our Report a Problem form, we will then instruct a contractor to fit this once you have purchased the correct bulb. Don't forget, jobs are carried out in order of priority. Therefore, you could be waiting up to 28 days for this to be done, as it is classed as non-urgent.

Safety notice:

- Always check the wattage on the bulb before replacing it. You must not exceed the maximum wattage, this is printed on the inside of the light fitting. For example, if it states you can only install a 40 watt bulb do not replace it with a 60 watt, this is unsafe.
- Do not touch the exposed light socket.



Spotlight



LED Tube Lights



LED Bulkheads



Unique Fixtures

Please do not attempt to change a spotlight bulb. Spotlight fittings are notoriously flimsy and easily broken when removing the faulty bulb.

These other types of light fixtures are not as common and we do not expect tenants to be able to replace these. Let us know (via the online portal) if you have a light like this which needs replacing, we will instruct a contractor to do this for you. State the type of light fitting you have so the contractor knows what type of bulb is needed.



Fire Safety and CO Detectors

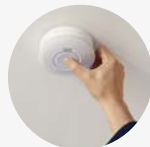
Many of our properties have alarms fitted for your safety and security.

Smoke Alarms and Heat Detectors SAVE LIVES!

You must **test your smoke alarms regularly** by pressing and holding the test button until the alarm sounds. This is **your responsibility** throughout your tenancy.

If your smoke alarm is **beeping regularly, it means the battery is running low**. Please report this to us via the [online portal](#) and a contractor will replace this for you. Please do not attempt to do this yourself as you may break the detector accidentally, they are known to be fragile.

Heat detectors differ from smoke alarms; they don't react to smoke but the rising temperature within the property. This means they aren't prone to false alarms like burning your toast.



Fire Alarm System (Fire Panel)

Some of our larger properties may be fitted with a fire alarm system (there will be a fire alarm panel in the hallway). The smoke alarms are still battery operated, but are wired together to respond to one another. If you accidentally set off the alarms, please follow the instructions written on or next to the fire panel.

If the panel displays a fault (there will be a flashing red or yellow light stating "alarm/buzzer silenced") please report immediately via the [online portal](#).



Fire Extinguishers and Blankets

There can be various sizes and types of fire extinguishers installed throughout properties (hallway/landing), whereas fire blankets are always in the kitchen.

Do not, under any circumstances, use a fire extinguisher or blanket unless it is an **EMERGENCY**, you will be charged for this. Both fire extinguishers and blankets should be hung on the wall with a bracket. Please inform Drake & Co via the [online portal](#) if they have fallen off. Never use an extinguisher to prop open your door, this defeats the object of fire safety. Closed doors delay a fire from spreading throughout the property. Many of our properties have fire doors which are heavier and have self-slamming hinges, brushed/smoke seals and another fire retardants.



Carbon Monoxide Detectors

If the property has a carbon monoxide detector, it will look similar to the image on the left. These are located next to/on top of your boiler, or inside the cupboard where your boiler is stored. They are battery operated (AA or AAA) and will need testing regularly. You must replace the batteries when required.



Important Safety Notice

DO NOT ignore a beeping smoke alarm.
DO NOT cover a smoke and/or heat detector.
DO NOT leave fire doors open.
DO NOT neglect to regularly test your smoke/CO detectors.
DO NOT block the hallway with belongings (e.g. bikes). This is dangerous and prevents you from getting to safety quickly.

- Store** items safely; keep corridors, stairs and exits clear.
- Identify** alarm points so you can warn others.
- Make** sure doors are closed to stop fires from spreading.
- Place** things that can catch fire away from things that cause fire.
- Let** someone know if you spot fire safety problems.
- Ensure** that everyone knows what to do if a fire alarm sounds.



Smoking substances and burning incense/candles in the property is prohibited as per your Tenancy Agreement. This is to protect the property from damage to the interior, and to reduce the likelihood of an accidental fire. Tenants will be charged if the property smells of smoke/substances or has any yellow staining on the walls.



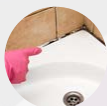
Baths, Showers & Drains



Keeping your bathroom properly cleaned and maintained is essential for hygiene purposes, as well as preventing damage and potential leaks.

CLICK HERE to see Which's top tips for keeping your bathroom in good shape.

- **Clean the bath and/or shower room regularly**, including the toilet, sink, drains, bathtub, shower tray, sealant and tile grout (where applicable) to prevent the appliances staining. Consider coming up with a cleaning rota between yourselves to share responsibilities.
- Regularly **check the drains for blockages and remove any hair/debris**. Do not use the shower if the drain is blocked as this could overflow and create a leak.
- Make sure that you close the shower door/curtain properly to **avoid water spraying out**. Adjust the aim of the shower head so that water is kept inside.
- **Use a bathmat** on the floor. Never leave a puddle of water or wet towels/mats on the bathroom floor as this may leak through into the room below.
- **Use the extractor fan** and/or **open the window** to allow the steam to escape. This will prevent the water vapour from condensing on the cold surfaces (walls/ceiling) and will reduce the chance of mould developing.
- **Use mould/mildew remover** as soon as you do see any signs of mould starting to develop.
- **Only flush the 3 P's**: pee, poo, and paper (toilet paper). Anything else (wipes, tampons, sanitary towels, condoms, cigarette butts etc) will cause blockages and must not be disposed of in the toilet.



Showers

Some properties have **thermostatic showers** (which rely on the boiler to heat the water), some have **electric showers** (which are heated by electricity). Depending on the property, you may even have both!

Common problems can include **low water pressure** and **fluctuating temperature**, causes of these could vary depending on the type of shower you have.

With a **thermostatic** shower, your boiler may be the culprit, so check your boiler pressure and whether other taps are also affected by this.

With **electric** showers, check whether there is an isolator switch/power cord, or if the fuse has tripped.

Check whether somebody is using water elsewhere in the property (running a tap, flushing a toilet, using the washing machine), as this can affect the water pressure and temperature in the shower.

Drains

Drains can become blocked if they are not regularly cleaned and/or if the wrong type of waste is being washed or flushed into the pipes. It is the tenant's responsibility to ensure this does not occur. If a blockage causes a leak, tenants will be responsible for the cost of the repair as well as rectifying any damages as a result of this.

How do you avoid blocking sinks, baths, showers and toilets?

- Place a strainer over the plug hole in the kitchen sink before washing up to ensure that food chunks are caught before being washed down into the pipes.
- Always scrape plates before washing up to prevent food from blocking the pipes.
- Don't pour grease, oil or fat down the drain, this will solidify and clog your drainpipe. Dispose of this using an empty jar and throw away using the bins provided.
- Clean all sinks regularly by slowly pouring boiling water down the drain to clear any residue.
- Hair is the most common cause of a blockage in a shower/bath. Before showering/bathing, make sure the strainer is covering the plug hole (if applicable) to prevent hair blocking the pipe. When sharing a property, this is a group responsibility. All tenants will be charged if a contractor is required to unblock a drain.
- Do not flush anything other than toilet paper down the toilet. Thick products such as sanitary towels, condoms and wipes will cause blockages.



Leaks and Stop Taps

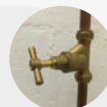


If you notice a leak in the property, follow these steps carefully.

1. Find where this is coming from and minimise the damage it may cause to the property.
2. Always check which room is above the leak first and foremost. Does the leak correlate with the bath or shower being used? Has a sink overflowed? Is it coming from the roof/has it been raining?
3. Once you have identified the cause of the leak, you may be able to control it. This may seem obvious, but for clarity sake – if you find that the shower is causing the leak- stop using it. If it is a sink or toilet, there may be an isolator valve which you can use to stop the water flow to the particular appliance.
4. If you are unable to find the source of the leak and water is still running, locate the stop tap to turn the water supply off. See below for more information.
5. Place a bucket/bowl beneath the leak to catch any water and stop it from damaging the floor/furniture. Use a mop and/or towels to clean up any water before this soaks in.
6. Move any belongings/furniture from underneath the affected area to prevent them from being damaged too.
7. Report the leak to Drakes on 0161 224 2134 AND using the [online portal](#). If outside of office hours, report it to the [emergency contact](#) following these [instructions](#).

Stop Tap

An **internal stop tap** (sometimes called a stop valve or stopcock) is the point where you can **shut off the water supply** to your home. Internal stop taps (inside the house) are generally located near water pipes, like underneath the kitchen or bathroom sink, behind the washing machine, in the cellar, or sometimes in the lounge, kitchen or hallway. Once you have turned the stop tap off, the water in the property will be switched off until it is turned back on again. You may find that the leak will continue for a short period of time as the water already in the pipes will need to drain.



Some properties do not have internal stop taps, [CLICK HERE](#) to see more information on external stop taps.

Leak when taking a shower/bath

If you see a leak coming through the ceiling below a bath/shower room this is most likely caused by the shower/ bath. Stop using this immediately and report the problem.

If the sealant has been compromised, the shower/bath may need re-sealing to prevent the water from leaking through. This means the shower will be out of order for a minimum of one day, as once the shower/bath has been re-sealed, the new silicone and/or grout needs time to dry. Try to open the window in the bathroom during this time as this causes a strong odour to occur.

If the shower/bath is not cleaned regularly and the sealant is left to produce mould and turn green, this can reduce its effectiveness. Make sure you purchase a bathroom cleaner spray to combat mould growth, these can be purchased from most local retailers, for example: [Tesco](#), [Amazon](#), [ASDA](#)



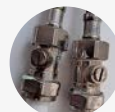
Leak from the roof and/or windows

These types of leaks often occur when the weather is poor e.g. heavy rain and high winds. Whilst you won't be able to shut the water supply off, you can minimise the damage by leaving buckets/towels underneath to catch the water. If you notice a leak stain and think this is being caused by the weather, please report this immediately. Although, in order for a contractor to check the roof safely, the weather must be dry and calm.

Leak from a toilet/sink

If you find that the leak is coming from the toilet and/or sink (you may see a build-up of water on the floor around the toilet, or find a pipe behind the sink is leaking), please stop using the toilet/sink. You must report the leak and follow the steps above to prevent water damage to the surrounding area.

There may be isolator valves fitted to the toilet/sink which can be turned off to isolate the water supply. Some isolator valves have handles that can be turned, others require a flathead screwdriver to turn the dial. If you cannot turn them off, please let staff know and they will do their best to assist you/arrange for a contractor to attend as soon as they can.





Preventing Pests

It is extremely unpleasant to have to share the property with an infestation at any point during a tenancy. Pests seek habitats that provide basic needs such as air, moisture, food and shelter. Try to prevent an infestation before it occurs.

The majority of properties we manage have previously had **preventative** pest treatments carried out as a **precaution**. This means that there may already be bait installed in the property.



Here are some tips to help prevent unwanted “guests” from moving in during your tenancy:

- **Create inhospitable living conditions for pests** by removing any exposed food and water. **Store food and waste in airtight containers** that are inaccessible to pests. Containers must have tight lids and be made of plastic, glass, or metal.
- **Empty the bins regularly**, pests will have an unlimited food source and home to live in, if you do not empty your bin(s) often enough.
- **Clean the property thoroughly!** Make sure to wipe all surfaces and sweep the floor after cooking. The kitchen needs to be cleaned more often than any other room in the property to remove food debris and sweep up all crumbs.
- **De-clutter throughout** the property to remove any nesting areas and/or easy hiding spaces.
- **Wipe inside of the cupboards out regularly** to check for signs of life. Storage cupboards are the perfect home for pests as they are dark, quiet and have easy access to food.
- **Do not leave food exposed in your bedroom**, otherwise you will encourage an infestation. This is unfair to the other tenants in the property as pests may venture into their bedroom too.
- **Try a home remedy.** We can't guarantee their effectiveness, but there are various methods recommended online. For example, peppermint oil and/or ultrasonic repellent devices are supposed to deter mice.
- **Report any holes/possible access points** to us via the **Report a Problem** form so a contractor can fill these.
- **Read through and follow the advice on the “Bins, Rubbish and Recycling” section on our [Advice Hub](#)** as exposed waste is a huge contribution towards pest problems.
- Bear in mind that neighbouring properties may be affected too. If your actions encourage vermin into the property, this will also cause a problem for your neighbours too as pests will seek shelter in their homes.

What do you do if you do see evidence of pests in the property?

1. **Follow the advice above**, to ensure that you are not contributing towards this problem.
2. Check to see if you can **find where the pests are gaining access**.
3. **Clean and declutter the property thoroughly** to rid any possible nesting areas.
4. **Check neighbouring properties' waste disposal** and **report any exposed waste** to the council immediately.
5. **Report the problem to Drake & Co immediately** via the **[online portal](#)**. Make sure that you provide as much information as you can (e.g. when and where you have seen evidence of the infestation) so we can relay this to the pest control contractor and they can complete the most appropriate treatment.

How do you treat for pests?

We rely on a contractor's expertise when ridding the property of a pest problem. There are various methods used to treat for different types of pests. Information about the relevant treatment would be provided in the event that a treatment was required. During any visit, **the contractor would complete a report** which explains what they have treated for, where they have treated and if they found any evidence of activity whilst on site. A copy of this report can be provided to all tenants to keep them updated. **The property's hygiene level will also be rated by the pest control contractor** and this is returned to Drake & Co so we know if tenants are contributing to the problem. Please be aware, if it is deemed that tenants have caused the problem and/or, if the property is rated as **“needs improvement” or “poor”**, **tenants will be responsible for the cost of this and all future treatments, until this has been rectified**.

Slugs do not require attention from a pest control contractor. **Most pest control will not treat for slugs**, these are common household pests, which you can treat independently using salt or slug pellets from a local retailer.

REMEMBER- pets such as cats, dogs, reptiles, birds or other living creatures are prohibited within the property.



Condensation and Mould



www.drakes.co.uk/tenants/tenantadvicehub-dcmcr2134/condensation/

Please be aware that it is the tenants' responsibility to minimise condensation, prevent mould from developing and treat this if it occurs.

Some tenants confuse mould produced by condensation with penetrative damp. Rising penetrative damp can only rise a maximum of 3ft due to atmospheric pressure, meaning it cannot be found upstairs and is very unlikely to be a problem in the property. Penetrative damp presents itself differently to condensation mould, it usually appears as a wet patch on a wall (like a leak), and you would see the patch before the mould started to develop - again this is not very common. Any wet-looking patches must be reported to Drake & Co via our [online portal](#) as this could indicate a leak. Although, please remember that if the issue is found to be caused by condensation, you will be responsible for the cost of rectifying this.



Condensation is water which collects as droplets on a cold surface when humid air is in contact with it. For example, when the steam from a shower touches the cold mirror. However, condensation can occur anywhere throughout a property, not just in the bathroom.



Moist surfaces become a perfect environment for mould to begin to develop, especially in dark areas (e.g. down the side of furniture). The longer this is left untreated, the more the mould will spread.

There are many factors which can contribute to the production of condensation/mould within a property, the most common being:

1. **Too much moisture/humidity** – creating a large amount of moisture which is added to the air.
2. **Lack of ventilation** – failure to remove the moisture-laden air and allow fresh air to enter.
3. **Low temperatures/inadequate heating** – too many cold surfaces which the humid air can come into contact with.
4. **Tenants' negligence** - failure to maintain the humidity, ventilation, temperature, and to wipe away condensation droplets before mould is allowed to form and treat any mould before it is allowed to spread.

Condensation can be reduced by following the following steps:

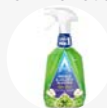
- Open windows a few times a day (particularly in bedrooms)
- Leave trickle-vents open where applicable. Double glazed windows tend to have a secondary locking system which allows you to lock your window while it stays slightly open allowing fresh air flow.
- Dry laundry outside (using a washing line or keeping maidens in the garden) or using a tumble dryer.
- Cover your pans when cooking to reduce the amount of steam being released into the air.
- Close internal doors when cooking or showering, and open windows/use extractors in the relevant room to allow steam to escape.
- Open the interior doors for around 30 minutes per day to allow drier air to circulate throughout your home.
- Leave a gap (a few inches) between furniture and walls to increase airflow.
- Rearrange furniture (particularly beds) to keep it away from external walls (the coldest wall in the room).
- Avoid over-filling storage spaces such as wardrobes to allow for airflow.
- Reduce shower times and dry the surfaces/tiles in the bathroom after showering to remove excess water.
- Heat your home! Try keeping temperatures above 15 degrees for a reasonable amount of time each day. This will increase the temperature of any internal surfaces and reduce the chance of moist air condensing.



Remember, condensation occurs due to humid air and cold surfaces. Condensation will be reduced where there is less moisture in the air, the property is warmer, and ventilation is promoted.

If you see mould starting to develop within the property, you will need to arrange for this to be treated promptly before it spreads and/or becomes a more serious problem. You can purchase mould removers from various supermarkets and online. Click the following links to see some examples you can use. Test the area you are cleaning beforehand, as some chemicals are very strong and can cause further damage.

[B&M](#) [Amazon](#) [Tesco](#) [Sainsbury's](#) [Asda](#)





Meters and Readings

Meters come in a variety of shapes and sizes.

If the property has a gas supply, there will be a gas meter and an electric meter. If the property is electric only (has no gas supply), there will be no gas meter. Some properties also have a water meter, this would've been stated on the property listing when the house was being advertised.

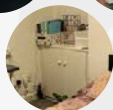
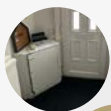
The meters measure your energy usage throughout the course of your tenancy, so it is important that tenants stay energy conscious to avoid incurring any high bills. See our energy saving tips on the [Tenant Advice Hub](#).

You must know where all of your meters are for safety reasons (you may need to access this in the event of an emergency), **and to send regular meter readings** to your energy supplier or bills management company.

If you are unsure how to take a meter reading, [CLICK HERE](#) and follow the detailed, step by step instructions.

How do you know what type of meter you have, and which is for gas/electric?

Type the make and model (e.g. Liberty EG4 v 10) online, this should help you find out the type of meter and whether it is gas or electric. Tip: Some gas meters have a flame, and electric meters have a plug symbol on screen. Gas meters also tend to have a gas warning label on the meter. If you need help taking a meter reading or using your meter, you will be able to search the model to find PDF instructions and/or a video tutorial online.



Where are your meters located?

- In the hallway (on the wall or in a box/cupboard)
- Outside of the property inside a cabinet. You will need a key to open this, keys can be purchased at most supermarkets, hardware stores, or online (usually around £3).
- Inside a cabinet/cupboard in a bedroom, lounge or bathroom
- Under the stairs
- In the cellar (if applicable)
- In the porch/by the front door

Standard Meters

These are very common and easy to read. You do not need to press anything for the meter reading to display.



Two Phase Meters

If you get cheaper electricity at certain times of day, you may have a two rate ('two phase' or 'dual-rate') meter. These are similar to a standard meter, however when taking meter readings, providers require the highest and lowest read your meter has registered.



Smart Meters

Most properties have smart meters installed. These help track usage more efficiently, as they send data directly to the energy supplier via Bluetooth.

Some have keypads with digits between 0-9, select, OK, connect, or A and B buttons which are used to scroll between settings and obtain meter readings.

The model of your meter will determine which number/button you need to press to display the readings. [CLICK HERE](#) and follow the detailed, step by step instructions.



Gas meter readings will have **m³** on the screen, after or underneath the digits displayed.



Electric meter readings will have **kWh** on the screen, after or underneath the digits displayed.



Your Responsibilities

www.drakes.co.uk/tenants/tenantadvicehub-dcmcr2134/
www.drakes.co.uk/files/Example_Tenancy_Agreement.pdf

The terms of your Tenancy Agreement show a clear list of your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. However, to avoid any misunderstandings, here are some examples of what might be expected of you whilst living in rented accommodation.

✓ DO'S

- Act in a 'tenant-like manner'. This means that you will be expected to look after and respect the property like your own home.
- Follow Drake & Co's procedures correctly, to ensure that we can offer you the best support possible.
- Keep the property in a clean and tidy condition, with all furniture, appliances and decor stain-free.
- Use and maintain your appliances correctly to avoid them becoming damaged. Check they are all set to the right time settings too.
- Clean bathrooms/shower rooms and toilets often to avoid a build up of mould and mildew, and keep drains unblocked to avoid causing a leak.
- Defrost the freezer, clean the oven, microwave and fridge regularly, unblock the drainage hole on the fridge where required.
- Keep the property free of condensation and mould. Wipe windows often to avoid build up of condensation.
- Take and submit meter readings to your bills provider/manager each month (or when required).
- Empty the lint filter and/or water tank on the dryer. Avoid blocking the washing machine, clear the filter.
- Keep the property free of any pests and treat any pest problems that you encourage.
- Rectify any damage caused and/or cover the cost of any damages caused.
- Ensure the gardens are maintained to the best of your ability and are free of any litter/refuse.
- Monitor and manage your waste disposal, avoid overflowing bins and cross contamination.
- Try to resolve any issues to the best of your ability before requesting for a contractor to attend.
- Report any problems as soon as you become aware, so that they can be rectified before worsening.
- Allow staff/contractors access to the property when necessary (e.g. for repairs, viewings, inspections etc).
- Keep the property safe and secure, utilise all security measures that are installed.
- Replace batteries in any remotes, carbon monoxide detectors or other small appliances.
- Test heat/smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors often.
- Change light bulbs when required (where it is a standard fitting).
- Keep your keys with you at all times to avoid becoming locked out.
- Be respectful of local residents and the area surrounding your home.
- Pay rent on time and in full, and ensure that your housemates do the same.

✗ DON'TS

- Do not cause or allow any guests to cause damage to the property or the furnishings within.
- Do not smoke or vape within the property or allow anybody else to do so.
- Do not allow any naked flames or burn candles or incense within the property.
- Do not store bikes inside of the property as they can cause damage to the decor.
- Do not block any emergency exits (hallways, stairs and landings etc).
- Do not block access to the gas and/or electric meters.
- Do not allow the property to fall into disrepair by failing to report repairs promptly/correctly.
- Do not attach photos/posters/decorations to the walls in a way that will cause damage.
- Do not be disrespectful or unpleasant towards staff. Drake & Co are employed by the landlord to manage the property, we are the 'middleman' and would like to work with everybody throughout the duration of the tenancy.
- Do not misuse fire equipment or allow heat/smoke alarms to be set off in the property due to negligence.
- Do not create noise nuisance and/or exhibit antisocial behaviour that may disturb your neighbours.
- Do not hesitate to contact us if you are unsure about your rights or responsibilities.