



Tenant Handbook



A guide of useful tips, advice for emergencies and useful contact details





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Mortimers welcome you to your new home



We are pleased we have been able to assist you in finding your new home and hope your tenancy is an enjoyable one.

We have compiled this booklet to assist with ensuring your tenancy runs as smoothly as possible, by giving you all the information you should need in order to look after your home.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the team at Mortimers, who will be happy to assist you.

The Team at Mortimers

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Condensation

Condensation occurs when there is a build-up of moisture in the air. There will always be moisture in the air, but people create excess moisture when:

- Cooking
- Boiling water
- Showering or taking baths
- Drying clothes inside



Please take the following steps to reduce the moisture in the air and thus reduce condensation and any possible mould growth.

- Cover pans when cooking
- Dry clothes outside or in a well ventilated room
- Ventilate the property to let moisture out, open kitchen and bathroom windows when in use. Open windows in the property for a short period each day to allow moisture to leave the property.
- Keep your home warm, this does not require the property to be heated to excess but it is useful to ensure there is 'background' heat in the property to stop moisture settling.
- Wipe regularly all areas where moisture does settle, i.e. windows, window sills etc..

All of the above should assist in reducing condensation and mould in the property. Should you notice any mould growth in the property, please wash it down with a diluted bleach solution or an anti-fungal wash that can be purchased from any supermarket or DIY store.

Guttering

It is important that gutters are kept clear to allow rainwater to drain away. Where a gutter is blocked with leaves or debris, the flow of water cannot drain away easily and this can cause the gutters to overflow. Overflowing gutters can lead to damp problems within the property, as excess water penetrates the brickwork.



If a tenant does not clear the gutters and damp occurs as a result, the cost of any repair work will in most cases fall to the tenant.

We strongly recommend you check the gutters during your tenancy and ensure they are cleared as necessary.

Leaks

Should you notice a leak at your home, please take the following precautions and advise Mortimers at the earliest opportunity.

- Place a suitable container/vessel underneath the leak; pull back any carpets and place towels or newspaper down to absorb any dampness.
- If a pipe has burst, please take the following action before contacting Mortimers
- Locate the stopcock and turn off the water supply to the property. (The mains stopcock can usually be found under or near the kitchen sink. Some are located externally in the ground and will have a cover marked “water”).



Example of a “Stopcock Valve”



Example of “External Stopcock Cover”

- Open all taps to swiftly drain the system of water.
- Some appliances may have their own isolation valve (gate valve or service valve) that you can turn off.



Example of a “Gate Valve”



Example of a “Service Valve”

Should any electric fitting become wet, **DO NOT TOUCH** it. Turn the electricity off at the consumer unit.

It is a good idea to locate the stopcock when you move into the property, just in case!

Washing Machine

In some rental properties, a washing machine is provided for the tenants use.

It is important to carry out a service wash on your washing machine on a monthly basis. This will dissolve any mould and soap scum built up in the machine. Soda Crystals can be used for this purpose and can be purchased from most supermarkets and DIY stores.

You should also ensure the machine is cleaned regularly to reduce the growth of mould, particularly on the door and on the rubber seal to the door. The machine should be left to dry after cleaning to prevent black mould growth.



Black mould tends to form when low temperature (non-bleach) detergents are used, when moisture is left on the seal and glass and when oxygen is reduced by having the door shut. It is also a good idea when the machine is not in use to leave the door and detergent drawer slightly open.

The detergent drawer should be cleaned and rinsed regularly to stop blockages caused by a build-up of soap residue or powder.

Do not overload the washing machine. Large items, such as towels, become heavy when wet and can cause the washing machine to become unbalanced. This can cause the machine to move or can damage the drum or its bearings.

Please refer to the appliance manual for information on running maintenance washes and day to day upkeep of your machine.

Should your washing machine stop working mid cycle, this can be for a number of reasons, but one that you can check is if the filter for the drainage pump is blocked. This will require you to access the filter to clear any blockages. Please refer to the appliance manual for instructions on this and ensure you have a container and plenty of towels to catch any water that may escape the machine when clearing the filter.

If you do not have a user manual for the appliance, please let Mortimers know the make and model of the appliance and we will happily locate a user manual for your use.

Blockages

The common cause of a blockage is foreign objects such as food, grease or hair. Every effort should be taken by you to avoid any such items going down the sink. Hair traps can be purchased from a DIY store to help stop hair blocking drains.



You should use a drain clearing product regularly to avoid any blockages.

If Mortimers send a contractor to a report of a blockage and the cause is found to be as a result of “misuse”, you will be held liable for the cost of clearing the blockage. Please endeavour to clear any blockages yourself, prior to calling Mortimers to avoid any such costs being levied against you.

If more than one fitting is blocked and your attempts to clear the blockage have not been successful, please let Mortimers know.

Toilet Overflows

If you notice that there is a constant flow or trickle of water in the toilet pan this may be down to a fault with the flush valve within the cistern.



Example of supporting a "Ball Valve" float to stop overflow

To stop an overflow, lift the float up to close the ball valve. If this stops the overflow, support the float by using string and a piece of wood to tie it in place. Report the issue to Mortimers.

Bleeding a Radiator

If you notice that the top part of your radiator is cold whilst the bottom is warm, this means there is air trapped in the system where water should be. This requires you to bleed the radiator to release the air.

Before you bleed any radiator, check the following:

- If the whole of a radiator is cold, check the radiator valve is turned up.
- If more than one radiator is cold, it may require the whole heating system to be checked by a qualified heating engineer, call Mortimers.



If the above does not apply and you have a radiator that is cold at the top and hot at the bottom, then please follow the process below:

- Turn off the heating system and allow to cool. If you do not allow the system to cool, the water that escapes when you bleed the radiators could scald you.
- Check the bleed valve on your radiator to find the correct bleed key required. (The bleed valve is usually found at the top of the radiator. Bleed keys can be purchased from any hardware store).
- Use a bowl to catch any spilled water and use a rag to wipe away any spillages.
- Insert bleed key into the valve at the top of the radiator.
- Turn anti-clockwise until you hear a hiss (this is the air escaping the radiator).
- When water starts to come through turn the key clockwise to close valve.

DO NOT UNSCREW VALVE COMPLETELY AS THE PLUG WILL COME OUT.

Heating your Home

During cold weather, keep the heating on constantly to prevent freezing pipes. The minimum temperature should be set to 15°C whilst the property is unoccupied.

Heating systems vary. Most are controlled with one central room thermostat or by thermostat controls on individual radiators.



Example of "Radiator Thermostatic control"



Example of "Central Room Thermostat"

If your heating system has a digital timer, refer to the user manual to set the heating and hot water to come on at the times you require. Ensure the time is set correctly on the timer to avoid the heating and hot water coming on at the wrong times

If you have an analogue heating timer, turn the clock to show the correct time and set the pins to the times you wish the heating and hot water to come on. Do the same to set the times you the heating and hot water to shut off.



Example of an "Analogue heating timer"



Example of a "Digital heating timer"

Electricity

The electricity to your home will likely be controlled by a main consumer unit in your property. This contains your trip switches for the different circuits in the property and a master switch to turn off the electricity to the entire property.



Example of a modern "Consumer Unit"

You can turn off an electricity supply to an isolated area, or to the whole property, in the event of an emergency.

Should you encounter any issues such as water penetration, burning from an electrical fitting or any other electrical concern, switch off the electrical supply and report the issue to Mortimers at the earliest opportunity.

If you lose power to a room or to all sockets, check the consumer unit as there may have been an overload caused by too many appliances being on at once.

In the event of total power loss, check with a neighbour as there may be a power outage in your area; alternatively, you can call your electricity provider.

If there is not an issue in your area and you remain without power, contact Mortimers.

Changing fuses

It may from time to time be necessary to change a fuse on an appliance plug. This can be done quite easily and swiftly by unplugging the appliance in question, opening up the plug and removing the fuse from the plug and replacing with the correct amp replacement fuse. Please take note to ensure the correct fuse is fitted in terms of “amps”.

Moulded plugs cannot be fully opened but have a removable cover for access to the fuse.



Two part plug with screws to open plug fully for access to the fuse.



Changing light bulbs

It is your responsibility to change any light bulbs in your property. Standard and halogen light bulbs are readily available at any hardware store or supermarket.

Please take care to ensure that the light is turned off and any bulb has cooled before attempting to change the light bulb.

Standard bulbs consist of two types;



Bayonet Light bulb



Screw cap Light bulb

Both of the above are simple to fit and require little effort to change. In terms of the Bayonet bulb, you will see two “hooked catches” within the bulb fitting. The pins on the bulb should be aligned with the catches and pushed up, and then twist the bulb until it is secure in the fitting.

The Screw cap bulb requires the bulb to be screwed into the fitting until secure, making sure not to turn the bulb too hard to avoid damaging the glass and the screw cap becoming stuck in the fitting.

Please note both of the above bulb types can be purchased as an “energy saving” bulb from any hardware store or supermarket.

(Energy saving bulbs do not work in dimmer light fittings. If lights are dimmed these can cause flashing in the room)

Halogen Bulbs

Like standard bulbs, there are two common types of halogen bulb:



GU10 Halogen Lamp



G9 Halogen Lamp

Changing the GU10 Bulb requires the bulb to be inserted into the fitting and turned clockwise until secure. It is best to use a cloth glove or any other soft cloth to avoid getting “body oil” on the glass surface.

To change a G9 Bulb, grip the bottom of the bulb and pull directly down, do not twist.

Fit the new bulb by aligning the pins with the slots in the fitting and push in.

Pest Control

The most common cause of pests in the home is food debris not being properly cleaned away, open food left out and rubbish not being properly stored and discarded.

For the above reasons, the responsibility of controlling a pest issue sits with the tenants. Traps, baits and other pest control products can be easily purchased from a hardware store or supermarket.



Your landlord may take steps to proof the property where necessary, such as covering obvious holes that could be a point of entry for pests.

The most common pests are mice and it is often very difficult to exclude them from properties. It is understood that a mouse can gain entry through a gap the diameter of a pencil (6mm).

To reduce the likelihood of mice coming into your property you should ensure that:

- Food is stored in sealed containers and put away in cupboards or shelves.
- Food debris is cleared away immediately.
- Waste is kept in closed bins and discarded regularly for the local authority waste collection services to collect.



Trouble Shooting & Tips

My electric oven is not working:

- Check the clock on your cooker as this could have accidentally been reset.
- If there is no power at all, check the consumer unit to see if the circuit has tripped off.

My fridge doesn't drain and my food is wet:

- Check the drainage valve in your fridge as this can become blocked. Use a straw or cotton bud and try to clear the valve. Drainage valves are usually found at the back of the fridge.

My dishwasher is not cleaning my crockery properly:

- You may need to replace the rinse aid or salt in the dishwasher. These can be purchased from any DIY store or supermarket.

General Tips

- Wipe all windows that are affected by condensation. If any mould has formed wash it down using a diluted bleach solution or a suitable product from a DIY store or supermarket.
- Remove lime scale from taps, showerheads, baths and sinks using a de-scaler product. De-scaler can be purchased from any supermarket or DIY store.
- To avoid blockages in sink waste pipes, use a drain clearing product on a regular basis. These can be purchased from any DIY store or supermarket.
- External gullies and gutters should be kept clear of leaves and debris to ensure water can drain away properly. This is the responsibility of the tenant and should blocked gutters and gullies cause damage to a property you will be held liable for the cost of repairs.
- As the tenant it is your responsibility to change all light bulbs in the property.
- Be sure to locate your mains water stopcock. This can usually be found where the mains water pipe enters the property or around the kitchen sink.





- Ensure you know the location of the Electricity and Gas supply to the property; you will need to know this in case either should need to be turned off.
- Carry out regular “maintenance washes” using a soda crystal product to help keep the washing machine clean and in good running order.
- If you have a kitchen waste disposal unit, be sure to run water through it regularly to reduce the risk of the appliance seizing up.

For any queries you may have, please do contact Mortimers who will be happy to go through any issues you may be having and assist where they can.

User manuals should be located in your property for all appliances. If there are any user manuals you require that are not in the property, you can locate these by searching on an internet search engine using the make and model of the appliance. Alternatively, Mortimers can assist.



Emergencies

Below are the procedures you should follow in the case of an emergency.

FIRE.

Evacuate everyone from the property and do not return for any reason.
Call **999**

If you live in a block of flats, set off the communal fire alarm.
Warn any neighbours who may be in danger.

SMELL GAS??

Open all doors and windows to allow the gas to escape the property.
Check to see if any gas appliance has been left on unlit, or if the pilot light in the boiler has gone out. If so, turn the appliance off and **do not** attempt to relight it until the gas smell has cleared from the property.

If you cannot stop the leak by turning off the appliance or if you are unsure if it has stopped, turn the main gas supply off at the meter and call the gas emergency service immediately: **National Grid 0800 111 999**



Example of a gas meter with shut of valve located on pipework (red handled lever)

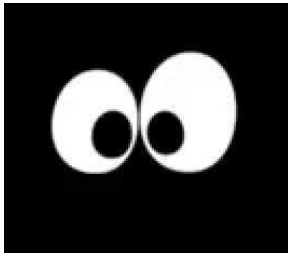
BURST OR LEAKING PIPE

In the event of a leaking pipe or burst pipe, turn off the mains water supply (see leaks section).



If the electrics are affected, turn off the electricity at the consumer unit (see electricity section) and call Mortimers

LOSS OF ELECTRICITY



- Check your fuse box to see if the power has tripped out.
- If neighbours are affected, speak to your electricity provider.
- If none of the above applies, call Mortimers.



Useful Contacts

Mortimers Estate Agents

5 Temple Street,
Aylesbury,
HP20 2RN
Tel- 01296 398555 (Option 2 for lettings)
Email- enquiries@mortimersaylesbury.co.uk

Aylesbury Vale District Council

The Gateway
Gatehouse Road
Aylesbury
HP19 8FF
Tel- 01296 585000

Thames Water

Tel- 0800 980 8800

National Grid (Emergency Number)

Tel-0800 111999

Emergency Services (Police, Ambulance & Fire Services)

Tel-999

Non Emergency Police Service

Tel-101

