

Health and Safety

Handbook

For tenants



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1. Introduction

This handbook has been designed to raise awareness of accident prevention in the home, enabling tenants to make changes to ensure a safe environment for everyone in the household including visitors.

The handbook has been developed by our Health, Safety and Environmental Manager who has many years experience in workplace and home safety, working alongside a number of tenants who have contributed to the contents of this handbook.

Two Rivers Housing is a member of The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and has been participating in their annual awards process since 2013.

2. Cost of home accidents, facts and figures

More accidents happen at home than anywhere else. Approximately 2.7 million people each year suffer an injury requiring medical treatment, with the main age group being children under 15 years and people over 65 years.

The most common hazards that result in incidents in the home are:

- Fire.
- Cooking and food preparation.
- Medicines, cleaning products and other hazardous substances.
- Electrical.
- Slips, trips and falls.
- DIY and garden.
- Lifting objects.

Incidents occurring will depend on one or more of the following:

- The risk being present.
- Lack of risk awareness and risk control.
- Age.
- Your health and physical condition.
- Ability to do the task.

The annual cost to society of UK home accident injuries has been estimated at £45.63 billion. This figure does not take into account costs associated with aftercare treatment, long-term care, the welfare system and other support services.



£ 4 5 . 6 3 billion

**Annual cost to
society of UK
home accidents**

3. Typical hazards found in the home

3.1 Fire – Following a report by South West Fire and Rescue during 2008-2013 they found that age, health and lifestyle issues are the most common causes of fatalities following a fire in the home.

To help our tenants to be fire aware, Two Rivers Housing has joined forces with Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service to take a more pro-active approach particularly to keeping vulnerable people safe.

Staff who frequently visit our tenants in their homes have received training from Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue giving them knowledge of fire safety, warning signs and what to look out for. We can arrange a joint visit with your Neighbourhood Housing Advisor and a representative from Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service so that they can assess your property for fire risks and provide you with advice on fire prevention, or alternatively you can arrange the visit yourself by calling Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue on **0800 180 4140**.

Prevention - Fires can start suddenly and spread quickly, damaging your home and furniture and putting lives in danger. They are caused in a variety of ways but there are a few simple steps you can take to prevent the likelihood of one starting:

Furniture

- Ensure your furniture is fire-resistant and away from a heat source.

Electrical items

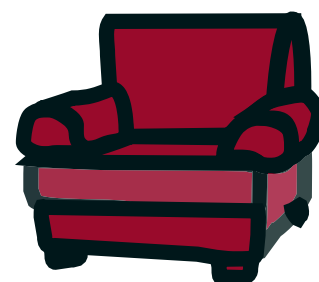
- Follow the manufacturers safety guidance for use and, where applicable, any charging safety guidance.
- Do not overload sockets, and ensure there is ventilation around the equipment.
- Use the correct rating of fuse.
- Check electrical items and cables to ensure they are in good condition.
- Never leave electrical items in the standby mode and always unplug them when not in use.
- Do not turn on washing machines, tumble dryers etc. when you are leaving the house.
- Beware of counterfeit goods - ensure any electrical equipment you have, or purchase, comes from a reputable supplier. Check the equipment has a CE marking but do not rely on this as they can be copied.

Some white-goods manufacturers have raised concerns around a number of fires caused by a safety fault within their tumble dryer range. If you have one of these products, do not use it and seek advice from the manufacturer.

White-goods manufacturer, Beko, had a number of fires caused by a safety fault with some fridges in 2011. Again, if you have a Beko fridge or fridge freezer, seek advice from the manufacture.

Portable heaters/fires

- Secure portable heaters up against a wall to stop them falling over, and keep them clear from curtains and furniture. Never place clothing etc. over them to dry.
- Only use the type that have a safety cut out switch should they fall over.



Chip pan fires

- Avoid using chip pans or use those that have a thermostat control.
- Never leave a chip pan unattended.

If you have a chip pan fire, carry out the following:

- Turn off the heat if it's safe to do so.
- Place a damp tea towel over the chip pan, or better still, use a fire blanket.
- If the fire is out of control, leave the kitchen and close the door then raise the alarm and get everyone out of the building and stay out until help arrives.

Never use water to extinguish a chip pan fire.

Smoking

- If you smoke, make sure you use an ashtray and position it so that it cannot fall over. Using a little water in the ashtray will help extinguish the cigarette. Never leave a lit cigarette unattended, and never place a lit cigarette end into a waste bin.
- Take extra care if you smoke when you're tired, taking prescription drugs, or if you have been drinking alcohol.
- Never smoke in bed.
- Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children.



Candles

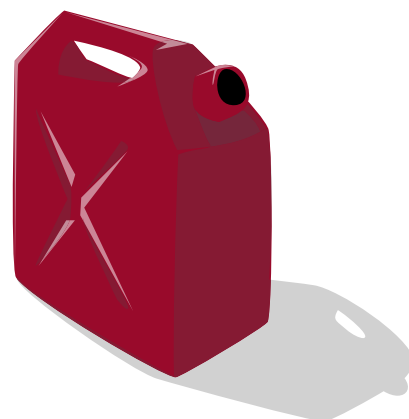
- It is best to avoid using candles.
- Put candles out when you leave the room, and make sure they're put out completely at night.
- Use a snuffer or a spoon to put out candles; it's safer than blowing them out as sparks can be produced.
- Children should not be left alone with lit candles.

Chimneys

- If you have a solid fuel fire we will ensure that your chimney is cleaned on a regular basis.
- Only burn the recommended fuel type.

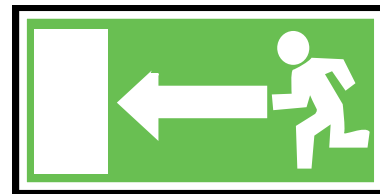
Combustible materials and general household items

- Avoid a build-up of waste; clear it out on a regular basis and remove it from the building.
- Avoid storing flammable substances in the building and near naked flames, sparks or heat.
- Store combustible items away from any source of heat and/or ignition. Better still, remove them completely.
- Do not store flammable substances if there is no requirement to do so. If you do have flammable substances, store them in an external building in the correctly labelled container and keep them away from children, sources of heat and/or ignition and keep the quantities to a minimum.



Escape routes – In the case of a fire

- Plan your escape route and make sure everyone knows how to escape.
- Make sure your escape route is kept clear.
- The best route is the normal way in and out of your home.
- Think of a second route, in case the first one is blocked.
- Take a few minutes to practice your escape plan.
- Review your plan if the layout of your home changes.
- Keep door and window keys where everyone can find them.
- If you cannot get out, get everyone into one room ideally with a window and a phone. Put bedding around the bottom of the door to block out the smoke, then open the window and call **“HELP, FIRE”**.
- If you're on the ground or first floor, you may be able to escape through a window.
- If you cannot open the window, break the glass in the bottom corner.
- Make sure doors on your escape route can be opened without a key.



What to do if there's a fire

- Keep calm and act quickly, get everyone out as soon as possible.
- Do not waste time investigating what's happened or rescuing valuables.
- If there's smoke, keep low to the ground where the air is clearer.
- Before you open a door, check if it's warm. If it is, do not open it, fire is on the other side.
- Call 999 as soon as you're clear of the building.

Bedtime checklist

- Close inside doors at night to stop fire from spreading.
- Turn off and unplug electrical appliances unless they are designed to be left on such as your fridge/freezer.
- Check your cooker is turned off.
- Do not leave the washing machine on.
- Turn heaters off and put up fireguards in front of open fires.
- Put candles and cigarettes out properly.
- Make sure exits are kept clear.
- Keep door and window keys where everyone can find them.
- Ensure your smoke alarm is working.
- Do not smoke in bed.

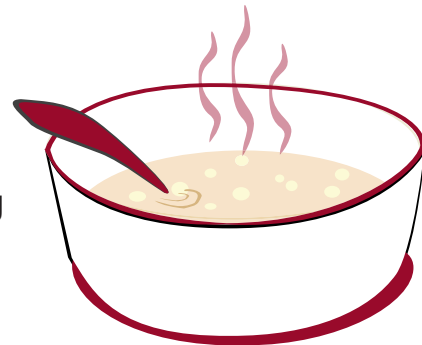


How to make sure your smoke alarm works

- Test the smoke alarm every week by pressing the button until it sounds (if it fails to sound then contact us immediately).
- Change the battery every year. If you hear a beeping sound coming from the smoke alarm it's warning you that the battery needs replacing. (If you are unable to do this yourself then please contact us.)
- Never remove the battery.
- Never disconnect the alarm if it goes off by mistake.
- Vacuum the grill area of the smoke alarm every 12 months.
- Never cover smoke alarms.

The fire and rescue service is called out to over 600,000 fires each year. About 50,000 (140 a day) are in the home. (www.fireservice.co.uk)

3.2 Cooking and food preparation - The kitchen is often referred to as the heart of the home; however, it is the most common area where an accident is likely to happen due to the hazards associated with cooking and the presence of cleaning products. Teaching and encouraging children to cook is an essential life skill but this needs to be controlled. Here are some tips to help manage the risks:



- Do not leave children alone in the kitchen when cooking.
- Keep knives sharp, in good condition and out of reach of children.
- Keep pan handles turned inward so that they cannot be knocked off or grabbed by children.
- If you need to leave the kitchen whilst cooking, take pans off the heat or turn them down.
- Keep towels, cloths and curtains away from fryers, toasters and the cooker.
- Use spark devices as they are safer than matches or lighters.
- Avoid any build up of fat and grease in the cooker or grill.
- Do not put anything metal in the microwave.
- Take extra care if you cook when you're tired, taking prescription drugs, or if you've been drinking alcohol. You might fall asleep.

Cooking also presents a fire risk which has been covered in section 3; also refer to section 8 for advice on cleaning product safety.

3.3 Medicines, cleaning products and hazardous substances - Medicines, cleaning products and hazardous substances should always be treated with caution.

Medicines

- Keep medicines in their original containers, clearly labelled and out of reach from children.
- Do not take other people's medicine, or let them take yours.
- Return leftover medicines to the pharmacist for destruction – do not hoard them.

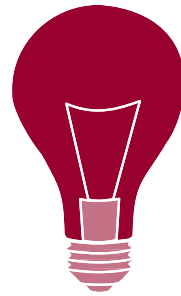


Cleaning products and hazardous substances

- Consider substituting hazardous substances with less hazardous substances.
- Use protective clothing as guided by the manufacturer.
- Reduce the amount of hazardous substances you have.
- Keep cleaning products and other chemicals in their original containers, clearly labelled and out of reach from children.
- Store them and use them as guided with the manufacture's instructions.
- Keep flammable substances away from source of heat and ignition.
- Dispose of any unwanted cleaning products or chemicals, safely.
- Think about the environmental impact if you allow hazardous substances to contaminate the land, air or water.

3.4 Electrical

We have already mentioned in section 3, the fire risks associated with electricity. The other risk associated with electricity is electric shock. To manage the risk:



- Do not carry out any repairs or alterations to the wiring in your home.
- Do not use electrical equipment in wet areas, and never attempt to change light bulbs/plug-in or unplug electrical appliances with wet hands.
- When changing light bulbs, make sure the light is unplugged, or for fixed lights ensure the electrical supply is turned off at the consumer unit.
- If an appliance appears faulty, stop using it and have it checked at once.
- Consider using a RCD (residual current device) when using electrical garden equipment.
- Always ensure that any appliance you buy comes fitted with a plug or, if you need to fit a plug yourself, ensure that you are competent to do so or use a qualified electrician.

3.5 Slips, trips and falls

More than 3,500 people in England and Wales die every year as a result of a fall, and nearly a third of a million people need hospital treatment.

The cause of a fall is often multi-factorial, involving both environmental hazards and an underlying medical condition. Strength, balance and gait, decline in vision, mental health problems and deficiencies in the diet are all contributory risk factors.

Although prescription medicines are seldom the cause of falls, they may also be a major risk factor.

Prevention

- Avoid leaving items on the stairs.
- Ensure you have a firm grip of the banister whilst going up or down the stairs.
- Keep things at low level to prevent the use of step ladders etc.
- Avoid jobs where there is a risk of a fall. If this cannot be avoided, use the right equipment that offers a handrail, and never stand on chairs or tables etc. Better still; get someone in to do the job for you.
- Avoid sudden movements that might cause you to lose your balance.
- Ensure floor coverings are in good condition and do not present a trip hazard.
- Look-out for your pet as many falls have been contributed by people tripping or falling over them.
- Do not place rugs on slippery surfaces unless they have a slip resistant backing.
- Keep the floor areas clear of obstructions and trailing cables.
- Wear suitable well-fitting footwear.
- Have grab rails installed in high risk areas.
- Spills on the floor should be cleaned up immediately to prevent slipping on them.
- Ensure there is adequate lighting.
- If you're prone to falling, ensure you have the ability to raise the alarm. Therefore, carrying alarm pendants etc. before you get up and walk is important.
- Have a slip-resistant mat in the bottom of the bath when showering (if installed).
- Place an inflated swimming arm band over bath taps, so should you fall and hit the taps the severity of injury would have been greatly reduced.



3.6 DIY and garden

DIY



Over-ambition and lack of knowledge are two of the biggest factors in DIY accidents causing death and injury.

- Be realistic and do not tackle a job unless you have the ability and skills.
- Keep tools clean and in good repair. Give each one a quick check over before using it and keep them out of reach of children.
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear when doing DIY jobs.
- Stop and disconnect power tools before maintaining them or clearing a blockage etc.

Garden

- Use circuit breakers (RCD) on electrically powered garden tools and jet wash systems.
- Beware of any poisonous plants and berries that can cause an allergic reaction.
- Keep children clear of garden tools and chemicals when they're being used, and ensure they are stored safely when not in use.
- Secure furniture, pots etc. to prevent them falling over and causing harm.
- Look for signs of damage to the external area of the property that could cause harm whilst in the garden.
- Ensure garden toys are being used in a safe manner.
- Net ponds and keep children clear of them. Better still, fill them in.
- Do not burn any waste in the garden; take it to the household recycling centre. Not only is this method safe but it will also reduce any environmental impact.
- Keep recycling boxes containing glass clear of children.
- Check trees for signs of dead wood with the potential to fall.
- Check for slip, trip and fall hazards and prevent persons from being exposed to them.
- When children are playing in the garden, check on them regularly, and ensure they cannot get out of the garden.
- Beware of any harmful insects etc. and avoid them where possible.
- Think about the harmful effects of the sun, and ensure you are protected against it.

Barbecues

- Keep children away from barbecues.
- Keep the barbecue clear of trees, dry vegetation, combustible material, flammable substances, buildings, sheds and fences. Never pour flammable substances on a barbecue.
- Store gas bottles safely.
- Ensure food is cooked thoroughly before eating.



3.7 Manual handling

Manual handling is any task requiring an object to be moved by the use of bodily force by either lifting, lowering, pushing or pulling.

The best way to avoid a manual handling injury is to avoid manual handling altogether. However, we carry out manual handling tasks in the home every day and have done so for many years. These stem from cleaning, DIY, gardening and moving furniture etc.

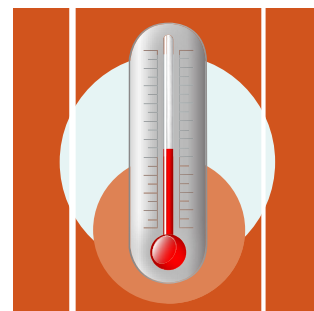
With that in mind, consider the following:

- Can I avoid the manual handling?
- Am I capable of moving the load?
- Am I injury free?
- Is the route clear of hazards?
- Can I reduce the weight of the load?
- Can I get help with moving the load?

If you have answered yes to all of the above and implemented them, then you would have done enough to reduce the risk of a manual handling injury.

4. Heating systems

Safety is especially important with heating systems using gas, solid fuel and oil burning appliances as they give off toxic waste gases when burning their fuel.



The hazardous gases are removed from the appliance via a chimney or a vent where the gases are dispersed safely into the atmosphere. It is vital that the chimney or venting system from the appliance is not tampered with, and that these outlets remain clear of any obstruction.

The flame on a gas appliance should burn blue; if the flame is yellow or orange in colour then this indicates there is a safety problem and the appliance should be turned off and reported to Two Rivers Housing's Customer Service Team immediately. The appliance must remain out of use until such time the fault has been rectified.

Two Rivers Housing is required by law to ensure gas appliances belonging to them have an annual safety inspection. To help us meet this legal requirement, and for your safety, you must allow our engineers into your property when arranged by our Maintenance Team.



If you suspect a gas leak; extinguish all forms of naked flames, open the windows, and immediately turn off the gas supply to the property (this can be found by your meter) then immediately telephone Transco on 0800 111 999 and Two Rivers Housing's Customer Service Team. The gas supply must remain isolated until the leak has been rectified.

If your carbon monoxide alarm activates, you must open the windows and turn off the appliance and report the incident to Two Rivers Housing's Customer Service Team immediately.

Solid fuel systems with either a chimney or flue will be swept annually. Any chimney that has been decommissioned must not be brought back into use.

Always keep furniture and soft furnishings clear of open fires and keep a special watch on young children and the elderly when fires and heaters are in use.

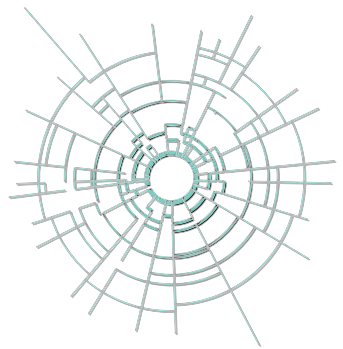
Bioethanol and gel fuel burners are becoming increasingly popular and are often used as decorative items and heating sources both indoors and outdoors. The fuel, which burns with a virtually invisible flame, is mostly produced from sugar plants and is typically used for cooking, water heating and the heating of buildings. It is sold in fire pots for use in fondue sets, small fireplaces and patio torches. The high risk of accidental burns makes them unsuitable for use in the home.

Advice for the use of bioethanol and gel burners:

- Always follow the manufacturer's guidelines and instructions.
- Only use bioethanol fuel in fireboxes and containers designed for the product.
- Bioethanol fuel is highly flammable and should be kept in containers tightly closed and away from any ignition sources.
- Fireboxes and containers should always be placed on a stable surface and away from combustible materials.
- Never add fuel to a burning fire, or overfill a fuel container, and never fill up a firebox fuel container that is still hot.
- Keep children and pets away from fireboxes and fuel.
- Extinguish all fires when leaving a room or before going to sleep.
- Always use bioethanol fireboxes and containers in a well-ventilated room.
- Regularly clean and check fuel containers for damage and never use a leaking one.
- Clean away any fuel spills with a damp cloth and dry completely.
- Keep your hands, hair and clothing well clear of any burning flames and fuel.
- Always light bioethanol fuel with an extended lighter or extra-long match – never discard matches into the container.

5. Safety glass

Ordinary glass is dangerous - particularly at low level - because it breaks into large, jagged pieces which can cause serious injury. The Building Regulations require safety glass to be fitted in glazed doors, side panels and areas below 800mm in new buildings.



- Safety glass is specially made. There are two main types: laminated glass and toughened glass. When it breaks, it breaks safely; in a way that is designed to reduce injury.
- If ordinary glass is in use, you can help reduce the risks by:
 - a) Making sure people know the glass is there, and ensure that the area is well lit.
 - b) Never let children play near glass - they could easily crash through it and receive a serious injury.

6. Burns and scalds

Every day, 21 people are admitted to hospital following a serious burn or scald. The very young and older generations are most at risk from burns and scalds in the home. The main source of heat injuries are caused by contact with radiators, electric fires and cookers and the majority of scalds involve the use of kettles.

Prevention - Here are some tips that can be followed to reduce the likelihood of a burn or scald:

95% of all childhood burns and scalds happen at home. Each day nine children are admitted to hospital with burns and scalds (www.capt.org.uk)

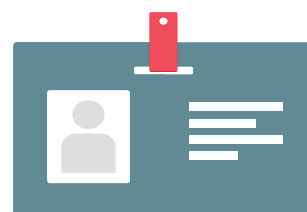
- Use a cordless kettle, do not over-fill it.
- Only boil the amount of water required.
- Try not to carry hot liquids further than necessary.
- Check the temperature of the bath before getting into it - for an adult the water should be no more than 46°C – and for a child it should be 37°C.
- Always use rear hot plates and turn the pan handles away from the front of the cooker.
- Use oven gloves when handling hot items.
- Ensure hot water bottles are of good quality and do not show signs of wear.
- Use guards around fires.
- Keep children clear of the cooker and other hot objects.

Treatment - When someone receives a burn or a scald, it is important you reduce the high heat in the effected area immediately by submerging the burn/scald area under cold running water for at least 10 minutes. If a blister appears, do not pierce it and do not remove any clothing as it may be stuck to the blister and by removing it may pierce the blister. After the 10 minutes, apply a layer of cling film over the burn/scald and report to A&E. Do not apply any creams.

7. Security

Security is an important part of your safety. Two Rivers Housing has provided you with a home which is capable of being secure at all times. However, there are times when visitors will come to your door, expectedly or unexpectedly. To improve your security, consider the following:

- Do not allow cold callers into your home.
- Look through a window before opening the door, and do not open the door if you're unsure of the person on the other side.
- If you are expecting a visitor but feel that there may be a security issue, get a friend or family member to accompany the visit.
- Check ID badges of contractors.
- Adopt a system that you do not answer the door before 9am and after 5pm unless you are expecting someone outside of these times.
- Keep your doors and windows secured especially when going to bed or when you go out.
- Consider using timer lights throughout the night.
- Do not have money or valuables on display.
- Report any suspicious activity in your neighbourhood.
- Consider setting up a neighbourhood watch scheme.
- Make sure you have a telephone so that you can raise the alarm.



8. Firework hazards

Top 10 safety tips for adults - young people should watch and enjoy fireworks at a safe distance and follow the safety rules for using sparklers. Only adults should deal with firework displays and the lighting of fireworks. They should also take care of the safe disposal of fireworks once they have been used.

Sparklers can reach a temperature of 2000°C. Make sure you have a bucket of water to put them in after use (www.capt.org.uk)



1. Plan your firework display to make it safe and enjoyable.
2. Keep fireworks in a closed box and use them one at a time.
3. Read and follow the instructions on each firework, using a torch if necessary.
4. Light the firework at an arm's length with a taper and stand well back.
5. Keep naked flames, including cigarettes, away from fireworks.
6. Never return to a firework once it has been lit.
7. Do not put fireworks in pockets, and never throw them.
8. Direct any rocket fireworks well away from spectators.
9. Never use paraffin or petrol on a bonfire.
10. Make sure the fire is out and surroundings are made safe before leaving.

Sparklers - These are often viewed as being harmless but they do burn at fierce temperatures. To a young child, the heat from a sparkler is equivalent to the heat from a welding torch.

Safety rules for sparklers

- Never give them to young children under five years.
- Always wear gloves with sparklers, preferably leather ones.
- Hold a sparkler at arms length while an adult lights it.
- Use in a clear space away from others.
- Never hold a baby in your arms when you are holding a sparkler.
- When the sparkler has finished, put it into a bucket of cold water straight away and leave it there.

Pets - Animals do not like bonfires or fireworks. The flames and noise frightens and upsets them. They should always be kept safely indoors. Make sure that they cannot get out through open windows and doors. It is best to keep the curtains closed too and it may be necessary to keep them indoors for several nights around 5th November.

Fireworks are not only used on bonfire night but are also used to celebrate other occasions in the calendar.

9. Christmas hazards

Christmas lights - If you have old lights, please do consider buying new ones which will meet much higher safety standards. When buying, look for:

- Safety marks e.g. BS Kitemark.
- Buy from a reputable store.
- Avoid buying second-hand unless you have them professionally checked first.
- New lights are transformed down to 24 volt for added safety, or they may be double insulated.
- Correct type for the environment where they will be used.

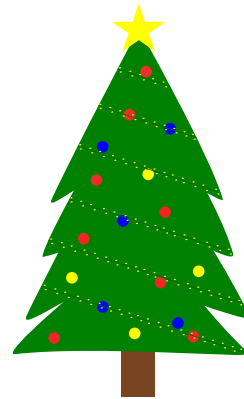
Checking - NEVER insert or remove bulbs when switched on. Inspect cables and bulbs for damage and do not use lights which are damaged; dispose of them safely.

Using Christmas lights

- Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Use an RCD (residual current device) for added protection against shock.



- Do not use the lights outdoors unless specifically made for such use.
- Do not run the cable under carpets or where it can be damaged.
- Keep lights clear of decorations and other flammable materials.
- Avoid cables becoming a tripping hazard.
- Use a stable support when hanging the lights.
- Remember to switch them off when you go to bed or when the house is empty.
- Do not allow children to play with the lights.



Storing - Take care when dismantling and packing the lights in order not to damage them. Keep them safely stored away out of the reach of children, avoiding damp or excessively hot conditions.

10. Asbestos

Asbestos was a common building material used from the 1950s to 1999. However, the UK banned the import of brown and blue asbestos in the mid 1980s and banned white asbestos in the late 1990s.

There are many buildings in the UK where asbestos can be found today; domestic homes, factories, shops, offices, schools, leisure centres, hospitals etc. to name just a few. Any buildings built or refurbished during the 1950s to mid 1980s are highly likely to contain one or more of the asbestos types (blue, brown or white).

Buildings refurbished or built after the mid 1980's may only contain white asbestos as the blue and brown asbestos types were banned products from the mid 1980's. The UK still allowed the use of white asbestos until 1999.

Buildings built after late 1999 should be asbestos free.

Asbestos only presents a health risk when asbestos fibres are released and breathed in. Fibres can only be released due to the following circumstances:

- The asbestos becomes damaged.
- It deteriorates.
- It is drilled into/sanded/cut.



Two Rivers Housing surveyed all its properties built before 2000 for asbestos. The information is then provided to our contractors enabling them to prevent any disturbance during any works being carried out. If it is foreseeable that any work will disturb the asbestos, then the asbestos will be removed safely prior to the works being undertaken.

Tenants wanting to do DIY on their home must seek advice from TRH with regards to any asbestos that may be located in the works area. They will then be advised accordingly. The asbestos regulations do not imply that we must remove asbestos if it is known to be present, providing it is in good condition and presents no risk to health.

Please refer to our 'Asbestos in the Home' leaflet for more information.

Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous silicate mineral, or put simply, asbestos is a fluffy rock! However, it must be treated with great care.

11. Lead

Lead was used for many building products, these include the following:

- Plumbing.
- Glazing.
- Roofing materials.
- Paint - lead pigments were widely used in paints for homes, schools, offices etc. until the 1960s. It was not removed from all commonly used paint until the early 1980s. Therefore, lead can be found underneath existing paintwork in older buildings. Lead does not pose a health risk unless it is disturbed as follows:



Particles – When lead paint is sanded particles of lead will become airborne which could be breathed in creating a health risk.

Vapours – When paint containing lead is burnt off lead vapours will become airborne which could be breathed in creating a health risk.

Ingestion – If you handle lead based products without any hand protection, and have not washed your hands, you may ingest lead through hand to mouth contact.

When removing paint from wood or metal, you will need to consider if lead is present in the paint being removed and follow these procedures:

- Avoid the removal of the old paint, if this is not practicable then:
 - a) Remove the paint using a chemical paint remover.
 - b) Then use a damp rag to wipe the work piece clean.
 - c) Then use a damp sanding block and sand the work piece as required prior to painting.

You can remove the paint using heat guns; however they must be kept below 500°C.

When carrying out the works, ensure you are wearing the required personal protective equipment.

12. Child's play

Young children often have no perception of risks and hazards they encounter on a regular basis during the early development years, and therefore they are at a greater risk of injury. To help protect children from harm consider the following:

- **Environment** - Assess the child's playing environment for hazards that could cause harm to children. If you identify any, think about removing the hazard. Make sure your child is secure; gates are locked, fences cannot be climbed, and holes in fences are repaired.
- **Prevention of contact** - For any hazards that cannot be removed, measures should be put in place to prevent a child coming in to contact with them. Better still; find an environment that is suitable for child play.
- **Supervise** - Child play can be dangerous, from playing with small toy parts to climbing equipment and playing near water etc. Therefore, supervision is essential to accident prevention.
- **Suitability of toys** - Toys should be checked to ensure they are suitable for the child, check for defects and small parts that could cause harm. Make sure toys have been purchased from a reputable shop as many counterfeit products can have safety defects

that could cause harm.

- **Education** - Ensure you let your child know about hazards and how they can be harmed.
- **Tidy up** - Child's play can cause hazards to other people in the house presenting trip hazards from toys etc. Therefore, it's essential these hazards are managed.

Blind cords - Blind cords have resulted in a number of fatal accidents across the UK. If you are thinking of having blinds fitted, consider the following:

- Choose blinds without a cord.
- Do not fit blinds with blind cords in children's bedrooms.

If you already have blinds fitted, consider the following:

- Removing them from rooms where children play and sleep.
- Shorten the cord and fit a cleat high up and wrap any loose cord around the cleat.
- Fit a weak link to the cord, this will allow the cord to break in 2 should a child be caught in it.

Nappy sacks - Nappy sacks have resulted in a number of fatal accidents across the UK. If you use nappy sacks, consider the following:

- Always keep nappy sacks and other plastic bags, or wrapping, away from babies and young children.
- Never place nappy sacks in a baby's cot or pram or in easy reach.
- Buy nappy sacks on a roll if possible.

13. People and dogs

There have been a number of incidents across the UK where people, especially children, have been attacked by a dog. Some of which have left the person with permanent scars, disfigurement or even resulted in death.

If you own a dog then you must comply with the 2014 Dangerous Dogs Act which applies to all breeds; any dog can become dangerous. The Act applies to public areas, inside the home and garden.

If your dog attacks anyone, the dog could be taken away and destroyed. The owner or person in charge of the dog at the time can be also prosecuted under the Dangerous Dogs Act irrespective of breed of the dog.

It is important that you understand the nature of your dog and whether it can interact safely with people. If you have any concerns that your dog may attack someone then you need to consider securing the dog when around people.

Putting signs up saying 'Beware of Dog' is not seen as a means of preventing harm to people. The best way to protect your dog from attacking someone is as follows:

- Secure the dog when it's in the garden particularly where children are playing.
- Make sure the garden fence is in good condition and of sufficient height so that the dog can't escape.



There are around 8.5 million dogs in the UK - 25% of households have a dog.



- Keep the dog on a lead when walking in public spaces, and if the dog is required to wear a muzzle, make sure it's the correct type and fit.
- Keep the dog secure in a separate room inside the house if there's a risk of the dog attacking someone.
- Consider using a dog crate, but this should be a positive safe place for your dog, not used as a punishment.
- Educate children in the house if the dog might be likely to bite them such as children pulling the dog, going near the dog when it's feeding or sleeping.

If you do not have a dog but it's something you're thinking about, you need to consider everything mentioned in this section. Also consider the type of dog you have in mind, and how they interact with people. Seek advice from a recognised body, such as the RSPCA.

14. Product safety

We use many products in our everyday life but often overlook the safety aspects for the use of them. Safety for the use of these products should be considered when purchasing and using them.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents are working with the Association of Manufacturers of Domestic Appliances (AMDEA) and have set-up a new central register which is designed to allow owners to register their electrical appliance. If a product recall is instigated then the Association of Manufacturers of Domestic Appliances (AMDEA) will notify you of the recall and of the safety concerns etc. If you wish to register any appliance then go to: <http://www.registermyappliance.org.uk/>

15. Older people safety

More and more people are enjoying life into their 80s and 90s. However, older people, in particular the frail elderly, are one of the groups who are most likely to have an accident particularly in and around the home.

Older people are least likely to avoid a risk, and are more likely to have slower reactions to situations that may cause harm.

The main risks include:

- Falls.
- Fire.
- Burns and Scalds.

These have been covered in other sections in the handbook which gives practical advice on how to protect against the specific risk. Another risk that needs to be considered for the elderly is hypothermia. There are ways to reduce the risk of developing hypothermia, including:

- Keep the house warm during winter.
- Wear several thin layers of clothing.
- Natural fibres like wool are warmer than synthetic fabrics.
- Eat regular meals and drink hot drinks during the day.
- Move around at regular intervals.
- Seek help if you're experiencing financial difficulties in heating your home.

Other areas to consider are building up a community network of friends and to keep an eye out

for each other. Not only will this be good for safety but it will also reduce the chances of being affected by loneliness.

Every year, more than one in three (3.4 million) people over 65 suffer a fall that can cause serious injury, and even death.
www.ageuk.org.uk

16. Summary

Most accidents happen in the home, with children and the elderly being more at risk.

Hopefully this handbook has provided you with some useful information on how to stay safe in your home. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) has more detailed information about home safety, which can be found at <http://www.rospace.com/home-safety/advice/general/>.

Building up a good relationship with your neighbour will further enhance your safety as this will enable you to look out for each other and, if one of your neighbours spots anything out of the ordinary, they could respond.

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“The Chief Executive acknowledges that their valued contribution to the handbook has been an important part of its development and contains useful advice on keeping safe in your home.

“I would also like to thank the Health and Safety team and the Branding, Design and Communications Group at Two Rivers Housing for all their hard work.” *Andy Tootell, Health, Safety and Environmental Manager.*

This guide is for information and advice on health and safety matters in the home. We urge our tenants to take all reasonable precautions to avoid and prevent incidents, wherever possible.