

## **TIPS FOR TENANTS: HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR RENTAL PROPERTY**

Being a great tenant is beneficial for both you and your landlord. Taking care of the property that you are renting can save you money and help the landlord keep their home in great condition, even when they are not the ones living there.

### **DON'T FLUSH BABY WIPES**

This is a very common mistake we see with tenants. Even wipes that say they can be flushed can do a lot of harm to the plumbing in the home. Baby wipes do not break down, so instead of dissolving like toilet paper, it will clog the drains. Even if it does make it all the way through the pipes.

## **KNOW WHAT YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR**

### **LOCKING YOURSELF OUT**

We have all made the mistake of accidentally locking ourselves out. As frustrating as this can be, the cost for the locksmith is usually paid for by the tenant. This is something you need to be prepared for if it happens to you.

### **INTERNET INSTALLATION**

Tenants often ask us for assistance with setting up their internet. However, landlords are not responsible for setting up your internet or helping with installation. This is something that will need to be handled directly with the provider.

### **SMOKE DETECTORS**

If your smoke detector starts to beep, it likely means the battery needs to be changed. This is also a tenant responsibility.

### **GARDENING**

You will be required to maintain the gardens whilst in occupation to include cutting the lawn, de weeding and trimming bushes.

### **CLEAN REGULARLY**

One of the best things you can do for yourself and your rental property is to clean regularly. This will help with the longevity of the home and its appliances. Cleaning the oven, and refrigerator (If supplied) are often overlooked but are common sources of a high cleaning bill after you move out.

Make sure you are properly ventilating your bathroom. Mould and mildew can grow easily in a humid room and cause damage to the decor. It is also important to know the difference between mould (Damp) and mildew (Condensation) to properly address the situation. If you think you have a mould issue, contact Lane & Browns asap.

### **FROST DAMAGE**

Frost damage is a risk to all houses left empty during the winter period due to possible pipe bursts and flooding. You are required to take reasonable precautions to prevent frost damage if you are away from the property for anything other than a very short period. Such precautions might include leaving the heating on (and turned down to a low setting) and opening the loft access hatch to allow warm air to

circulate into the attic space. If you are away for a more extended period, then you should contact Lane & Browns or the landlord regarding more permanent arrangements such as turning off the mains water supply or draining down the heating system. Failure to carry out these precautions could make you liable for any damage caused as you will be in breach of your obligation as a tenant to take good care of the property.

## **MAINTENANCE OF APPLIANCES**

Any damage, breakdowns or other maintenance problems should be reported as soon as possible to Lane & Browns. As tenant you are responsible for all appliances left in the property and should take good care of them. This will involve using any appliance in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions or user manual and carrying out any minor maintenance that would be expected (e.g., cleaning or changing filters etc.)

The landlord will undertake to cover genuine breakdowns (i.e., not caused by misuse) and pay the related repair costs on appliances supplied by the Landlord during the tenancy term.

## **LEGIONNAIRE'S DISEASE**

The potential risk of exposure to Legionella from most residential hot or cold-water systems in the UK is very low, but the law requires that we alert tenants to these risks in any case. For most healthy people, the risk of developing Legionnaire's disease in a typical well-maintained domestic setting is negligible. There is a higher risk of infection with older people and people with lowered immune systems, which can lead to severe pneumonia or other complications.

In the domestic environment, risks of Legionella may increase where the property is unoccupied for a short period, or where water is being stored between 20°C and 50°C.

In particular, tenants are advised to:

- inform the Landlord or Agent if they believe the hot water temperature is below 50°C or the hot water tank/boiler is defective in any way.
- advise the Landlord or Agent if they believe that the cold-water temperature is above 20°C.
- flush through little used outlets for 2 minutes once every week or two, or on return from a holiday.
- clean, disinfect and descale shower heads at least once every six months. You can do this by mixing white vinegar with water and letting it soak for 30 minutes.
- notify the Landlord or Agent if they notice any debris or discolouration in the hot or cold water.

## **PESTS**

Fortunately, with modern building and repair standards, we expect few tenants to be troubled by household pests during their tenancy. An infestation of any kind be it ants, fungal attack, bedbugs, fleas, or wasps makes a property unpleasant to live in and should be eradicated as soon as possible. Regular cleaning and vacuuming will help to prevent any such infestation taking hold, and you are expected to take care

of the property in this way and keep a watchful eye for unwelcome visitors as part of your tenancy obligations. During the tenancy, the tenant is responsible for keeping the property free of any pests, and also for any damage that might occur as a result. You should inform the agent if you discover any pest infestation at the property.