

SW | STANLEY WRIGHT

TENANT HANDBOOK

Helpful tips, advice for emergencies

www.stanleywright.co.uk

LOOKING AFTER YOUR HOME

You are responsible for keeping your home in good condition. To help you do this it is best to carry out small tasks and checks to prevent future problems:

- Wipe down on a regular basis all windows affected by condensation, and if any mould has formed, clean it off using a wash of diluted bleach, or an appropriate product from a supermarket or DIY shop. *See 'Condensation'.*
- Lime scale can be removed from baths, sinks, shower heads, and taps with a descaler available from all DIY shops and supermarkets.
- Blockages in kitchen sink waste pipes can be prevented by flushing through a drain clearing product (also available from supermarkets & DIY shops).
- Outside gullies should be kept clear of leaves and other debris so that water drains away easily. This is a tenant's responsibility and if blocked gullies cause leaks or damage to the property, you will be liable for costs.
- It is your responsibility to replace light bulbs during your tenancy.
- Make sure you know where the main water stopcock is, and how to turn it off. It is usually where the main water pipe enters the property or by the kitchen sink.
- Be sure you know how to turn off electricity and gas supply in an emergency. See 'turning of electricity' or ask a contractor when they next visit you.

CONDENSATION

Condensation occurs when there is an excessive build-up of moisture in the air. There is always moisture in the air, but people create additional moisture in their homes by:

- Cooking, or boiling water
- Taking baths or showers
- Drying clothes indoors

Warm air holds more moisture than cold air, so when warm air cools, it releases the moisture. This will happen when it touches a cool surface, such as outside walls, mirrors, windows, wall tiles or even clothes. This is why condensation is usually worse in cold weather.

If condensation cannot dry out, it will cause mould to form on walls, in cupboards and on window sills, and mildew to form on clothes and upholstery.

There are four things you can do to stop condensation forming:

- **Produce less moisture. Cover pans and turn down the heat when boiling; switch off boiling kettles; and dry clothes outside, or in a well-ventilated room**
- **Ventilate to let moisture out. Open a bathroom or kitchen window to let steam escape (or use an extractor fan), and open windows for a while each day to change the air in your property.**
- **Keep your home warm. Keep a low background heat: this need not result in significantly increased heating costs.**
- **Wipe down anywhere moisture settles.**

SEPTIC TANK

If your property is connected to a septic tank system there are guidelines which need to be followed both to allow the septic tank to function properly and to prevent blockages to the drains.

Unfortunately modern cleaning materials can adversely affect both the drains and tanks causing blockages and breakdowns which are very costly.

You should ensure, by arrangement with the Landlord, that the septic tank serving the property is cleaned and emptied as often as necessary. The Landlord reserves the right to arrange for the tank to be emptied and serviced on behalf of the Tenant, recharging them a full or fair and reasonable proportion according to use of the cost incurred.

To ensure the tank continues to function correctly and to minimise problems and expense it would be very helpful if you would comply with the following points. Please bear in mind that 99% of blocked drains are caused by the wrong things being discharged into the drains rather than anything wrong with the drains themselves.

- **Try to use only household products labelled “suitable for septic tanks”, “environmentally friendly” or “low phosphate”.**
- **Use household cleaning products in moderate amounts, minimise detergent use in washing machines and dishwashers.**
- **Try to use less water, space out laundry/dishwashing loads to prevent lots of waste water washing through the system at once.**
- **Use a sink strainer as food scraps cause sludge build ups.**
- **Never flush anything other than bodily waste and toilet paper down the toilet- put everything else in the rubbish bin.**
- **Never dispose of grease or cooking oil down any drain, pour into a container and dispose of in the rubbish bin.**
- **Never put paints solvents or any other chemicals down any drain, these must be disposed of at a civic amenity site.**

Septic Tank (cont.)

	KITCHEN TOWELS, SANITARY ITEMS, COTTON BUDS, CONDOMS, NAPPIES, MOIST TOILET TISSUE, WIPES These can block your drains. They are not broken down in the tank, and so cause the sludge to build up more quickly.
	OILS, GREASE, FAT These will solidify and block your drains. They are not broken down in the tank, and so cause the sludge to build up more quickly. Fats 'waterproof' the soakaway, stopping it from working.
	BLEACHES, PAINTS, DISINFECTANTS, PESTICIDES, MEDICINES, SOLVENTS, CAUSTIC SODA, DRAIN CLEANERS These kill the bacteria in your tank (stopping the system from digesting waste) and pollute the environment.
	HOUSEHOLD CLEANING PRODUCTS CONTAINING PHOSPHATES Phosphates are a major pollutant of watercourses. Septic tanks do not remove them so low phosphate products must be used.

PEST CONTROL

It is your responsibility to carry out pest control. Traps and bait can be bought from some supermarkets, or DIY stores. Alternatively, we can provide you with a name of a professional pest control company who you may wish to instruct.

If necessary, in some cases, the landlord will carry out “proofing” of the property, i. e. blocking as many obvious holes, which may be considered a point of entry for rodents, as possible.

Mice are one of the most common types of pest and it can be very difficult to exclude them from properties as there are so many points of entry. It is generally said that a mouse can enter through a hole about the diameter of a biro pen (about 6mm).

To lessen the likelihood of mice in your property you should ensure that:

- Food is stored in sealed containers and put away in cupboards/on shelves.
- Food crumbs are cleaned away immediately.
- Waste is kept in closed bins and removed from the property regularly for local authority waste collection services to remove.

HOME CONTENTS INSURANCE

We strongly recommend you insure your home for damage to furniture and fittings, personal possessions and redecoration. The Landlord does not insure your belongings, and has no responsibility to assist in drying out or replacing items damaged by burst pipes.

HEATING

During winter months it is advisable to keep the temperature controls at a constant setting – this will help keep costs down as the heating system will only require a small amount of energy to maintain the heat setting rather than heating a whole property from cold.

CHIMNEYS

Ensure your chimney is swept before having regular fires; this should be done at least once a year.

NOISE AND NUISANCE

Your Tenancy Agreement states quite clearly that tenants and their visitors must not cause nuisance to neighbours.

What to do

Talk to your neighbour.

Contact your council's Environmental Health if the problem is about severe or persistent noise or other environmental problems such as animals, rubbish, fumes and so on, your council can take action.

Talk to us. We can only get involved if one of our tenants has breached their tenancy agreement.

We will not respond to anonymous complaints, but we will treat all complaints seriously.

Being a good neighbour

Control the volume of sound from radios, music systems and televisions, making sure it does not get above a reasonable level.

Make sure that you mow lawns or cut logs etc at reasonable times of the day.

Be quiet when you return home late or set off early.

If you have a dog, do not leave it barking continually in the home or out in the garden.

Warn neighbours when you are going to do something particularly noisy such as drilling, hammering or having a party

REPORTING FAULTS & REPAIR REQUESTS

Please report all faults to the Estate Office:

By telephone **01659 58697** or email **enquiries@stanleywright.co.uk**.

The Estate Office is not always manned, please leave a message or in an emergency call

07920 745 045

This enables us to log the fault, report it to the relevant contractor and monitor progress until it has been resolved.

If you report a fault to us, we will do our utmost to resolve it within a reasonable time of being notified.

EMERGENCIES

Most emergencies turn out not to be as urgent as initially thought and in most cases, nothing can be done until the next working day anyway. However, if you have an extreme emergency that cannot wait until the next working day, you can contact one of our emergency contractors who will ask you as much information about the situation as possible and attempt to assist you over the telephone. It is therefore important that you know where to find the stopcock and fuse board so water or electricity can be turned off if necessary. If the contractor believes that the problem cannot wait until the next working day, a call out will be arranged to deal with the fault as soon as possible.

Emergency contact details are issued on entry to the property and can also be obtained by contacting the Stanley Wright office.

FIRE

In case of fire, dial 999.

Get everyone out and do not go back for any reason

Close all doors and windows

Warn your neighbours if any of them might be in danger

BURST OR LEAKING PIPE

Turn the water off at the mains.

If electrics are affected, turn off the electricity at the consumer unit.

Call The Estate Office. If our office is closed, use the emergency number.