



States of Guernsey  
Housing

# Tenant Property Guide

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# Introduction

This guide will help you answer some of the questions you might have about how to maintain your home and carry out minor repairs.

All the adults in your household should be familiar with the advice in this booklet, so that any one of you can deal with issues that might arise.

There's also a binder in the electric meter cupboard that has instructions and user information for the items we've supplied in your home.

This booklet and other useful information is available on our website:

<https://www.gov.gg/article/151875/Information-for-social-rented-housing-tenants>

If you have questions, or you want anything to be explained to you in more detail, please contact us on **Tel: 01481 713465**.

As a tenant, you're responsible for cleaning, some maintenance of the property and for minor repairs. There's more information about your rights and responsibilities in your Tenancy Agreement and in the Tenant Handbook.

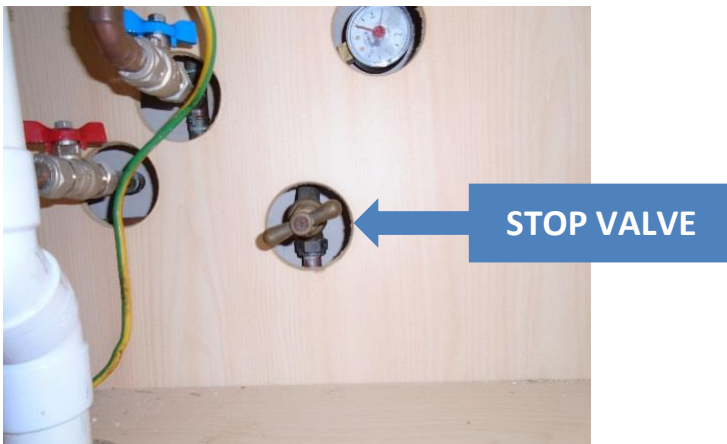
# Water

## Cold water

Water comes into your home through the water main under the road.

If you have a water leak, or if you need to shut off the water for any other reason, you need to isolate the water supply. You can do that by turning off the stop valve. That will cut off the supply of water through the water main into your home.

You may have more than one stop valve but the main one is located where the water main enters the property - typically this will be in the kitchen under the sink, in a downstairs toilet, bathroom or utility room. It usually looks like this:



To shut off the water turn the valve clockwise until it shuts the water off. There will still be water in the water pipes, so you will need to turn on your taps to drain all the water out of the pipes. This should stop the leak until it can be fixed.

If you have a cold water storage tank in the attic, some taps (usually the cold water taps in the bathroom basin) will have a water supply until the tank in the attic has been emptied.

A water leak is an emergency repair. We are responsible for fixing the problem, so you have to phone us as soon as you shut off the water. If it's outside office hours you can **call the emergency line on Tel: 01481 724215**.

When the problem has been fixed, you can turn the stop valve anticlockwise to turn the water back on.

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*Find the stop valve and test it every twelve months*

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### **Hot water**

Hot water comes from either a gas boiler, electric water heater or oil boiler. If your hot water isn't working, how you fix it depends on what kind of heating system you have.

## ***Electric water heater***

If you have an electric water heater it's likely to be fitted in a cupboard and is usually cylinder shaped. Electric water heaters will have an on/off switch nearby – usually on the wall. Make sure that the water heater is switched on. The temperature is set annually between 60°C and 65°C by our engineer. The hot water should never be set below 60°C. The outlet temperature of the hot water should be between 50°C and 55°C.

If your water heater has a timer function you can set it so that it's only turned on at certain times of the day.



## ***Gas water heater***

If you have a gas water heater it's likely to be fitted on the wall in your kitchen. These often have a dial to switch on the hot water and a separate dial for the temperature of the water (the higher setting is hotter).



If your gas boiler also operates your central heating, there will be separate dials for controlling the heating. Please see the heating section below.

## Toilets

### ***Blockages***

If you get a blocked toilet, there are a number of things you can do to clear it. Keep a plunger and a toilet brush available for this. You should only flush human waste and toilet paper. Don't flush tampons or sanitary pads, nappies, condoms, dental floss, wipes – or anything else! They can cause blockages that will be difficult and expensive to clear, which you'll have to pay for.

Initially remove any obstructions from the toilet bowl.

You can normally clear a blockage by putting a plunger over the opening at the bottom of the toilet bowl and moving it up and down quickly. Whatever was causing the blockage will come back into the bowl, which you can remove or break up and then flush.

You can also flush a toilet by pouring a bucket of water into the bowl.

If you can't clear the blockage you can call us, but if it's caused by flushing anything other than human waste and toilet paper, you will be charged for the call out.

### ***Broken toilets***

If the water in your toilet is running all the time, it might be a problem with the float arm. Open the lid and check the cistern. The water in the cistern is clean tap water. You can check and remove any blockages. If you lift the arm and ball it should fix the problem temporarily.

If that hasn't worked, please call us.

### **Sinks and basins**

Never pour oil or grease down the plughole. It will clog your sink/ basin. Once it's cooled, pour oil into a disposable container like a screw top jar or bottle and put it in the bin instead.

You should regularly clear shower/ bath plug holes of hair or the water will not drain properly.



# Heating

## Gas boilers

Gas boilers control both the radiators and the hot water in your home. Most gas boilers have switches which let you decide if you want to heat both the radiators and the water, or just one or the other.

Each radiator in your home will have a thermostat. These let you control the temperature of each room.



## Electric heating

If your home is heated by electric, you will have a combination of storage heaters and electric panel heaters. Never put anything on top of your heaters. Don't put furniture too close to them. They get very hot and can cause fires.

Electric panel heaters are usually fitted in bedrooms. They work immediately and don't store heat. The panel heater has an on/off switch on the wall adjacent to it.

There are also controls on the heater itself including a switch between on – off –timer. If your electricity has off peak and on peak times (Economy 12), it will be more expensive to use these heaters during on-peak periods.

Electric storage heaters work differently. In the meter cupboard, there is a storage heating switch. This should be turned on, so that power is supplied to each separate storage heater in the house. Beside each storage heater there's an on/off switch on the wall.

Storage heaters work by storing heat through the night, when the electricity is cheapest. The input dial tells the storage heater how much heat to store, and the output dial tells it how much heat to release into the room.



The input dial is usually on the right, and the output dial is usually on the left.

### **The input dial**

You should use this to tell the heater how much heat you want it to store during the night. As a general guide, Dimplex recommends that you set your input dial at:

- 2 - 4 in mild weather
- 5 - 7 in cold weather

- 8 and above in very cold weather

### **The output dial**

Use this to choose how warm to make the room. At night and when there is nobody in the property it should be set lower to help keep the heat in the heater until you want it.

When you want to heat up your home, turn up the output dial to release the heat. The higher the number, the more heat is released. You might want to turn it up high for a quick temperature boost, and then turn it down to maintain a comfortable temperature.

## **Alarms**

### **Smoke alarm**

You'll have at least one smoke alarm fitted. It's probably in your hall, and if there are stairs in your house you might have another one on your landing. The alarm sounds when the sensor detects smoke – the best response for slow smouldering fires.



### **Heat alarm**

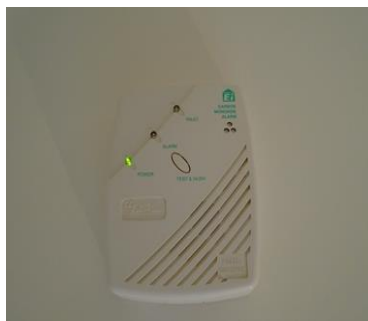
The heat alarms are usually fitted in your kitchen. Like the smoke alarm, it's wired into the mains electricity.



The alarm sounds when the sensor temperature reaches 58°C.

### **Carbon monoxide alarm**

If we've supplied a gas appliance, gas boiler, or a coal fire, you will have a carbon monoxide alarm. These will be fitted in rooms which have gas appliances or coal fire.



### **Alarm switches**

Because the alarms are connected to the mains electricity, they have individual switches. These are usually found near the fuse box in the meter cupboard.

The types of alarms fitted in your home have been selected as the most appropriate for their location. You can provide your own additional battery operated alarms in additional locations if you wish. Never turn the alarms off. They are there to keep you and your family safe. If there is a problem with your alarm, call us. These alarms are some of the most important items in your home.

You should carefully vacuum around your alarms and test them every month to make sure they're working properly.

Your alarms are wired to the mains electricity, and have a battery backup. That means that even if there's a power cut, it will still work for weeks after the loss of power. The alarm will beep every 40 seconds when it's running out of power in the battery backup.



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*Never remove any alarm. If it's broken **call us on Tel: 713465***

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### **Communal fire alarms**

If you have a communal fire alarm, it should only be tested by the alarm engineer.

Communal fire alarms are linked to your neighbours', so testing one will activate all the others on the system. If you have a communal alarm we'll test it regularly. Your alarm will sound briefly during testing.

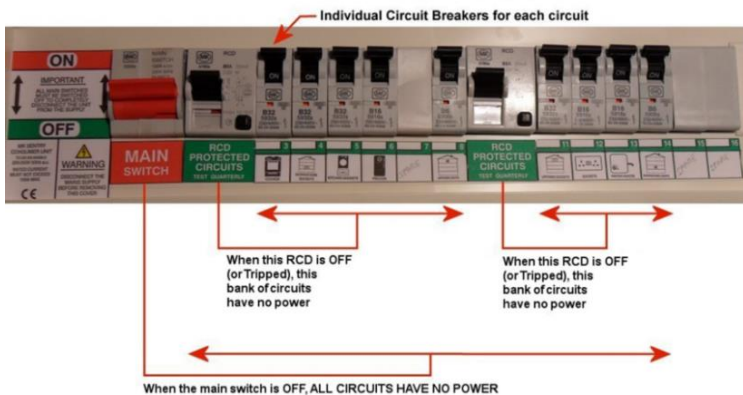
# Electricity

## Electric appliances

If one of your appliances isn't working, check first to make sure it's properly plugged in and switched on at the wall. If it is, but it's still not working try plugging another electric appliance into the socket e.g. a lamp or mobile charger.

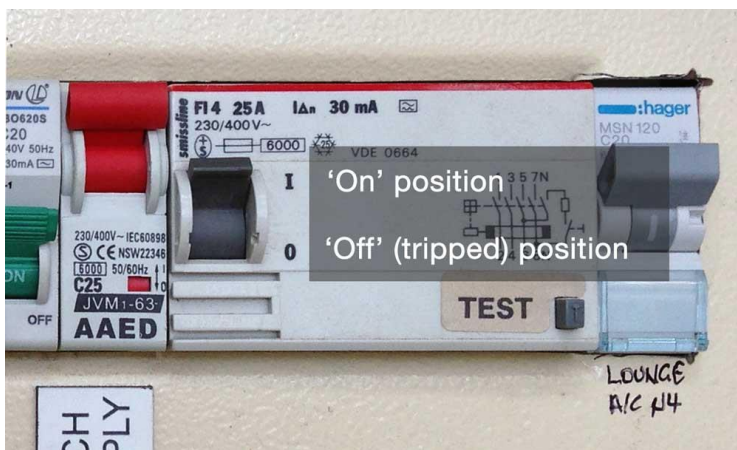
If the second appliance works in that socket, then your problem is with the original appliance itself. If it belongs to you, it's up to you to get it repaired. If it's something that belongs to us, call us on **Tel: 713465**.

If the second appliance *doesn't* work, it might be an issue with your electrics. Check the circuit breaker and fuses to make sure nothing's tripped or blown. That's easy to do:



You have a fuse box like the one above in your house.

If your power goes off suddenly, or if your sockets aren't working, look for a tripped switch on your fuse box. Sometimes certain appliances can trip the switch, so unplug everything, especially anything you were using just before the power went out. If there's a tripped switch, the RCD switch will be halfway down. You can fix it by pushing it all the way DOWN to the 'OFF' position, and then pushing it all the way back UP to the 'ON' position.



If that doesn't work, it could be a few different things.

You might have blown a fuse. When that happens you have to replace it – not repair it. You should check the size of any fuses needed in your home, and keep some spare. You can buy them in any hardware shop, and you can also get them at most supermarkets.

Never replace a fuse with a more powerful one – the replacement fuse has to be identical.

If all your power is off but your fuse box looks normal, there could be a power cut in your area. Keep a store of torches and candles somewhere in case this happens. Usually, power will be restored quickly, but you can always call Guernsey Electricity on Tel: 01481 200700.

Your power might go off if you need to add credit to your electric account.

### **Electric key / card systems**

If you use a key or card credit meter, it has to be kept topped up or the power will go out. If the credit drops below £1.00, an orange light should flash. This means that you can access 'Emergency Credit' of £2.00. If you need to do that, press the button '6' on the bottom of the meter. That will temporarily reconnect you until you can top up. The "Emergency Credit" reserves will be topped up when adding your credit e.g. a £20 top-up will result in a visible £18 credit because the "Emergency Credit" has been replaced in the first instance.

### **Lighting**

You're responsible for changing the bulbs in your home. That includes bulbs in a focal fire.

Make sure the light switch is turned off or the lamps or focal fire is unplugged before you change any bulb.



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# Contacts

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## Housing

Edward T Wheadon House  
Le Truchot  
St Peter Port  
GY1 3WH

[housing@gov.gg](mailto:housing@gov.gg)

## Tenancy Management

[tenancymanagement@gov.gg](mailto:tenancymanagement@gov.gg)

**Tel: 01481 756550**

## Property Management

[housing.maintenance@gov.gg](mailto:housing.maintenance@gov.gg)

**Tel: 01481 713465**

**Emergency out of hours Tel: 01481 724215**



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Notes

