



## Nether Edge Management Company Limited

### Technical Note – Health and Safety and Maintenance of your apartment

#### Electric:

**What is needed?** - fixed wire electrical testing

**How often?** – Every 10 years, or if you are a landlord every time there is a change of tenancy as well as PAT testing if you supply any items.

**What is the cost?** – £150-£250 depending on the amount of circuits/boards in the property

**Can we recommend a contractor?** Yes, refer to the emergency contacts list or recommended trade contact list.

**What are the implications?** – Electrocutation, electrical fire, invalidation of the any insurance policies

“30 deaths and nearly 4000 injuries from electrical accidents and the 8000 fires that occur in the home each year”

“In December 2007, Emma Shaw, a 22-year old mother, was electrocuted in the airing cupboard of her flat in the West Midlands. At an inquest into Miss Shaw's death, the jury heard how the tragedy resulted from a plasterboard fixing screw being driven into a concealed cable when the flat was being built the previous year”

**Further recommendations?** – a general electricity check every 1-2 years

#### Smoke Alarms

**What is needed?** – The apartments all have smoke alarms. The batteries on these alarms should last for 10 years therefore if you haven't replaced the alarms already; we highly recommend you take action this for the safety of yourself and the rest of the communal block.

**How often?** – Replace every 10 years.

**What is the cost?** – £50 per alarm including fitting and commissioning

**Can we recommend a contractor?** Yes, refer to the emergency contacts list or recommended trade contact list.

**What are the implications?**

“Working alarms save lives – in the event of a fire in your home you are at least 4 times more likely to die if there is no working smoke alarm”

**Further recommendations?** – Test the operation of your smoke alarms bi-annually

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### Gas:

#### **What is needed? –**

**Annual Gas Checks:** HSE strongly advises that all gas appliances, flues and pipework should be installed, regularly maintained and serviced at least annually by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

**Carbon Monoxide Alarms:** HSE strongly recommends the use of CO alarms as one useful precaution to give advance warning of CO in a property.

**Ceiling Hatches:** As of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013, Gas boilers which have flues running through ceiling spaces will need to be fitted with an inspection hatch. The Gas Flue takes fumes away from your boiler; any faults with this flue could lead to a risk of Carbon Monoxide poisoning. We recommend you organise for your Gas Boilers to be inspected to assess whether any works are required. Please note, any works needed which will directly affect the communal area or external building will need to be authorised by the Facilities Management Team/NEMC. [http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/advice/flues\\_in\\_ceiling\\_spaces.aspx](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/advice/flues_in_ceiling_spaces.aspx)

**Ventilation and flues:** To help operate safely, all gas appliances need the following: An adequate supply of air to help the complete combustion of gas; efficient operation of their flue to remove any combustion products, including carbon monoxide (CO), that are produced. Never block ventilation and ensure that flues are kept clear at all times.

**Gas shut off valve:** Each apartment has a gas shut off valve located at the external gas box. The gas boxes are labelled with the plot number of your apartment. Please make yourself aware of the location of your gas box in the event of an emergency. We have a list of plot numbers if you don't know what yours is.

We recommend the installation of a gas shut off valve inside your apartment to ensure the supply can be turned off immediately without the delay of running around the building, in the dark, in the bushes, looking for one valve.

**What is the cost? –** £80-£120 annual gas safety inspection, £20 carbon monoxide alarm, the cost of ceiling hatches will vary but most apartments have had to pay £100-£300.

**Can we recommend a contractor?** Yes, refer to the emergency contacts list or recommended trade contact list.

**What are the implications? –** Gas leak/carbon monoxide poisoning/explosion  
“Every year around 7 people die from gas-related carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning”

**What should I do in an emergency?** It is illegal for anyone to use a gas appliance if they suspect it is unsafe. Turn the appliance off and do not touch it until it has been checked by a Gas Safe registered engineer

Call National Grid's Gas Emergency Freephone number: 0800 111 999

Open all the doors and windows

Shut off the gas supply

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### **Water:**

**What is needed?** – be aware of the location of your water shut off valve in the event of a water leak.

Sheaf 1 – stop cock located in the leisure suite riser cupboard

Sheaf 3 – stop cock located in the communal area riser cupboard

Sheaf 2, Peveril, Edward, Victoria, Kingswood, Muxlow, Cliffe – shut off valve located under your sink.

We highly recommend Sheaf 1 and Sheaf 3 residents to install their own water shut off valve internal to the apartment.

**Prevention is better than the cure:** In a block of flats a water leak or burst pipe can cause devastating damage to the structure of the building, electrical wiring, fixtures and fittings as well as damage to contents.

“Water damage accounts for around 75% of insurance claims in flats and apartments. It generally occurs following inadequate maintenance leading to corrosion of internal and external pipework, leakage of copper pipe or failure of plastic pipe joints, poor maintenance of seals around bath and shower areas, and accidental damage to hidden pipes”

Ensure all pipes and tanks exposed to winter temperatures are well lagged. Be aware of the equipment and installations in your block that are capable of causing a problem for example, boilers, showers & washing machines and carry out planned preventative maintenance.

### **In your kitchen and bathroom:**

- Check appliance inlet and outlet fittings annually.
- Clean door collar seals on washing machines and dishwashers, replacing any that are damaged or worn.
- Annually check that the seal around your bath and/or shower is watertight.
- Don't allow your bath to overflow.
- Ensure plugs are not in the drain holes when not in use.
- Replace washers in leaking taps and overflowing cisterns as soon as possible.
- Ensure overflow pipes can release water effectively.

### **With your Central Heating:**

- Carry out an annual check on central heating tanks and systems.
- Ensure “shut off” valves are located in easily accessible places and that you know how to use them.
- Check radiator valves regularly for leaks.
- Prior to un-occupancy for more than a few days during the winter period leave central heating ON and at a low setting to prevent the pipes from freezing.

### **Externally:**

- Look out for dripping pipe outlets, as it may be due to an overflowing cistern.

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### Water continued...

**Actions to take on discovery of a leak:** Unfortunately, most water leaks do not inconvenience the leaseholder with the leak, but usually the blameless occupier below. Water management devices such as Sure Stop [www.surestop.co.uk](http://www.surestop.co.uk) and Leaksafe [www.leaksafewater.com](http://www.leaksafewater.com) have become popular with flat and apartment owners - with the mere flick of a switch, water flow is restricted whilst you are out or away.

- Turn off the water supply stop cock.
- If there is no shut off stop cock located inside the flat then it may have a shared water supply, so make sure you can get to the stop valve - this is normally located where the water enters the building, then tell your neighbours, as their water supply may be affected.
- If appropriate, turn off central heating and any other water heating systems.
- Drain water pipes and tanks. Once the water heating systems have been shut down, turn on the taps to help drain the system fully of the remaining water to minimise damage.
- Turn off the electrics if the escape of water is near your electrical wiring or appliances. If any live electrical equipment is wet, do not touch it – send for a qualified electrician.
- Warn the occupiers of the flats directly below so that steps may be taken to reduce the likelihood of any damage to their properties.
- If water starts to seep through the ceiling in the flat below try and collect it in a suitable container. Should the ceiling begin to bulge consider piercing the plaster with a wooden broom handle or similar implement to release the water and prevent the ceiling from collapsing.
- Notify the estates office as soon as possible find a reputable plumber to effect repairs. If you wish to submit an insurance claim please refer to the flow chart located on the website.

Afterwards, always remember to make sure that your hot water system is completely refilled again without airlocks before switching on boilers, or switching on immersion heaters in tanks etc. Water damage can cost tens of thousands of pounds. Suitable measures such as outlined above will help control your insurance costs.

### Unvented Water Cylinders/Problem Boilers

The purpose of this is to draw your attention to serious issues with a particular system with a boiler, usually, but not exclusively, a Chaffoteaux, linked to a separate mains pressure hot water tank with a capacity of around 250 litres.

In the original installations, the mains pressure hot water tank is a Telford Tornado in copper. Later installations have the same tank in stainless steel. Whilst the duration of the guarantee differed, in both cases the guarantee is invalidated unless the tank is serviced annually.

You should be aware that the Building Regulations Approved Document G (section G3) requires that a hot water storage vessel with a capacity of more than 15 litres, which does not incorporate a vent pipe to atmosphere, should be installed, commissioned, inspected and serviced by a competent person. You should ensure that the service person you employ holds a valid unvented qualification: an unvented hot water identity card will be evidence of this.

We have now learned of historic and ongoing problems related to the Telford Tornado hot water tanks which are prone to split and in some cases burst, causing leakage of a very substantial volume of water. If your tank does leak please take steps to minimise the risk of major damage to your property:

- Turn the water off at the mains.
- Turn on every hot water tap in the property to empty the tank.



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### **The lease states:**

Maintain uphold and keep the premises and all the landlord fixtures and fittings in the premises in good and substantial repair order and condition at all times to maintain shelter and protect all other parts of the building.

Don't do anything which may render void any insurance policy or which may cause increased premiums.

Don't thrown rubbish/bags/any other refuse into sinks, baths, toilets or cause any obstruction to these services (this includes non-flushable baby wipes/cleaning wipes/nappies).

### **Insurance:**

Buildings insurance is provided for leaseholders through the service charge as per the requirements of the lease. The amount payable is based on the square footage of individual properties to ensure adequate levels of cover for each property.

If you wish to submit an insurance claim, please refer to the flow chart document on the website.

In addition to providing buildings insurance cover for individual properties, the policy covers all communal areas of the development and public liability. Cover for terrorism, leisure suite contents, employers' liability, directors' and officers' liabilities for those leaseholders serving as directors of NEMC, is also provided through the service charge.

As leaseholders, we are all responsible for ensuring our properties are maintained in accordance with the terms of the leases. If, for example, house leaseholders fail to arrange for gutters, hoppers and downpipes to be regularly checked and kept clear, then an insurance claim in respect of consequent damage may be rejected. The same applies in respect of loose slates and broken/damaged mortar or pointing which have not been re-fixed or repaired, or windows/roof-lights which leak and are not repaired promptly.

Apartment-owners need to be aware of potential damage to adjacent properties or communal areas in the case of, for example, a water leak. Those with terraces should ensure that the drainage channels are well-maintained and kept free of obstructions to avoid the risk of water damage to other properties. If these have not been maintained, then again, an insurance claim may be rejected. Any signs of loose pointing or other damage noticed on external communal stonework should be reported to the Estates Office.

Under the terms of the leases, as well as for our own protection, all leaseholders are required to have

\*Landlords: Please note separate legislation applies to you in relation to electrical and gas servicing, please be aware of your legal responsibilities\*