

Preventative Maintenance

Keeping Your Home Safe

How to check your Home

Inspecting your home regularly could help you spot a problem before it causes serious damage. Many problems can often be put right cheaply, but if left may end up costing you much more. The exterior of your house is exposed to the elements and any damage could be caught early through simple home maintenance and repair. The interior of a house also needs to be maintained and this includes appliances run by gas or electricity.

Electrics

Are any sockets, switches or light fittings loose, broken or cracked? Are there burn marks on sockets? Are all cables and plugs wired securely without cracks, splits, or coloured wires visible? Do fuses blow or light bulbs only last a very short time?

If yes, speak to the agency for advice.

Gas Appliances and Central Heating

It is advisable to have all gas appliances serviced once a year by a GAS SAFE (formerly CORGI) registered gas fitter to make sure they are safe. Burn marks on heating elements, or on walls behind or to the sides of the gas fire, and flames that are more yellow or orange than the normal blue with yellow tip may indicate a problem. This should be checked and put right immediately by an approved GAS SAFE registered gas fitter.



Plumbing

Are taps dripping or supply or waste pipes leaking? Repairs at an early stage could be quite cheap, but if left could develop into expensive works. What appears to be a leaking cold water pipe may be no more than condensation. Dry out and warm the wet area of the pipe. If there is a leak, water should appear immediately.

Externally

Make sure your gutters and down pipes are free from leaves and debris.

Replace loose or missing roof slates and tiles and make sure all of your roof flashings are in good condition.

Make sure air bricks and floor ventilation is clear, it is important to ventilate your home.



Can I Do The Work Myself?

The following is general advice and whether to do a job yourself or call in someone else will depend on your physical ability, technical know how, time available, personal finance, availability of tools and, in many cases, how comfortable you feel at the top of a ladder!



Any work required to Gas or Electric appliances including fires, heaters and gas central heating must be carried out by a qualified person.

In An Emergency

If you smell gas – open windows, do not switch lights or sockets on or off, don't light a match or lighter, put out cigarettes, check that all gas appliances are off.

Turn the gas off at the meter and call Free 0800 111999.

Leaking/burst pipes - turn off the water at the mains stop tap and turn all taps on to drain the system, then call a reliable plumber. If for any reason you are having difficulty and need advice call the Staying Put Agency.

Security And Safety

Doors – When replacing locks it is recommended that you fit 5-lever deadlocks and security bolts as you may find that this is the minimum requirement of insurance companies.

For external doors you should also consider security bolts, a security chain and a spy-hole.

Windows – It is advisable to fit window locks to your windows. These are available in a variety of types. The best ones are those that require a key to open them. Make sure you know where to find the keys so you can escape in an emergency.

Access – You are less likely to be burgled if access to the rear of your house is restricted by a gate that can be locked.

Smoke Alarms - Fit smoke alarms upstairs and downstairs on your route out of the house. These will give you enough warning to escape before a fire really takes hold. Don't forget to test them regularly to make sure they are working properly. If you require fire safety advice speak to the Staying Put Agency.



Know your escape plan – Think through how everyone in the house will escape if there was a fire. Wherever the fire is make sure everyone, even children, know what to do when the alarm goes off, especially at night. Consider purchasing a fire blanket and fire extinguisher.

Don't let burglars know you are out - Leave a light on if you go out and are leaving the house empty at night. When you go away on holiday cancel the milk and papers and have a neighbour move the post to where it is out of site.

Insurance – Check that your home is adequately insured against all perils. Check that the contents of your house is insured against loss, damage and theft.

If you have any questions or would like more information on maintaining your home please contact:

Middlesbrough Staying Put Agency

PO Box 504

Civic Centre

Middlesbrough

TS1 9FY

Tel: 0800 5875184

Email: stayingputagency@middlesbrough.gov.uk

Opening Times

Monday – Thursday: 8:30pm – 5:00pm

Friday: 8:30pm – 4:30pm

Essential Information

It's important to make a note of where the following items are so that if you have an emergency you can locate them quickly and easily. Fill in this table and keep this booklet in a handy place for emergencies.

Fuse Box location: **Can you turn off?**

Water Stopcock location: **Can you turn off?**

Gas Valve location: **Can you turn off?**

Emergency numbers - 24 hr help lines

Electricity – 0800 668877

Gas - 0800 111999

Water – 0845 7171100

Your Home Insurance -

