



**HIGHSTONE**

HOUSING ASSOCIATION

# Repairs & Maintenance

## A Guide for Tenants

## Introduction

Highstone understand how important your home is to you. We are committed to making sure that your home is maintained to a good standard. This guide is designed to provide you with useful information about our repairs service.

### 1. Reporting a Repair

You should tell us as soon as possible when your home needs a repair.

The easiest way to report a repair is:

On our website [www.highstoneha.co.uk/contact/report-a-repair](http://www.highstoneha.co.uk/contact/report-a-repair)

You can upload photos of your repair using the online form to help us to assess more effectively what and who is required for your repair.

You can also report a repair by:

Emailing [repairs@highstoneha.co.uk](mailto:repairs@highstoneha.co.uk)

Calling 01484 609189 during office hours

0330 058 4090 out of hours emergency repairs only

When you report a repair please tell us:

- Your name, full address and telephone number
- As much as you can about what is wrong, and where the problem is

### 2. Emergency Repairs – Out of Hours

Please only call the out of hours telephone number for genuine emergencies as we are not able to deal with other repairs out of hours. Our out of hours emergency service may attend and make safe only and follow up will be made in office hours if further works are needed.

### 3. How quickly will repairs be completed?

We aim to carry out repairs as quickly as possible.

Repairs are prioritised by our repairs service dependent upon:

- The seriousness of the defect
- The impact it will have on the safety of the household

- The potential damage to the property

Repairs are categorised into emergency, urgent or general

Emergency Repairs	Attention within 24 hours	These repairs relate to damage which could affect the health, safety or security of the tenants or the building if the repair is not attended to immediately
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major water leak that cannot be stopped with a stop cock</li> <li>• Major electrical failure, no lighting or power within a property</li> <li>• Risk to security of property such as a broken window or lost key</li> <li>• Tenant unable to gain access to property due to loss of key or door entry system failure</li> <li>• Fire alarm sounding and will not re-set / silence</li> <li>• Blocked drainage that is coming up within a property</li> <li>• Toilets where the tenant only has access to one toilet</li> <li>• Significant roof leak that compromises health and safety</li> <li>• No heating or hot water (winter months only)</li> <li>• No cold water to the property</li> <li>• Gas leak</li> </ul>		
Urgent Repairs	Attention within 48 hours	These are repairs that are not an emergency, but cannot wait to be dealt with as routine repairs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water leak that can be managed by turning stop cock off</li> <li>• No hot heating or hot water (summer months)</li> <li>• Partial electrical failure, such as sockets in one room have fused / not working</li> <li>• Fire alarm sounding due to a fault but can be silenced and there is no evidence of fire</li> <li>• Faulty appliance, where the appliance is maintained by Highstone.</li> <li>• Lift Failure</li> </ul>		
General Repairs	Attention within 28 days	All other routine repairs come into this category.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Putting in new taps or resealing baths and sinks</li> <li>• TV aerials not working</li> <li>• Re – fixing slipped or missing roof slates</li> <li>• Changing lightbulbs that covered / sealed units.</li> <li>• Adjusting kitchen doors</li> </ul>		

#### 4. Access to your home

We will at various times require access to your home, for example to inspect a repair or service gas appliances. Under your Tenancy Agreement you must allow us reasonable access, provided we contact you more than 24 hours before we need to come into your home (unless it is an emergency where no notice is required)

If you try to prevent us from entering, we may take legal action to gain entry and charge you the cost of getting into your home.

## **5. Identity Cards**

All of our employees and contractors carry an official identify card. Before allowing anyone into your home claiming to represent Highstone please ask to see his or hers identity card. If you are in any doubt of their identity, do not let them into your home and call Highstone on 01484 609189 to confirm they are who they say they are.

## **6. What will we repair?**

As part of your tenancy agreement, we carry out certain repairs in your home. Other repairs are your responsibility. In general we are responsible for the maintenance and repair of the building structure, exterior, fixtures and fittings, heating, hot water, electrical, gas and kitchen and bathrooms suites.

## **7. What to expect when we carry out the repair**

We will:

- Be punctual and keep the appointment we made with you. We will not be late without telling you first
- Be polite and courteous at all times
- Ask permission before we enter your home. We will explain who we are, why we are visiting your home and what we will be doing
- Not smoke inside your home
- Not use your electricity, water, toilet or appliances without asking you first
- Ask you to remove any personal belongings away from the work area to avoid any damage being caused to them
- Treat your home with respect, clean all rubbish and leave the area where we have been working clean and tidy.
- Make sure that all work is carried out safely and will not leave materials or tools lying around.
- Try to complete your repair on first visit.

## **8. Paying for repairs**

The rent we collect pays for the repairs and maintenance service so most tenants never get charged for repairs. We do not charge for fair wear and tear.

You will be charged if we need to repair or replace anything due to neglect, misuse, theft or deliberate damage by you, or anyone you as a tenant are responsible for.

You will also be charged if we need to remove or reinstate something you have changed or installed without permission.

Examples of the type of repair work that you would be charged for are:

- You lose your keys or fob and ask us to get you back in or to replace the lock or keys/fob
- You break a window and it needs boarding up and then re-glazing
- You drop something into the wash basin and it cracks
- You block your toilet by putting baby wipes (or similar) down the toilet.

This is a list of examples but they are not the only things you can be charged for.

## **9. Home Insurance**

We strongly advise you to take out home contents insurance as we do not insure your personal contents, fixtures, fittings, and decorations against theft, fire vandalism or leaks.

## **10. Home Improvements & Planned Improvements**

We want you to feel at home in your property and have the freedom to make some additions and changes.

Depending on the terms of your tenancy agreement you may be able to make improvements or alterations to your home, but there will be times when you will need to get written permission from us before you start any work.

Highstone carry out a programme of planned works to maintain and improve your home.

As your home gets older we may need to replace or improve things such as bathrooms, kitchens, heating installations and double glazing.

Each year we plan which homes will need items replaced due to their age and condition. To do this we plan improvements by looking at our properties and their condition every 3 years.

## **11. Aids & Adaptations**

We aim to allow you to live as independently as possible. One of the ways we can do this is by funding certain aids and adaptations to your home so you can live more comfortably and maintain your independence longer.

There are a range of services and simple adaptations such as grab rails and ramps that we can offer and we will work closely with you to find the options that best suit you.

## **12. Your Safety**

We take your safety very seriously and believe it's important for you, your family and those that live around you to be safe.

## **Gas servicing**

We have a legal duty to carry out a safety check each year to our properties that have gas supplies to make sure that the gas supply and appliances in your home are in a safe condition. We comply with our responsibilities by undertaking an annual service and safety inspection that includes gas pipework, gas cookers, gas boilers, gas fires and gas water heaters. Our contractor will contact you to arrange a convenient appointment. If you cannot keep this, please contact the gas contractor straight away to arrange another appointment. If you do not allow us access we may have to cap the gas supply for safety reasons and to remove any risks to you or your family. It could also result in us taking legal action against you. Any costs we incur in taking this action will be passed on to you. If you smell gas call National Grid on 0800 111 999 immediately (minicom 0800 587 5055) and:

DO turn off the meter at the control valve

DO put out any naked flames

DO open doors and windows

DO keep people away from the affected area

DON'T smoke or strike any matches

DON'T turn electrical switches on or off. For further information on gas safety visit our website.

## **Fire**

We will fit a smoke alarm in your home and carry out fire risk assessments for all communal areas. It is your responsibility to make sure that you test the smoke alarm in your home regularly and keep exits clear. We will also come to your property with a specialist fire engineer every 6 months to test the smoke alarms. **Electrical** We will test your electricity supply and wiring before you move into your home to make sure it is safe. We also test the electrics every 5 years, so will need access to your property for this. You should make sure that your own electrical equipment is safe and in good working order. Highstone will perform PAT testing every 2 years on any portable electric appliances that we are responsible for.

## **Water**

At times we may need you to turn off your water supply. You should make sure you know where your stopcock is. It is wise to test it twice a year to make sure it is working. You can do this by shutting it off to check it closes, then opening it fully. Then close it slightly by turning it a little towards off. Note – if you do have to turn off your water supply, you may also need to turn off your heating system.

## **Carbon Monoxide**

Carbon monoxide (CO) is known as the 'silent killer' as it is colourless and odourless. It can come from faulty appliances powered by any fuel that burns. These include gas, solid fuel and oil fuels. CO alarms detect the presence of this poisonous gas. We fit carbon monoxide detectors as standard to all our properties with gas supply, and we will service these annually.

NEVER use a gas appliance if you think it is not working correctly. Look out for signs that include yellow or orange flames, soot or staining around the appliance and pilot lights that frequently blow out

NEVER cover up a gas appliance

NEVER block or obstruct any internal or externally fixed ventilation grille or airbrick

NEVER block or cover any internal or externally fitted flue from a gas appliance

NEVER allow an unqualified gas fitter or person to install or carry out works on your gas appliances, or attempt the work yourself. (All qualified gas fitters are registered with Gas Safe and must present an up to date Gas Safe identification card).

**IF YOU SMELL GAS PLEASE CALL NATIONAL GAS EMERGENCY SERVICE ON**

**0800111999**

## **13. Protecting your home**

### **Frost damage prevention**

In cold weather, water pipes, cisterns and basins can freeze and expand, causing serious damage. At the start of a cold spell, take these precautions to avoid freezing:

- make sure that all taps are turned off at night
- report any running overflows
- keep your home as warm as you can
- find out where the main stopcock is and how to turn it off
- if you are leaving your home empty for more than a few days, and there is a danger of a hard frost draw off any water from the domestic system after turning off the stopcock, or if you have a central heating system, leave it running at a low temperature to provide background warmth.

### **Burst pipes**

If you have a burst pipe, you should:

- switch off your central heating system or immersion heater if you have one

- turn off the main stopcock
- put something under the leak to catch the water
- turn on all taps to drain the system as soon as possible
- call the repairs number.

## **Condensation**

Dampness in buildings can be caused in many ways. The most frequent cause of reported damp is condensation. Condensation occurs when moist air reaches a cold surface and deposits water on or in that surface. Air can become heavy with water vapour from cooking, washing, hot baths and drying clothes. Dampness shows up as black mould growth, particularly near windows or in areas where air cannot circulate. To limit condensation:

- reduce the amount of water vapour in the air by drying clothes outside. If you have to air them indoors, keep a window open
- after a bath or shower keep the bathroom door closed and the window open so that steam can escape without getting into other rooms
- try to ensure that there is enough heat and ventilation in each room. If you have an airbrick or vent in the wall or window do not block it up or you will stop moisture getting out and prevent essential ventilation.

For more information on how to protect your home visit our website.

## **14. Moving Out**

When you move out of your home you need to make sure that it is clean and empty. It should be in a good decorative order and in a good state of repair. You must ensure that all keys including communal entrance keys and fobs are returned to us. There may be some wear and tear but there should be no sign of damage or neglect. If a property is left in disrepair, or if we have to clear it of goods or clean it, we will charge you for the cost of doing this work.

## **15. Complaints**

If you are unhappy about any aspect of our repairs service, you can make a complaint via the following channels:

- Speaking to a staff member of Highstone, such as a Housing Officer



- By Phone 01484 609189
- Paper Complaints Form
- Website Form <https://www.highstoneha.co.uk/tenant-info/how-to-make-a-complaint/>
- By email [complaints@highstoneha.co.uk](mailto:complaints@highstoneha.co.uk)