

## Repairs and Your Home

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### How to report a repair

You should report any repair that you think is our responsibility as soon as possible. You can report a repair by phoning us on 020 7485 8889, by sending an email to [info@sih.org](mailto:info@sih.org) or by visiting our head office at 1 Holmes Road, NW5 3AA.

We will usually need to gain access to your home to carry out the repair so you should tell us when you are available for a contractor to call. Once the date and time have been agreed please make sure that the contractor can get access. If you break the appointment, you may be charged for the repair.

Routine repairs will normally be carried out Monday to Friday between 8am and 5pm.

### How to report an emergency repair out of office hours

If you have an emergency repair outside of office hours or over the weekend (for example a total loss of power or a major burst pipe) you can contact the out of hours' service on:

**020 7372 6633**

- All emergency repairs will be completed within 24 hours **to make safe or remove danger** to the residents e.g. gas leaks, offensive graffiti or failure of electricity/water supply.
- All urgent repairs that could be a danger will be completed within 7 days e.g. heating/hot water faults or blocked sinks.
- Any routine repairs that do not pose a danger or inconvenience to residents will be carried out within 28 days e.g. dripping taps or general day-to-day repairs.

### Resident Feedback

We are always looking at ways of improving the repairs service and one way of doing this is to ask you to fill in a satisfaction survey. We issue these to you every time a repair is ordered in your home. Alternatively you can complete our online 'Repairs Feedback' form located in the residents' section at [www.sih.org](http://www.sih.org). You can also telephone us on 020 7485 889, email us at [info@sih.org](mailto:info@sih.org) or complete a hard copy of the feedback form in person by visiting our head office at 1 Holmes Road, NW5 3AA. Your comments help us to maintain an effective and responsive service.



## Your responsibilities

You are responsible for keeping your home in a good decorative condition. You are also responsible for minor repairs such as replacing tap washers, fuses and light bulbs. You must deal with

- lost keys and lock changes
- decoration inside your home
- replacing cupboard latches, handles and hinges
- unblocking sinks, hand basins and baths and replacing toilet seats
- cracked or broken glass in windows and doors caused by you, your family or visitors
- any damage caused to the property by you, your family or visitors including blocked drains due to misuse
- TV aerials (unless they are shared aerials)
- shed and garden fixtures, including clothes lines (unless communal)

**We may carry out the above repairs if you ask us to but we will charge you the cost of doing so.**

## Handy hints:

### **Causes of blocked bath, basin, shower, sink or toilet**

- Blockages in basins, sinks or showers are usually caused by the build up of waste in the trap: cooking oil, fat, tea leaves, hair and so on. To stop this happening, you should flush wastepipes and traps with hot water regularly and at least once a month use a clearing product to clear them. (**Do not** use caustic soda as it destroys modern plastic fittings.) Please be aware the trap will always hold some water which stops air or foul smells coming up the drain.
- If more than one fitting (bath, basin, sink or shower) is blocked, the blockage may be in the soil stack or main drain. This will need to be cleared by a contractor. In this instance please contact us on 020 7485 8889.
- Blocked toilets are usually caused by unusual objects such as nappies, toys, cleaning/baby wipes, sanitary towels, hand paper towels or toilet fresheners. **Do not** use toilets to get rid of rubbish.

**To unblock a bath, basin, sink, shower or toilet, you will need:**

- Bowl or bucket.
- Jug, cup or mug.
- Wet cloth.
- Plunger (or toilet brush).
- Rubber gloves.

**How to unblock a bath, basin or sink:**

- Scoop out most of the water.
- Hold the cloth tightly over the overflow opening.
- Place the plunger over the plug hole and pump it up and down quickly.

**How to unblock a toilet:**

- If the pan is already full, scoop out some of the water using a jug, cup or mug and put this into a bucket.
- Push the toilet brush or plunger to the bottom of the pan.
- Pump it up and down quickly about 10 times, which should shift the blockage.
- Flush the toilet to see whether the blockage has gone. You may need to repeat this process several times before the toilet flushes normally. If there is no improvement please contact us on 020 7485 8889.

**Resetting a trip switch: how to put the electricity back on when it has ‘tripped out’**

Modern electric circuits are fitted with circuit breakers called trip switches. If there is a problem with the electrics in your home, a switch will trip off and break the electricity supply to that circuit. Some consumer units have buttons rather than switches.

If your lights or power go off, it means your trip switches are working properly. You will need to find the trip switches at the consumer unit (fuse box). The consumer unit is usually next to the electricity meter or near your front or back door.

**General advice:**

- If there is a problem with one of your electrical appliances, leave it unplugged and get a qualified electrician or service engineer to look at it.
- If there is a problem with a light, keep it switched off (put some tape over the switch) and let us know immediately.
- Make sure your hands are dry when you touch electrical fittings.

**A trip switch/button usually operates because:**

- There are too many fittings or appliances on a circuit and it has been overloaded.
- An appliance is faulty or hasn't been used properly, for example a kettle has been overfilled or a toaster not cleaned of crumbs.
- A lead to an appliance, such as a TV or hair dryer is loose or badly connected.
- Water has leaked into a circuit or split onto a plug.



- A light bulb has blown.
- There is a problem with the immersion heater.

**What to do to reset a trip switch:**

- Open the cover of the consumer unit so you can get to switches or buttons.
- Check which switch/button has tripped to the OFF position and which rooms (circuit) have been affected.
- Put the switch/button back to the ON position.
- Switch on all the lights and appliances again one by one. (This will help you to see if it is a particular light or appliance causing the problem.)

**If the trip goes again**, it is probably because one of your appliances is faulty. You need to find out which circuit is being affected and which appliance on that circuit is causing the problem:

- Unplug all appliances on the problem circuit and switch off the immersion heater if you have one.
- Switch the 'tripped' switch/button to the ON position.
- Plug in and switch on the appliances one at a time until the trip goes again. The last appliance you plugged in will be the faulty appliance. **Do not** use adaptors when testing appliances.

**Do not** carry on resetting the trip switch/button if it keeps tripping off and you cannot work out which appliance is causing the problem. Contact us on 020 7485 8889.

**Smoke detectors: how to test them**

Smoke detectors can either be connected to the main electricity supply in your home or they can be battery-operated.

**How to test your alarm:**

- Press and hold the test button for a few seconds. The alarm should sound.
- If the alarm does not sound, try cleaning it and test it again.
- If the alarm still doesn't sound, contact us on 020 7485 8889.

**How to reset the alarm:**

- If it has a HUSH button, press the button. The alarm will stop for 10 seconds, but it then beeps every 40 seconds. If the problem doesn't clear after 10 minutes, the alarm will keep going.
- If there is no HUSH button, turn off the electricity supply at the consumer unit for at least 15 minutes. Then switch the electricity back on.

**How to change the battery (of a battery operated alarm):**

- Buy a new 9-volt battery.
- Open the detector and unclip the battery from its connections.
- Clip the new battery firmly into place. Make sure it is put in the same way as you removed the old battery.
- Close the detector and press the test button to check that it works properly.



### **How to clean your alarm:**

- Clean with a vacuum cleaner (at least once a year) to remove particles that will affect smoke alarm performance.
- Vacuum the outside of the smoke alarm with a vacuum cleaner, a brush attachment might help in removing accumulated dust on the cover of the alarm.
- If recommended by the manufacturer, open the battery cover on battery operated smoke alarms and gently vacuum the circuit board.
- The alarm case can be cleaned with a cloth dampened with a solution of washing up liquid.
- After vacuuming and cleaning, always test the smoke alarm.

### **Rechargeable repairs**

If we are responsible for repairing an item but we feel that the damage has been caused by neglect or carelessness by you, your family or visitors we will charge you for the repair.

### **Planned maintenance**

Planned maintenance is different from day to day repairs. It involves major repairs or improvements such as installing new windows, kitchen or bathroom. Sapphire Independent Housing is responsible for this work and we will inform you in advance of any work planned.

### **Burst Pipes**

You should turn off the water at the mains stopcock and report the problem immediately to us. If do not know where the mains stopcock is, please contact head office where a member of staff will be able to assist you in locating it. This will ensure you are prepared if you do have a burst pipe in the future.

### **Gas Appliances**

By law we have to carry out a yearly safety inspection of any gas appliances, pipe work and flues installed in your home. A specialist gas engineer will contact you to arrange an appointment to do this. As this is important for your health and safety you must allow the engineer into your home to carry out these checks. If you do not allow the engineer access to carry out this work we will have to take legal action.

**If you smell gas you should report the problem to the National Grid immediately on:  
0800 111 999**



## Electricity

If you have an electrical fault and have checked your trip switches and appliances, you should turn off the supply at the mains and report the problem to us immediately.

## Fire Safety

You can help prevent fire by turning off electrical appliances like TVs when not in use and especially when you leave the house. Never leave lit candles unattended. Smoke alarms can save your life by giving you an early warning of fire so you should check them regularly to make sure they are working.

Do not store flammable substances such as petrol or bottles gas in your home or in communal areas.

If there us a fire dial **999** immediately and ask for the fire brigade. Get out of the building as quickly as possible, closing doors behind you. Leave the building using the stairs not the lift, if it is safe to do so.

## Insurance

Many residents believe that their furniture, belongings and decorations are insured against fire, water theft and vandalism by Sapphire Independent Housing. This is not the case, Sapphire Independent Housing is insured for the exterior, structure and fittings of the building and will make good in these areas. Our insurance does not cover tenant's effects. Please make sure you have adequate household contents insurance to cover you and belongings from fire, flood, theft and every day mishaps.