



pace
property professionals

Safety and Communal Living

Guidance for Tenants

01702 445600 | [pace-properties.com](https://www.pace-properties.com)

Contents

Please find below some guidance we'd like to share with you to reduce common problems we find reported by tenants. If you've got any additions to this list, we'd love to hear them.

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Internal Leaks

Please check your property regularly for signs of leaks either from your installations or into your flat. Shower screens are advised for any in-bath showers to reduce splashing. Toilets with concealed cisterns should be opened regularly and inspected for leaks.

Things to look out for are sponginess in the bathroom floor, damp smells in the room, defective silicone. The insurance excess is payable by the leaseholder responsible for the leak. If you have not reported a leak in a timely fashion, you may be responsible for the excess damage to your property. Insurers are tightening up on these liability issues.

Electrical Safety

The block owner/freeholder or Right to Manage company is only responsible for fire safety in the communal area. Landlords and tenants both have responsibilities for the situation inside the flat.

Here are some things to consider:

WIRING

Your landlord should be aware that as of 1st April 2021 all rented properties must have passed an electrical safety check (EICR). If your landlord or letting agent contacts you to arrange a time for an electrical safety inspection, please co-operate in arranging the relevant appointment. It is for everyone's safety in the block as well as your own.

Visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/electrical-safety-standards-in-the-private-rented-sector-guidance-for-landlords-tenants-and-local-authorities/guide-for-landlords-electrical-safety-standards-in-the-private-rented-sector>



PORTABLE APPLIANCES

The fire at Grenfell Tower was started by a faulty fridge. Have you ever had your portable appliances tested to ensure they are safe? If you use a fridge, washing machine, microwave etc or have any plugged in wall heaters in your flat, consider having them checked annually. This is called a PAT test and whilst not a legal requirement we feel everyone in living in flats should PAT test their appliances.

Visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/electrical-safety-standards-in-the-private-rented-sector-guidance-for-landlords-tenants-and-local-authorities/guide-for-landlords-electrical-safety-standards-in-the-private-rented-sector>

Fire Safety

SMOKE ALARMS

Your landlord has a legal responsibility to ensure you have working smoke alarms in your property at the beginning of any new tenancy agreement.

If you discover you have a problem with your smoke alarm during your tenancy, please report it to your landlord or letting agency immediately. Ideally, your smoke alarms should also be checked during each routine property visit by your landlord or letting agent.



FIRE DOORS WITHIN FLATS

If you live in shared accommodation (also called a bedsit/ HMO), or in flats with certain lay outs, other doors in your flat may also be fire doors. They should have a sign on them saying "Fire Door Keep Shut" and you should follow the rules above about how to use them.

FLAT FIRE DOORS

If the door of your flat leads onto an enclosed communal area (i.e. a hallway shared with other flats) then it is considered a fire door and needs to be fire safe. This is because the communal area is usually the way that everyone exits the building in a fire. If there is a fire in your flat, you should exit, close the door and phone 999. The smoke will then stay in the flat long enough for the fire to be put out or your neighbours to also evacuate. In very small blocks, you should also let your neighbours know there is a fire.

- UPVC doors are never fire safe.
- Door furniture (hinges etc) should be fire safe (it should say that on them)
- Gaps between the door and frame, and around the frame should be less than 4mm (except potentially at the bottom of the door, where the gap should be as small as practicable allowing for uneven floors).
- There should be an overhead self-closer.
- Most doors will have intumescent strips and smoke seals too. These are furry strips that go around the edge of the door and melt to cause a seal in a fire. They shouldn't have any gaps in, should stick out evenly and be generally in good condition.

Please follow these instructions for your fire door:

- Fire doors should be kept shut when not in use
- Do not remove or obstruct the self-closing devices (if they are heavy/stiff/too fast tell us and we will have them adjusted)
- Tenants should report any faults or damage to fire doors immediately to their landlord or letting agent

Rubbish

HOW TO DISPOSE OF BULK RUBBISH

Please do not place bulk rubbish in the communal bin areas. The council will not simply clear bulk waste from flats. You should phone your local council who will arrange a collection. If we have to clear it on your behalf, you will still have to pay the charge. It will also be more expensive as we will use a commercial contractor and you will also be liable for our reasonable administration fees for dealing with it.

You should not put rubbish outside in bags except on the morning of collection. If you need to store rubbish outside and have an designated area, you may need to buy a suitable bin. It's not your landlord's responsibility to provide a bin for your outside use, but there may be restrictions on where you can put it. If you live in a large block of flats, there should already be communal arrangements in place. Please let us know if you have any queries.

Each local council has its own rules and you will need to familiarise yourself with the rules that are appropriate to where you live. Here are the links for the major areas we cover.

Southend Council: <https://www.southend.gov.uk/recycling-waste-0/recycling-southend>

Basildon Council: <https://www.basildon.gov.uk/article/4784/Rubbish-and-recycling>

Castlepoint Council: <https://www.castlepoint.gov.uk/recycling&a=1>

Communal Area Safety

Please do not store anything in the communal areas of flats.

These are fire safe areas. If there is a fire and it is dark and smoky, you or a neighbour might not be able to get passed an object such as a bike or a pram. It is particularly dangerous to put items that may catch fire in communal areas such as old fridges, paint or motorbikes but that's not to say non-flammable items are acceptable. Communal areas must be kept clear.

Please see separate section on ebikes

Please do not let people into the building you don't know.

If there is a buzzer system, and a tradesperson rings your bell and you are not expecting someone do not let them in. The person who they are coming to see should let them in. Don't allow people you don't know to tailgate you into the building. If people are up to no good getting through the communal door makes it much easier for them to break into a flat.

IF YOU SEE A SUSPICIOUS PERSON IN THE BUILDING PHONE THE POLICE.

Ebikes

We have seen an increased number of Ebikes being used in and around Southend.

There have been reports in the national press of inferior quality and homemade batteries exploding and in some cases, causing considerable damage to people, animals and property. One report details the tragic death of a young woman who was unable to get out of her flat after her Ebike exploded and caused a serious fire.



Please consider your own safety and that of others if you own and need to store an Ebike. Whilst we have already explained any sort of bike should be kept out of communal areas, if possible, Ebikes should be stored out of flats too. An outside, secure bicycle store would be the safest option.

Noise Nuisance in Flats

If you have a problem with noise from your neighbour, your first step is usually to talk to them to try and resolve the situation amicably. If there is a serious issue, you should immediately call the police. Please also notify us but we have limited powers. For instance, the landlord of the flat making the nuisance, or the landlord of the block, can take legal action but this is a slow, expensive procedure and a last resort. They may not do it willingly either.

You should also report it to the council, visit:

<https://www.pace-properties.com/support-for-tenants-leaseholders-and-residents/>

We won't be able to take legal action without evidence such as police reference numbers or complaints logs. The council can help you with this.



Reporting Problems

We visit properties we own or manage every 6 to 12 months but we need your help keeping an eye on issues and reporting new problems as they arise.

You will also have been given our Tenant Information Pack which is an useful guide, also full of helpful information. Please contact us if you require another copy.

HOW TO REACH US?

Email us at pm@pace-properties.com or telephone 01702 445 600.

WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

Please don't simply email urgent matters – we can't see every email as it comes in.

If something happens out of hours and needs emergency attention such as a leak or break in to a communal door please telephone 01702 445 600 and listen to the out of hours message and follow the instructions. During the day call the office.

If it's a non-urgent matter, please send us an email and the appropriate person will get back to you as soon as they can.

WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE

There should be a sign in your communal area telling you what to do in the event of a fire. Please read it and follow the instructions. If there is conflicting information or no signage, please let us know urgently.

In the event of a fire in your own property, you should phone 999 and leave the property closing all doors and windows behind you.

It is important to keep communal areas completely clear of belongings to ensure they remain fire safe areas. We know this can be inconvenient, but making sure you and your neighbours can get out safely in a fire is important.



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