



TENANCY HANDBOOK

Contents

1. How to contact us & what to do in an emergency
2. Before you move in
3. What to do when you move in
4. Fire & smoke alarms.
5. How to prevent mould growth in your home
6. Boiler info & storage heaters
7. Utilities, meters & bins
8. Maintenance & inspections
9. Your responsibilities as a tenant
10. Landlord responsibilities
11. Renewals, moving out & how to get your deposit back.

1. How to contact us & what to do in an emergency

Address:

Cirencester Sales & Lettings
8 Ashcroft Road
Cirencester
Gloucestershire
GL7 1QX

Opening hours:

Monday-Friday (except bank holidays): 9am-5pm
Saturday: 9am-12pm
Sunday: CLOSED

Contact details:

01285 652442
info@cirencestersalesandlettings.co.uk

If you suspect a gas leak, report it to the National Gas Emergency Service on **0800 111 999**.

To report a power cut to your distribution network operator, call **105**.

To report an issue with your water supply, visit

<https://www.thameswater.co.uk/help/report-a-problem#/view-and-report-problems>.

If you have a life-threatening emergency, contact the emergency services on **999**.

For any non-urgent maintenance, please report using this link: **<https://cirencesterlettings-maintenance.10ninety.co.uk/>** and attach pictures if possible.

2. Before you move in

Move in documents:

Cirencester Sales & Lettings will send you a document containing all relevant certificates for the property before you move in. This will include the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC), Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) and Gas safety Certificate if applicable. You will also receive a scanned copy of the keys you were handed. Before signing a tenancy agreement, you will have also received a link to the government How to Rent Guide.

Inventory:

Before you moved in, an inventory would have been done. An inventory is a thorough, in depth report on the condition of the property prior to a tenant moving in. This report includes information about cleanliness, damage, fixtures, fittings, and meter readings. These reports are done by a specialist 3rd party company and are used as comparison when a tenant moves out. The report will be emailed to you before you move in, and you will have 7 days to notify us of any discrepancies. If we do not hear from you within 7 days, we will assume that you are happy with the contents of the report.

Utilities:

Meter readings will be taken at the time of the inventory, and if we manage the property, we will notify the utility suppliers of your move in (gas, electricity, water, and Council Tax). It can take up to a month for this change to be completed, but once complete, the suppliers will be in touch with you to set up your payments.

Smoke & CO2 alarms:

It is a legal requirement for the smoke and CO2 (if applicable) alarms to be tested on the first day of a tenancy. Cirencester Sales & Lettings, or the landlord, will arrange for this to be done, and a signed document will be sent to you confirming this and outlining the location of the alarms. After the tenancy start date, it is the tenant's responsibility to test the smoke alarms regularly. If the smoke alarms are battery powered, it is a tenant's responsibility to replace the batteries. If the smoke alarm are mains powered, an electrician will be required to repair them if they stop working.

3. What to do when you move in

Once you have moved in, we would advise that you thoroughly read your inventory and familiarise yourself with the location of your meters, fuse board, stop tap, boiler, smoke/CO2 alarms and security alarms if applicable.

Set up a redirection for your post and update your address on your driving licence.

Make sure you have arranged for your broadband to be installed if applicable.

Make sure that you are aware of how and when you pay your rent. Your rent will be due on the same date every month, this date is the same date as your tenancy start date unless otherwise specified. We would advise that you set up a standing order to the account details specified in your tenancy agreement to ensure that you do not miss a payment. Further information about paying your rent is available in your tenancy agreement under clause **7.1**.

If you plan to watch TV, even if you are watching on a laptop or tablet, you must apply for a TV licence. You can apply at <https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/>.

If you are in a property with allocated parking, it is a good idea to make sure you are aware of the parking situation, and the location of your space. If you are in a property with a designated bin storage area, make sure you know where this is, and which bins belong to your property. If required, you may need to apply for parking permit. You can do so by visiting your local council website.

All keys will have been evaluated prior to your move in, but please ensure that you also test them, and notify us as soon as possible if you think any keys are missing, or if any don't work.

Be sure you know the best escape route in the event of a fire. If you are in a shared building, familiarise yourself with the fire exits and meeting point.

4. Fire & smoke alarms.

Fire Safety:

- This is a non-smoking property.
- Make sure that all cooking appliances are supervised, and not left unattended when in use.
- Make sure you blow out any candles before leaving the property, and do not leave lit candles unattended.
- If you have electric heaters, keep them uncovered.
- Switch off appliances when not in use.
- Keep flammable objects away from children.

What to do in the event of a fire:

- If the fire is contained to one room, shut the door.
- Get everyone out of the property as quickly as possible.
- Call the fire brigade on 999.
- Do not re-enter the property to collect any belongings.

Smoke alarms:

- Ensure that smoke alarms are tested regularly and are working. It is a tenant's responsibility to replace batteries in battery powered alarms. If a mains powered alarm stops working, an electrician will need to attend. Notify us of this as soon as possible.

CO2 alarms:

- By law, a CO2 alarm needs to be located next to any fixed combustion appliance (except gas cookers). This includes the boiler and fireplaces. Carbon monoxide is odourless and can be lethal. Regularly test the CO2 alarms and replace if need be.

5. How to prevent mould growth in your home

During the colder months, as the temperature drops, both new homes and old homes are susceptible to the formation of condensation and unsightly mould; new homes because they are effectively a sealed box, and old homes because they often lack effective wall insulation.

Internal moisture build-up is a particular problem for landlords because tenants often complain to the landlord when they see black mould, with little understanding of the cause – they blame the building (landlord) when often they are not maintaining a living/ moisture balance.

Moisture balance:

Moisture is something that is a part of living in a home, but it needs to be carefully controlled to achieve a balance which maintains comfort and good health.

A proper understanding of what causes moisture build-up and condensation goes a long way to minimising its harmful effects.

There are three main causes of moisture build up inside a home:

1. From construction/renovation work where plaster and screeds need time to dry out properly.
2. From leaks and spills, where water enters the fabric of the building from burst pipes, flooding, overflowing baths and showers and leaking washing machines etc.
3. Moisture generated by the occupants from everyday living which can generate substantial amounts of moisture. The amount will vary depending on lifestyles, household size and time of year.

Points one and two are less common, but point three is prevalent in most homes, so householders need to be informed as to the best way to deal with this.

A New guide from the UK Centre for Moisture in Buildings (UKCMB), supported by the NHBC Foundation, explains where moisture comes from and identifies actions that can be taken by occupiers to maintain the right moisture balance in a home.

Keeping the home adequately heated in cool or cold weather – a minimum of 18 degrees should be maintained at all times. This is one of the main reasons why tenanted properties often suffer from black mould build-up.

- Keep trickle vents open to create minimal ventilation and open windows when and where excess moisture is generated.
- Make sure that extractor fans and cooker hoods are working and used when showering and cooking – the two main sources of moisture generation – extract the moisture at source and it cannot affect the rest of the home.
- Avoid drying clothes on radiators and anywhere else internally, and make sure that tumble dryers have a proper extraction system.

- Moist air is warm air, so it rises to the highest points in the property, where most condensation and mould will appear – bedrooms and bathrooms.
- Keep rooms clutter free to allow air movement within and between rooms.

If you are following the above steps, but still experiencing issues, please let us know.

6. Boiler info & storage heaters

If you are unsure about how to control your gas boiler or electric storage heaters, please let us know and we will provide you with a guide.

Oil boilers:

Some properties use oil for heating. If you have an oil heating system, you will need to fill the tank up with oil throughout the year. The location of the oil tank will be specified in your inventory. It is worth noting that there are a few several types of oil available, so we would advise that you contact an approved supplier to discuss your options.

7. Utilities, meters & bins

Utilities & meters:

The meter readings and location of the meters will be specified in the inventory report. Gas and electricity meters are usually located at the front of the property, and the water meter is sometimes out on the road. However, this can vary from property to property.

If we manage the property, we will contact the suppliers and the council to inform them that you have moved into the property. The suppliers will then contact you to set up your accounts. If the property is managed by the landlord, they will be responsible for notifying the suppliers on your behalf. Suppliers can take up to a month to action the account change and get in touch. If you do not hear from the suppliers within 1 month of your move in, please contact us.

If you are in a property with a pay as you go meter, it is important that you are aware of how/where you can top this up to ensure that you do not run out of gas or electricity. Some meters can be topped up via an app, but some require a trip to a local top up point. These top up points are usually in local shops or post offices, but more information about this can be found online. For more information about how prepayment meters work or for help topping up, contact your supplier. If you do not know your supplier, you can find out using the below links:

Gas - <https://www.findmysupplier.energy/>

Electricity - <https://www.ssen.co.uk/supplier-search/>

Please note that if you are on a pre-payment meter and advise us that you have no power, you will be asked to check if you have money left on the meter first.

If you do not have a pre-payment meter and report that you have no power, you will be asked to check that no switches have tripped on the fuse board first.

Bins:

Bins are collected fortnightly.

- Black tall bins are for non-recyclables only.
- Bottles and paper all need to be recycled using the black boxes.
- Plastics, cans, and aerosols are recycled in a white plastic bag/sack.
- Card is collected in a smaller blue bag/sack.

<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/residents/bins-and-recycling/kerbside-recycling/>

If you require extra of any of the above, they can be collected free of charge from the local council offices. Please see the link below for further information.

<http://www.cotswold.gov.uk/residents/bins-and-recycling/>

For collection dates for your property please put in your address in the link below.

<http://www.cotswold.gov.uk/waste-collection-calendars/>

If the tall black bins are put out and the lids are not fully closed, they will not be emptied. Extra beige sacks can be purchased and put out as extra and they will take these away, but they will not take extra black bags or anything extra that is not in the pre-paid beige sacks. These can be purchased from the local council office.

It is your responsibility to ensure that bins are put out on the correct date. Please ensure that your bins are not obstructing any neighbouring properties.

8. Maintenance & inspections

Routine maintenance:

- Gas safety checks are required by law every year.
- EICRs are required every 5 years.
- EPCs should be done every 10 years.
- Oil boiler services are recommended to be done every year.

If we manage the property, we will arrange for the above to be done on the landlords' behalf. We will always give you as much notice of these appointments as possible and will not allow a contractor to enter your property without your prior consent.

If you have reported a maintenance issue to us, the issue will be allocated to the appropriate contractor who will then contact you to arrange an appointment. If you are unable to be there for the appointment, please let the contractor know if you are happy for them to collect keys from our office.

Please note that if you report a maintenance issue and it is found to be a tenant fault (not knowing how the boiler or storage heaters work, damaging an appliance etc), you will be liable to cover the cost of the call out and any work required.

Inspections:

We conduct inspections at managed properties twice a year, usually at months 4 and 8 of the tenancy. Inspections are important for the agents, tenants, and landlords to understand how the property is being maintained, and if there are any issues that need to be addressed. Inspections are not intended to be invasive, and we as agents aim to make inspections as simple as possible. When arranging an inspection, we always try to give at least 1 weeks' notice of the appointment and can rearrange these if necessary. If you are not going to be in, please let us know if you are happy for us to let ourselves into the property. Once the inspection is done, a report will be sent to you and the landlord outlining any issues that were found. The report may also contain pictures of any issues. If there was an issue that needs addressing, we will arrange for a contractor to attend.

9. Your responsibilities as a tenant

The below list is not exhaustive; however, this outlines some of your responsibilities as a tenant:

- General garden maintenance including grass cutting, de weeding and pruning shrubs.
- Replacing light bulbs
- Replacing smoke alarm batteries if applicable
- Keeping the inside and outside of the windows clean
- General cleanliness of the inside and outside of the property where possible
- Broken windows
- Keeping the property free of rubbish both inside and outside
- Ensuring the property is always kept secure.
- If appliances have been supplied, it is your responsibility to ensure that they are maintained. For washing machines this includes regularly cleaning the filters, soap drawer and seal. For dishwashers, this includes keeping the dishwasher salt and rinse aid topped up, as well as cleaning the filters of debris. Tumble dryers should be kept free of lint, and condenser dryer water drawers should be emptied regularly. If any of these appliances stop working, you will be asked to confirm if you have done the above before a contractor is arranged. If it is found that the appliance has stopped working due to a lack of maintenance by yourself, you will be liable to cover the contractor costs.
- Lost keys or other security devices such as fobs. You will be liable to replace these.
- If you lock yourself out, you will need to arrange a locksmith. Please do not contact the out of hours emergency number for this. If you get the locks changed, you will need to provide us with a new key.
- You are responsible for keeping condensation and mould to a minimum as explained in the guide above.
- You are responsible for keeping the property free of pests and vermin including, rats, mice, and slugs. To keep the property pest free, you should ensure that waste/rubbish levels are kept to a minimum, and food waste is stored securely. We can provide you with contact details for pest control contractors, but you will be liable to cover the cost of their call out.
- To keep the drains free of blockages. If drains become blocked due to oil, hair, or other products, you will need to purchase drain unblocker. If this does not work, please let us know. Again, if a plumber finds that the blockage is caused by the tenants, they will be liable for the costs.
- To keep sealant and grouting free of mould.
- Sufficiently heating the property in winter to prevent frozen or burst pipes.
- Bleeding the radiators when required
- You are responsible for any damage that is not deemed as fair wear and tear. Fair wear and tear is defined as “loss, damage or depreciation resulting from ordinary use and exposure”.

10. Landlord responsibilities

The below list is not exhaustive; however, this outlines some of the landlords' responsibilities:

- To keep the property safe and free of hazards
- Ensure that all relevant certificates are in place (gas safety, EICR) and that all appliances are safe and installed correctly.
- Resolve boiler breakdowns and leaks.
- Repair appliances that have been confirmed not to be damaged by the tenant.
- Repair any damage to the exterior and structure of the property such as the walls, roof, exterior drains, gutters etc.
- Maintain basins, sinks, toilets, baths, and their pipework.
- Maintain water and gas pipes, electrical wiring, water tanks, radiators, electric heaters etc.

11. Renewal, moving out & how to get your deposit back.

Renewal:

If you are on a fixed term tenancy (a tenancy with a fixed end date, usually 12 months after your tenancy starts), you will be contacted around 2 or 3 months before your tenancy ends to find out if you are looking to renew your tenancy. If you do wish to renew, you may be subject to a rent increase (between 3 and 8%). A new tenancy agreement will then be sent out for you to sign, and the tenancy will then continue for the agreed term. If you wish to stay in the property, but do not want to sign for another fixed term, there is an option called a periodic tenancy. This is a tenancy that runs on a month-by-month basis with no fixed end date. If you wish to leave the property when on a periodic tenancy, you need to give 1 months' notice in line with your tenancy dates (if your tenancy started on the 1st of the month, your notice period would start on the 1st of the month). Alternatively, if you wish not to stay in the property after the initial fixed term, you will need to give 1 months' notice to leave. Your landlord will always need to give you 2 months' notice if they wish for you to leave. If for any reason you want to leave during your fixed term, you would be liable to cover the landlords' remarketing costs. You can find out more about this in your tenancy agreement.

Moving out:

When a move out date has been agreed, you will be sent a "move out" email outlining your responsibilities and giving you information on cleaning companies if required. You will need to return your keys to our office on the move out date. If the keys are not returned, there may be a charge of £200 to cover the cost of changing the locks. If for any reason you are unable to return your keys to us, you must let us know as soon as possible. Once the property is empty, a check out report will be completed by an independent clerk. This report will be compared against the ingoing inventory. We will then be in touch with you to discuss the check out report and your deposit.

How to get your deposit back:

To have the best chance of getting your deposit back in full, you must leave the property in the same condition that you found it in. We can no longer ask that tenants get the property professionally cleaned, but we do ask that it is cleaned to the same standard as the start of the tenancy. If you have had pets, we would recommend that you get the carpets professionally cleaned and de-flead as a precautionary measure. There are plenty of online guides available offering handy tips to get your deposit back.

If the property has been left in an acceptable condition, your deposit will be returned in full. We hold our deposits in the DPS (Deposit Protection Service). The DPS will email you requesting that you log in to your account to release your deposit. Once done, the money will be paid to you within 3-5 working days. If, however, there are issues with the property (cleanliness, damages etc), we will propose deductions from your deposit. If you agree to these deductions, the same process as above applies. If for any reason you disagree with the deductions, you will then have an opportunity to submit evidence to the DPS to dispute the deductions. This may then go to adjudication, and the DPS will have the final say in how the deposit is split.