

Maintaining your Home



Maintenance Repairs Quick Guide

Following the outline below should help improve the service offered by Arcon and avoid you being recharged for repairs or callouts that are your responsibility.

Repair enquiry	What should you check?	What action should you take?	Will you be recharged?	Tenant's are responsible for:
Gas leak	Check you have not left an appliance on	Switch off the gas at the mains. Open windows to ventilate and phone Transco on 0800 111 999	No	Any damage caused by yourself or people visiting your home. Any damage caused by neglect or misuse.
Gas Central Heating Fault, including leaks on radiators	No heating – check your gas supply is in credit. Leak – place container under and close radiator valves if possible.	Phone Alan Chew & Co. direct on 0161 737 9393	Failure to keep appointments made with the contractor may be recharged. If fault is due to no credit on gas or electric meter.	Some minor repairs: Replacement of broken glass. Replacement of lost keys and locks.
Electrical Fault	Check that the fuse has not blown. Also that you have credit on the electric meter	Report to maintenance department once you have established that fault is not a blown fuse and that there is credit on the meter	If fault is found to be a blown fuse or no credit on the meter the cost incurred will be recharged	Replacement of toilet seats. Unblocking sinks, basins or baths. Replacing plugs and chains to baths, basins and sinks.
Emergency Call Out	Make sure that the repair is an emergency. See Tenant's handbook 'Reporting Repairs' for specific guidance	Refer to Tenant's handbook 'Contractors Directory' for the appropriate emergency call out number	If the repair is found not to be an emergency you will be recharged	Checking and changing electrical fuses. Replacing light bulbs, fluorescent tubes and starters. Filling minor plaster cracks.
Damage by unknown person, including break-ins, attempted break-ins or vandalism	Make a note of the extent of damage.	Report incident to the police and record log number/crime incident number and date. Report damage to maintenance department. If your belongings are damaged or stolen report this to your home contents insurance company	A Rechargeable Repair Notification is automatically issued. This should be completed and returned to enable us to review the circumstances. Failure to return the form will result in the work being recharged	Internal decoration. Bleeding of radiators. TV aerials (except if shared with others.) Adapting doors to accommodate carpets. Fitting extra catches and safety devices. Plumbing-in washing machines or dishwashers.
General Repair	Check that it is not a repair you are responsible for. See Tenant's handbook last page of 'Maintaining your Home' section	Report to maintenance department	Failure to keep appointments made with the contractor may be recharged	Connecting cookers. Curtain rails, shelving and coat rails. Door bells and smoke alarm batteries.

When reporting a repair please provide your name, address, telephone contact number(s) along with details of the repair on 0161 214 4120

Arcon has a legal obligation to carry out certain types of repairs where needed. This leaflet lists the repairing obligations of both the Association and tenants.

All repair needs should be reported as soon as you notice them. The leaflet on reporting repairs explains how quickly these repairs should be carried out. That leaflet also tells you who to contact in emergencies.

As your Landlord, Arcon is responsible for:

Keeping in good repair the structure and exterior of your home and the building in which it is situated. This includes:

- the roof, outside walls, outside doors, window cills, window catches, sash cords, glazing putties and window frames and glass, including the necessary external painting and decoration;
- Internal walls, skirting boards, doors and door frames, hinges, locks, door jambs, thresholds, door handles, floors (but not floor coverings) and ceilings, plasterwork but not painting and decorating;
- drains, gutters and external pipes, chimneys, chimney stacks (not including the sweeping of chimneys in single family houses);
- pathways, steps or other means of access;
- integral garages and stores;

In the case of flats and maisonettes, the Association shall take reasonable care to keep common entrances, halls, stairways, lifts, passageways, rubbish chutes and any other common parts in reasonable repair and safe and fit for the use by the tenant, members of his/her household or visitors. This includes a duty to take reasonable care to keep the lighting of common parts and entryphone installations in working order.

Keeping in good repair and proper working order Arcon's installations for the supply of water, gas and electricity for sanitation and for space and water heating. These include but are not limited to:

- basins, sinks, baths, toilets, flushing systems and waste pipes;
- electric wiring, gas and water pipes and taps;
- water and space heaters, fireplaces and fitted fires;
- sockets and light fittings;

Keeping the exterior of your home and any common parts in a good state of decoration and normally to decorate these areas once every four years.

Maintaining in a safe condition all fences and external garages and stores making sure that they do not become a nuisance or annoyance or cause damage or inconvenience to the tenant, members of his/her household or visitors, or to the tenants or occupiers of neighbouring property.

Maintaining your property

The Association expects you as the tenant to maintain your property to the standard it was let to you. There are precautions you can take to minimize problems and make sure your home is maintained, safe and secure.

Dampness and Condensation

Many of the complaints we receive are about “dampness.” Unfortunately it can cause problems and is very difficult to cure. However, dampness can be aggravated by condensation which can be controlled or minimized by you. Condensation occurs when moist air comes into contact with a colder surface, depositing water vapour. Condensation can lead to mould growth on decorations, clothing and furniture.

Where does all the moisture come from?

Just breathing gives off moisture, for example, during 8 hours of sleep you will produce half a litre of moisture. Cooking gives off steam clouds which if left unventilated, allow moisture to be absorbed into the atmosphere. Also, a gas cooker will produce 1 litre of moisture per hour by being used. Bathing, laundry and wet outdoor clothing are often major sources of water vapour in the home. Even indoor plants can be a significant source of water vapour.

What can you do to reduce condensation?

Condensation can be reduced by keeping all sources of moisture under control.

If you find that your windows are full of condensation in the morning, then you should wipe them down daily with a cloth. You should wring the water out off the cloth direct into the sink and avoid drying the cloth on a radiator. If you do not wipe the windows, the moisture will pool and be reabsorbed into the atmosphere and will allow the problem of condensation to continue unabated.

Cover all pots and pans whilst cooking and do not leave a kettle boiling. Whilst cooking, use the extractor fan, if one is fitted, or open a window. Keep the kitchen door closed whilst cooking and for an hour after.

Put clothes washing outdoors to dry if you can or put it in the bathroom with the door closed. You may find it useful to buy a rack which fits over the bath and allows the clothes to drip dry into the bath. It will help the situation if the bathroom fan is switched on or the window is left open whilst the clothes are drying. If you have a tumble dryer make sure it is vented properly to the outside (unless it is the self condensing type).

Dry clothing left out in a room can absorb moisture from the atmosphere – you should therefore store clothing in a wardrobe. Avoid open freestanding rails that do not have any form of cover. Leather is particularly prone to mould attack if it is left exposed to high moisture levels. Never put shoes, bags or jackets away wet, allow to dry before placing them in a store/wardrobe. If your home suffers from a lot of condensation you should check leather products regularly to avoid them being ruined.

Use your heating system to keep some background heating within the property – this will keep the atmosphere warmer and therefore help keep the moisture from condensing and therefore reducing your condensation problems.

Some ventilation is needed to get rid of moisture being produced all the time, including that from people’s breath. Keep a small window ajar when someone is in the room or if you have trickle vents on the windows, leave them in the open position.

The Association has fitted air bricks into many properties. Although these can cause a draught please do not cover them up as the moisture will not be able to escape.

If you continue to have problems with condensation, after following the advice above, please contact the Maintenance Department who will arrange for an inspection to be carried out.

Damp

Rising damp will only be found in ground floor rooms and usually leaves stain marks above the skirting. Penetration damp can occur on any outside wall and generally appears in patches that can gradually increase in size. If you find either of these problems in your home please contact the Maintenance Department who will arrange to undertake a survey.

Blocked Waste Pipes

Blocked waste pipes occur most commonly in kitchens and bathrooms when either food particles or hair builds up in the U-bend. To avoid this remove food or hair from around the plug hole after using sinks or baths. If you are unable to remove the blockage with a plunger, carefully unscrew the lower part of the U-bend, remove blockage and screw pipework back into place.

Household Pests

Tenants are responsible for dealing with minor household pests such as ants, slugs, wasps, bees etc.

More serious pest or vermin problems should be referred to the Environmental Health Department of your Local Authority.

Gas Safety

If you think you can smell Gas :

- **Don't** turn electrical switches on or off
- **Don't** smoke
- **Don't** use naked flames
- **Do** turn off the gas supply at the meter
- **Do** open doors and windows to get rid of the gas
- **Call** TransCo on 0800 111 999

Electricity:

To avoid any incidents with electrical sockets or appliances:

- Ensure appliances are wired correctly.
- Do not overload any plug sockets.
- Remove plugs from sockets when you go to bed and also if you go out.

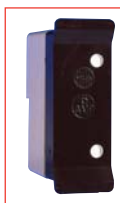
Checking and Changing electrical fuses?

As you should be aware from the tenant's handbook, replacing electrical fuses is the tenant's responsibility. As we have been asked for guidance in regards to this matter we have produced the following:

A light or power circuit's fuse can blow due to any number of reasons. A light bulb that fails, or an appliance that has a fault could cause the fuse to blow. This will require you to reset the fuse within the consumer unit. You should have one of the following fuses within the consumer unit.



Standard fuse: This contains a length of fuse wire held in position by two screws. You will need a torch, screwdriver with insulated handle and some fuse wire to repair the fix the fuse. To check the fuse you should SWITCH OFF THE CONSUMER UNIT MAIN SWITCH. You will not have the use of the lighting once you have switched off the electrics and will need a torch to continue.



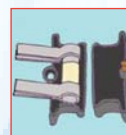
Remove the fuse to check if the fuse wire has broken or burnt out and replace with fuse wire of the same rating. The fuse rating is identified on the fuse itself along with a colour. For example the photograph shows a 5 Amp fuse, which always has white spots. The other two common fuses are blue spots indicate 15 Amp and red spots which is 30 Amp. There are other ratings and colours and if you have these you should use the appropriate fuse wire.



To replace the wire, undo the two screws and remove the old wire. Feed new fuse wire through the center of the fuse and wind around the screws before tightening. Cut off any excess wire before replacing fuse back in consumer unit. Switch electrics back on completion.

A card of fuse wire should cost you no more than a pound. If you are not sure which one to use, take the old fuse with you to your local hardware or DIY shop.

Don't forget that while the electricity is off your freezer can begin to defrost and you may need to reset clocks.



Cartridge fuse: These are similar to the above but in place of wire there is a fuse, similar to that those found in plugs but slightly bigger. Buy a new fuse with the right fuse rating; they cost a couple of pound each.



Modern fuse: This fuse will turn itself off if a circuit becomes overloaded. To reset this type of fuse you only need to push the switch back up to the on position.



Should the fuse trip again immediately after resetting, try to identify the source of the problem. If it's the lighting that is going out and it happens when you switch on a certain light fitting then replace the bulb and try again. If the problem is on the power circuit it could be due to a fault on one of your appliances. Irons, toasters, kettle and washing machines can often be the source of the problem. Unfortunately it is often a process of elimination where you will need to plug in an item to see if it causes the fuse to trip.

If the problem persists after you have carried out the above, then contact the Maintenance Department and explain the situation to them. Remember you could be recharged if an electrician is set to rectify a fault which turn out to be caused by one of your appliances.

Fire

Avoiding any electrical faults will help to prevent fire, it is also a good idea:

- Not to leave chip pans unattended. If a pan catches fire, cover with a damp cloth. (Accidents while cooking account for 59% of fires in the home)
- Not to use paraffin heaters.
- Not to remove closing mechanisms from doors or prop them open. This will help to prevent the spread of fire.
- Check smoke alarms regularly.
- Never leave lit candles unattended
- Ensure cigarettes are stubbed out and disposed of carefully
- Never smoke in bed
- Keep matches and lighters away from children
- Keep clothing away from heating appliances

In the event of a fire, close the door of the room where the fire has started and make sure that you and all your family exit the property. Call out the Fire Brigade and do not re-enter the property.

If you find you are trapped in a room try and cover any gaps around the edges of doors and open the window.

Frost precautions:

In times of harsh weather there can be problems with burst pipes. A few precautions in the winter period may help to prevent this from happening:

- Try and keep your property warm at all times.
- Locate your stop tap and know how to turn it off.
- Do not leave taps running or dripping.
- If your overflow is leaking it can freeze in cold weather which can result in flooding. Therefore you must report a leaking overflow immediately in the winter time.

If your pipes do freeze, try and thaw them out with a hot water bottle, electric fan heater or a hairdryer. NEVER use a naked flame.

If you have a burst:

- Turn off the main stop tap.
- Turn on all your taps to drain off the water.
- Turn off central heating or immersion heater.
- Try and find out where the water is coming from and inform the contractors when they arrive.

To prevent any extensive damage report the leak immediately to the Association. Any damage to furniture or decorations should be covered by your household contents insurance.

Security

Always make sure your property is secure when you go out:

- Always close windows and lock doors.
- Never leave keys "under the mat"
- If any strangers call to your property, ask to see their identity cards.

It is a good idea to fit window locks, mortice locks and alarm systems for added security.

Insurance

You must insure your personal possessions against fire, theft and damage. Arcon is not insured or liable for any losses on your personal belongings. However Arcon recognizes that where it fails to provide a satisfactory standard of service, compensation may be payable to tenants for loss or damage as a result of negligence.

Arcon has insurance to cover the building structure only. **Arcon's insurance does not cover your contents or internal decorations. It is the tenant's responsibility to obtain home contents insurance.**

What would happen to your contents in the event of a fire, smoke damage, explosion, lightning, storm, flood, water burst, water leak, vandalism, theft, but to name a few.

Remember damage may occur to your belongings through no fault of yours. For example, if you live in a flat and there is a leak from the flat above damaging your contents you will need to claim under your contents insurers. Or next door had a fire and your belongings are damaged by smoke or water used to douse the fire you will need to turn to your contents insurers. There are numerous other situations.

Arcon have agreed preferential premiums with an insurance company for its tenants. Premiums start from less than the cost of a daily newspaper for several thousand pounds of contents insurance. There are lower premiums available for senior citizens.

A number of tenants lose their keys to their home each year. They will be recharged for the cost incurred which can be very expensive when it is an out of hour callout. Most insurance companies cover the cost of replacement keys or locks.

Repairs, which are the Tenant's responsibility, are as follows:

- Replacement of broken glass.
- Replacing lost keys or the subsequent need to replace locks.
- Replacing door knobs, letterboxes.
- Replacing broken toilet seats.
- Replacing plugs and chains on baths, basins and sinks.
- Checking and changing electrical fuses.
- Replacing light bulbs, fluorescent tubes and starters.
- Filling minor plaster cracks.
- Internal decoration.
- Bleeding of radiators.
- Maintenance of any fixtures and fittings and appliances not provided by Arcon Housing Association.
- TV aerials (except if shared with others).
- Adapting doors to accommodate carpets.
- Fitting extra catches and safety devices.
- Plumbing-in washing machines or dishwashers.
- Connecting and commissioning gas cookers.
- Connecting electrical cookers.
- Curtain rails.
- Shelving.
- Coat and hat rails.
- Bells.
- Batteries and bulbs.
- Smoke alarm batteries.
- Minor household pests such as ants, slugs, wasps, silver fish, bees etc. (Arcon will deal with rodents, squirrels, cockroaches, wasps and bees nests)

With the EXCEPTION of internal decorations, Arcon WILL carry out these repairs for tenants who are frail/elderly or have learning difficulties and are unable to carry out the repairs themselves.

NB. You may request Arcon to carry out repairs for which we are not responsible but you WILL be charged for the cost of repair.

