

# Winter safety in and around your home

During the winter months, we all try to keep ourselves warm at home. However, it is essential that we make sure our homes are healthy, safe and protected. Follow our top tips to ensure you remember this winter for all the right reasons.

## **Preventing burst pipes**

Burst pipes can cause significant and costly damage to your home and possessions. To avoid this:

- Make sure you know where your Stopcock and Sure Stop are.
- Check your water Stopcock and Sure Stop are working properly.
- Keep your home warm whenever possible, even when it is unoccupied.
- Make sure there are no draughts from outside, especially near water pipes.
- Keep windows closed in unheated parts of your home.
- Ensure you know where – and how – to switch off your electricity and heating safely.

*[in a bubble* – Report emergencies to the Council on 0300 123 0900]

## **Heat your home safely**

We check the safety of your gas appliances every year, but if you smell gas, think you have a gas leak, or are worried that fumes containing carbon monoxide are escaping from a gas appliance, call the free National Gas emergency line immediately on 0800 111 999.

If you have a solid fuel heating system (wood, coal etc):

- Have your chimney swept twice a year to reduce the risk of a chimney fire.
- Do not sit too close to fires or heaters – your clothing or furniture could catch fire.
- Always use a fireguard with open fires, especially if you have young children, elderly or disabled people in the property. The fireguard should preferably be in a fixed position.

If you use a portable heater to boost the heat in your home, make sure you keep it clean and well maintained. If you have stored the heater away over the spring and summer months, make sure you thoroughly clean off any dust before use.

To keep yourself and your family safe, we also recommend you have a carbon monoxide detector in your home.

If you are over 60, disabled or on a low income, you may be able to get financial help with heating your home. Contact the Energy Agency on 01292 521896 for further information.

## **Be prepared for severe weather conditions**

During winter, we can experience severe disruption to our daily routine. Here are some tips to help you prepare for severe weather conditions:

- Check the batteries in your torch are working and have some emergency lighting handy in preparation for a power cut.
- Report any lighting faults immediately.
- Be sure you have some warm shoes or boots with non-slip soles.
- Keep a mixture of salt and sand handy to put on steps or paths in icy weather.
- Keep simple cold, flu and sore throat remedies in the house.

*(Your pharmacist can make suggestions and can advise on how to manage minor illnesses)*

- If you are invited to have a flu jab, be sure to follow this up.
- Order repeat prescriptions in plenty of time, particularly if bad weather is forecast.
- Keep basic food items in the cupboard or freezer in case it is too cold to go shopping.
- Unless you must go out in severe weather, stay at home.

You can find out some more handy tips at [www.readyscotland.org](http://www.readyscotland.org)