

Get your home ready for winter

A handy guide to help you keep your home safe and warm in the colder months



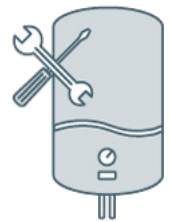
Planning ahead



Prepare for bad weather checklist

- ✓ Check your roof to make sure all tiles are secure and in good condition
- ✓ Clean gutters and drains to avoid blockages
- ✓ Secure or safely store your garden furniture and ornaments
- ✓ Cut trees or branches that can cause damage to your home

Central heating and boiler maintenance



Service your boiler every year

– get a registered Gas Safe engineer to do it if you have gas central heating or an OFTEC registered engineer for oil fired heating

Bleed your radiators – let the air out of radiators regularly to make sure they warm up properly

Keep heating on low during winter nights – this prevents your central heating pipes from freezing up

If there's a flood warning:



- Unplug all non-essential electrical appliances and keep them upstairs
- Lock your valuables away safely, ideally in waterproof containers, and back up important files on your computer
- Make sure you know how to turn your gas, water and electricity off if needed



How to avoid frozen pipes

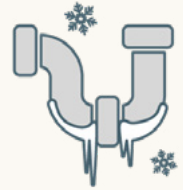
- Insulate water tanks and cover your pipes with ready-made lagging - pay special attention to pipes located in colder areas such as basements or garages
- If you have tanks or pipes in the loft space, open the roof hatch so warm air can circulate



- Fix any leaking taps and faulty ball valves around the home and outside
- Seal drafts around windows, doors and fireplaces where cold air could come through
- Turn off the water if you're going away for more than a few days and consider draining your system by running the taps until the water stops

Important: make sure you know where your stopcock or valve is so you can stop the water flow immediately if the worst happens

What if your pipes freeze?



If your boiler doesn't turn on, your central heating makes strange noises or there's no water coming from your taps, your pipes might be frozen

- Turn off your water supply and find the frozen pipe
- Slowly place a hot water bottle or a towel soaked in hot water over it, starting closer to the tap; you can also use a hair-dryer on a low setting but never use a naked flame like a blowtorch

If a pipe bursts



- Turn off your water supply immediately at the stopcock
- Run every tap to get the water out quickly and leave them to run until they stop
- Soak up any leaked water with old towels
- Call a qualified plumber; while you wait, you can temporarily patch the pipe with cloth or heavy-duty tape

Winter fire safety tips

- Check your chimneys and vents before you start using your fireplace again
- Test the smoke alarms around your home
- Protect your fireplace with a metal screen or tempered glass
- Beware of electric heaters and candles and don't place them near any fabrics or flammable materials



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