Heating Systems

This page contains important information on the different heating and energy systems you may have in your home.

Gas servicing

As your landlord, we are bound by law to carry out an annual safety check on all gas fittings installed in your home. As a tenant, you also have responsibilities. This section sets out what these are, how to avoid putting yourself at risk from faulty gas fittings and what you can expect from us.

Our duty as your landlord

We will ensure that:

- Gas fittings (appliances and pipework), and flues, installed by Connexus or our sub-contractors are maintained in a safe condition.
- All installation, maintenance safety checks and annual gas servicing are carried out by a Gas Safe registered installer.
- A gas safety check and service are carried out on every gas fitting/flue in your home, every year. When you take up a new tenancy all gas appliances/flues will be checked before you move in and we will give you a copy of the latest Landlord's Gas Safety Record.
- We keep a record of each annual safety check and service.

Your duty as a tenant

- You should allow us prompt access to your home to carry out maintenance or safety checks on our gas fittings/flues.
- You should ensure that any gas fittings which you own, including your gas cooker, are installed correctly, serviced regularly and checked annually for safety.
- You should always contact us before making any alterations to your home, no matter how minor.
- For your safety, always use a qualified Gas Safe registered installer to carry out any gas work in your home and provide us with certificates.

Failure to give us reasonable access to your home to complete the annual safety check is a breach of the conditions of your tenancy agreement, which could result in legal action to enforce access or end your tenancy.

Carbon Monoxide

A faulty gas appliance can give off Carbon Monoxide which can make you seriously ill and, in high quantities, can KILL in minutes.

Contact us immediately if you notice:

- Sooting or staining marks on or around a gas appliance.
- A yellow or orange lazy flame – not crisp and blue.
- A higher level of condensation than normal in the room where an appliance is installed.
- Anyone in your household suffering from drowsiness, headaches, nausea or pains in the chest when using a gas appliance.

IF YOU NOTICE ANY OF THESE SIGNS, TURN OFF THE APPLIANCE IMMEDIATELY AND REPORT IT TO US BY CALLING 03332 31 32 33

Electric storage heaters

How they work

Most storage heaters are wall-mounted and look a bit like radiators. They work by drawing electricity over the course of a few hours at night. This is normally between midnight and 7am during the winter months and between 1am and 8am during the summer, although this can vary. The heat is then stored in a 'bank' of clay or ceramic bricks to use the following day.

The advantage is that the storage heaters use electricity at night, when it is cheaper, and give out their heat many hours later. They work best if the household is on an Economy 7 tariff.

Understanding how to operate your storage heaters as effectively as possible will help you stay warm enough and not waste energy. Avoid using supplementary plug-in heaters or the convector button (found on some storage heaters). It is better to turn up the input on your storage heater and store more heat.

Controls

Most have 2 controls on the top of the heater, sometimes under a flap.

Input control (sometimes called Charge) - controls how much heat is stored in the heater when it charges up overnight

Output control (sometimes called Boost) - opens and closes the flap at the top of the heater to let heat out. Some heaters have an automatic output control where a thermostat controls the opening and closing of the flap, depending on room temperature.

Settings

- In very cold weather, set the Input to maximum. As the weather gets warmer, and you need less heat, turn down the Input control to store less heat in the heater.
- For the most economical heating, leave the Output control on a low setting during the day (lowest when you are out). Turn it up in the evening or when you come home if you need more heat.
- Before bedtime: turn the Output control to its lowest setting to stop heat being given out while you are in bed. Turn the Input up if you need to charge the heater more because you were cold or because you know the next day will be colder. Turn the Input down if you were too warm or you know the next day will be significantly warmer.

- Your house may be warm enough in the summer: turn the heaters off at the wall, and back on again when it starts to get cold.
- You can control storage heaters individually, choosing different heat settings for different rooms. Set the Output control to 1 in unoccupied rooms and 2-4 when the room is in use.
- You may have a storage heater combined with a convector heater, (usually in the living room) which operates independently to the storage heater and uses on-peak electricity. The switch for the convector heater element may have a red or orange neon indicator to show it's on. This is useful to provide a 'top-up' in very cold weather but it is not economical to use as your main source of heat.

How to heat hot water

- If you have electric storage heaters to heat your home, it is likely that the water will be heated by an immersion heater. There may be 2 immersions: 1 in the top of the hot water cylinder and 1 in the bottom. Usually, the bottom heater comes on at night and heats the whole cylinder using cheap off-peak electricity. The top heater is used to provide additional hot water during the day if required, using expensive peak rate electricity.
- **DO NOT leave a peak rate immersion heater on all day and all night.** You will use a lot of money keeping the water hot when you don't need it.

Solid fuel heating

Connexus will carry out a safety check every six months to your solid fuel installation. This will be carried out by a designated contractor who has been trained in solid fuel servicing procedures.

Our duty as your landlord

We are committed to your safety and we take our responsibilities on solid fuel safety very seriously. We will carry out a full annual safety check. The full service will include:

- Visual inspection of the entire length of all flues

- Flue flow and spillage test
- Flue clean and sweep
- Throat plate clean
- Check ventilation
- Check the feed and expansion tank in the roof space
- Inspection of your heating system

Your duty as a tenant

- Tenants must inform us of the following:

- Smoke entering the room where the appliance is situated

- Carbon monoxide detector going off

- System making rattling or banging noises

- System overheating

- Tenants are responsible for allowing access to the solid fuel installation to enable our operatives to carry out the safety check. This will mean that the appliance will need not to be lit for at least 10 hours, to allow the safety check to be carried out
- You must use the appropriate fuel for the appliance
- You are responsible for cleaning the throat plate on a monthly basis
- You should clean the flue-ways at the back of your boiler once a week
- Empty ash pans daily or more regularly as ash builds up
- Door seals and ash pit doors should be checked regularly for a tight fit
- You are responsible for replacing ash pans, tools and fire baskets

Failure to give us reasonable access to your home to complete the annual heating system safety check is a breach of the conditions of your tenancy agreement, which could result in legal action to enforce access or end your tenancy.

Carbon Monoxide

Carbon Monoxide is a tasteless, odourless gas that can be produced when fuel is not being burnt properly or as a result of faulty appliances and blocked flues.

Alarms to detect Carbon Monoxide have been fitted to all homes with solid fuel appliances. If the alarm activates, please contact us immediately by calling 03332 31 32 33. If you don't have an alarm fitted in your home, please contact us and we will arrange for one to be fitted as soon as possible.

If you suspect Carbon Monoxide is present:

- Open doors and windows
- Allow the fire to burn itself out
- Do not stay in the room any longer than necessary
- Do not attempt to re-use the appliance until it has been checked by one of our operatives

Burning wood and coal

The most common form of wood fuel is logs, which you can buy from a wide variety of local shops and suppliers.

It is important that logs are dry and well-seasoned.

Burning wet or unseasoned wood is less efficient and can cause harmful build-ups of tars in the flue over a very short period.

These build-ups can cause chimney fires or blockages preventing the chimney functioning properly. Removal of tar build-up from the flue is your responsibility. If the flue is not working properly then harmful fumes can escape into your home.

The most efficient way to burn is to set the installation to burn fast after stoking. This will ensure all gases are fully burned. Only set to slow burn when all wood has been reduced to charcoal and ash. If newly added wood is set to burn slowly, then a build-up of smoke and tar in the flue will occur. **The installation should not be banked up with logs for overnight burning.**

If you burn logs that have not been seasoned, you should store them undercover, in an environment with good air circulation, for at least a year. Bring the logs into the house a few days before you want to use them and get them as dry as possible. **Never burn painted or treated wood**, as these will let off

chemicals which are can be damaging to your health and the environment. This also applies to MDF and chipboard.

What is the best type of coal?

The cheapest coal is usually not the most cost-effective choice. Premium fuels tend to be more efficient than ordinary house coal, producing a stronger fire with a longer burning time and saving you money. Cheaper coals are less efficient and can cause heavy soot deposits in the appliance or flue, further reducing its efficiency and safety.

Solid fuel FAQs

Q. How do I know when my solid fuel service is due?

A. You will receive a letter advising when our contractor is due to be in your area to carry out the safety checks.

Q. What will happen if I don't allow access to complete the service?

A. As your landlord, we are bound by the Health and Safety at Work Act to ensure your home is safe to live in and to maintain and service the solid fuel appliances every year. Your tenancy agreement states that you are obliged to allow access for the purpose of inspection, service and repair.

Q. What happens if an appliance or flue fails the annual safety check?

A. If the appliance belongs to the Connexus and is your primary source of heating, our contractors will repair or replace the faulty appliance/flue or investigate the possibility of an alternative form of heating.

If the appliance is a secondary form of heating (does not provide the central heating) we will arrange for the appliance to be removed and the fireplace blocked up.

Q. Can I install solid fuel log burner in my home?

A. No, Connexus will not give you permission to install solid fuel into your home, or open up any chimneys to create an open fire. If you have a problem with your current heating system, please **contact us**.

Oil fired central heating systems

As your landlord, we are bound by law to carry out an annual safety check on all oil fittings installed in your home. As a tenant, you too have responsibilities.

This section sets out what these are, how to avoid putting yourself at risk from faulty oil fittings and what you can expect from us.

Our duty as your landlord

We will ensure that:

- Oil fittings (appliances and pipework), and flues, installed by Connexus are maintained in a safe condition.
- All installation, maintenance safety checks and annual oil servicing are carried out by an Oftec registered installer.
- An oil safety check and service is carried out on each relevant fitting/flue in your home every year. When you take up a new tenancy all oil appliances/flues will be checked before you move in, and we will give you a copy of the latest Landlord's Oil Safety Record.
- We keep a record of each annual safety check and service.

Your duty as a tenant

- You should allow us prompt access to your home to carry out maintenance or safety checks on oil fittings/flues.
- You should ensure that any oil fittings which you own are installed correctly and are checked annually for safety and serviced.
- You should always contact us before making any alterations to your home, no matter how minor.
- For your safety, always use a qualified Oftec registered installer to carry out any oil work in your home and provide us with certificates.

Failure to give us reasonable access to your home to complete the annual safety check is a breach of the conditions of your tenancy agreement, which could result in legal action to enforce access or end your tenancy.

Danger signs to look out for

IF YOU NOTICE ANY OF FOLLOWING SIGNS, TURN OFF THE APPLIANCE IMMEDIATELY AND REPORT IT TO US BY CALLING 03332 31 32 33

- Sooting or staining marks on or around the appliance
- A higher level of condensation than normal in the room where the appliance is installed
- Anyone in your household suffering from drowsiness, headaches, nausea or pains in the chest when using an oil appliance
- A persistent strong smell of oil

DO NOT

- Erect combustible buildings i.e. sheds or playhouses within 1.8 metres of tank
- Store flammable materials next to tank
- Erect combustible fences within 760mm of tank
- Tilt or move the tank in any way as this may cause damage to the tank and /or pipework
- Dig or erect washing lines, fences, building i.e. sheds or playhouse where an oil line runs
- Plant anything within 760mm of the oil tank

DO

- **Contact us** immediately if you notice oil leaking from the tank or associated pipework and fittings, no matter how small. Turn isolation valve off at base.
- Access is required to and around tank for annual inspection and maintenance
- Check oil line before digging. If in doubt, **contact us**.
- Ensure correct fuel is used – 28 second Kerosene

Oil boiler

DO NOT

- Let your oil run out. There is a charge for calling out repairs team to come out to bleed the oil through to the boiler.
- Store flammable materials next to your boiler
- Tamper with isolation valves or parts within the boiler
- Obstruct the flue terminal
- Use contaminated fuel
- Remove or damage smoke or carbon monoxide alarms

DO

- If you smell oil from the boiler turn it off and **contact us** immediately
- If you notice water or oil leaking from the boiler or tank turn it off and **contact us** immediately
- Keep an eye on your oil level monitor to ensure you do not run out of oil
- Regularly test the smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and report any faults to us, using the contact details **here**.