Infosheet | Top Tips For Tenants In The Winter

The wintery weather brings a number of unique, yet predictable pressures on residential properties. The colder temperatures often accompany increased rainfall and storms; and when coupled with reduced ventilation the risk of damage, deterioration and repair costs are much higher at this time of year.

Many common winter issues such as damp and mould, frozen pipes or leaks, and storm damage can quickly escalate into tenant complaints, insurance claims and disputes if they aren't managed proactively. In this infosheet we set out:

- The key winter risks to buildings.
- Practical steps agents and landlords can take to reduce exposure.
- A tenant-friendly checklist you could share with occupants to encourage them to play their part in protecting the property.

Winter | The Highest Risk Season For Homes

During winter, properties are exposed to:

- Huge temperature fluctuations.
- High incidents of rain and wind.
- Reduced daylight and ventilation.
- Higher internal moisture from heating, cooking and drying clothes.



These factors increase the likelihood of:

- Condensation and mould growth.
- Penetrating damp from damaged gutters.
- Burst or frozen pipes.
- Storm damage to roofs, fences and external fixtures.

Many of these issues develop gradually, but they are significantly cheaper to prevent than to repair which is why it is important to catch the issues early.

Condensation, Damp And Mould | The Huge Risk During Winter

Condensation is a common winter issue, as it increases during the winter months. Warm air holds more moisture than cold air and this means that in winter:

- Heating warms indoor air.
- Moisture from cooking, showers and drying laundry builds up.
- Cold external walls and windows cause moisture to condense.



Without adequate ventilation, moisture can settle on cold surfaces; this leads to damp patches and can then risk mould growth.

Keeping condensation in check:

- Ensure kitchen and bathroom have extractor fans fitted, and in good working order.
- Check trickle vents are working properly.

Ventilation | The Small Actions Which Can Have A Big Impact

One of the simplest and most effective ways to reduce winter damp is regular ventilation.

Encourage tenants to:

- Open windows briefly each day - even in the winter!
- Use extractor fans during and after cooking or using the shower / bath.
- Keep internal doors open to allow airflow.



Short bursts of ventilation of even just a few minutes ca help to remove moisture, without reducing room temperature.

Managing Rainwater | Gutters And Downpipes

Winter rainfall can expose weaknesses in a building's rainwater system. Common issues include:

- Blocked gutters overflowing onto walls.
- Disconnected or cracked downpipes.
- Leaking joints causing damp patches.

When rainwater repeatedly runs down external walls, it can penetrate the brickwork, create internal damp points and damage insulation and internal finishes



Advice For Landlords

- Arrange for the gutters to be cleared before winter sets in.
- Visually inspect downpipes during heavy rain.

Tenants are often the first to notice issues; therefore, encourage them tenant to report leaks or overflows – and act quickly when they do.

Pipes | Avoiding Frozen And Burst Pipes

Frozen pipes are possibly one of the most expensive winter emergencies. Pipes can freeze when there is:

- External or poorly insulated pipework.
- Lengthy periods of below zero temperatures.

When water freezes, it expands, which causes pipes to crack or burst, which often only becoming apparent when they thaw. Here's how to keep pipes in good condition.

- Ensure properties have adequate loft and pipe insulation.
- Maintain low heating during particularly cold spells.

If the property is vacant, landlords should consider draining the system down, and understanding regular inspections.



CHECK THE WORDING!

Some Buildings Insurance policies will stipulate that unoccupied buildings have their water systems drained in order for the policy to remain valid.

Storm Damage | Looking After Roofs And Fences

High winds and heavy rain can cause sudden damage. The areas most at risk are:

- Fence panels and posts.
- Loose roof tiles.
- Aerials and satellite dishes.
- Gutters.
- Sheds and outbuildings.



Fence damage is particularly common during the winter, because panels can act like sails in high winds, pulling posts loose or collapsing entire sections.

Small issues can quickly become safety issues if left unresolved, which is why your tenants should be encouraged to report:

- Loose or fallen fence panels.
- Leaks after storms.
- Visible damage to external fixtures.

Drying Laundry Indoors | The Hidden Moisture Risk

Drying clothes indoors without ventilation can release litres of moisture into the air, which can be a major contributor to condensation and mould.

To avoid this:

- Avoid drying laundry directly on radiators.
- Use a ventilated room where possible.
- Open a window slightly while drying.
- Use extractor fans or dehumidifiers if available.



This can be a common friction point between landlords and tenants, therefore we recommend clear, non-judgemental guidance is provided.

Maintaining Building Health | Heating And Energy Usage

Under-heating a property can increase the risk of damp and mould. Whilst high energy costs are a genuine concern, completely turning off heating during cold weather can allow surfaces to become cold enough for moisture in the air to increase condensation.

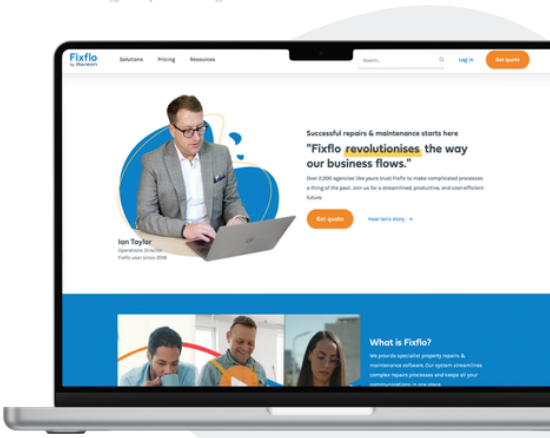
To reduce the risk of frozen pipes, you should encourage tenants to maintain a consistent, low background temperature which is often better for both the building and overall energy efficiency.

During the winter months, many property issues because of:

- Delayed reporting.
- Uncertainty over responsibility.
- Tenants not knowing what should be considered normal, as opposed to urgent.

MAKING WINTER REPORTING SIMPLE WITH FIXFLO

BOX Technology that powers lettings From THE LETTINGS HUB the home for lettings



Clear advice is only effective if tenants can act on it easily. Using a system like Fixflo allows tenants to:

- Report issues quickly and accurately.
- Access tailored help and guidance before problems escalate.
- Share photos and information that speed up diagnosis.

For agents and landlords, this means you will have faster resolutions and reduces repeated issues in the property.

Thanks to Fixflo's integration with BOX, agents can track and manage repairs. Fixflo creates time-stamped logs, and keeps a record of photos and messages. Plus, tenants can report issues in their tenancy portal.

Winter brings predictable risks - but with the right systems, guidance and communication in place, many of these issues can be prevented or managed before they become costly problems.

On the next page, we've created a handy checklist to share with your tenants to help them to protect the property during the winter months.

WINTER PROPERTY CHECKLIST FOR TENANTS

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Tenants. At this time of year, colder weather, increased rainfall and storms can all affect your home. The simple steps below can help reduce the risk of issues such as damp, mould, leaks and storm damage, and allow any problems to be dealt with quickly if they do occur.

VENTILATION AND CONDENSATION



- [ ] Open windows briefly each day to let moisture escape.
- [ ] Use extractor fans when cooking, showering or bathing.
- [ ] Wipe condensation from windows and sills if it forms.
- [ ] Keep furniture slightly away from external walls.

HEATING



- [ ] Keep a low, consistent level of heating during cold weather.
- [ ] Avoid turning heating off completely in freezing conditions.
- [ ] Report any heating issues promptly.

LAUNDRY



- [ ] Avoid drying clothes directly on radiators.
- [ ] Ventilate rooms when drying laundry indoors.
- [ ] Use extractor fans or open a window slightly.

EXTERNAL CHECKS



- [ ] Report any overflowing gutters or leaking downpipes.
- [ ] Let your agent know if fence panels or posts are damaged.
- [ ] Report leaks or damp patches after heavy rain or storms.

GENERAL



- [ ] Report issues early, because small problems are easier to fix.
- [ ] Use our agreed reporting system rather than waiting.

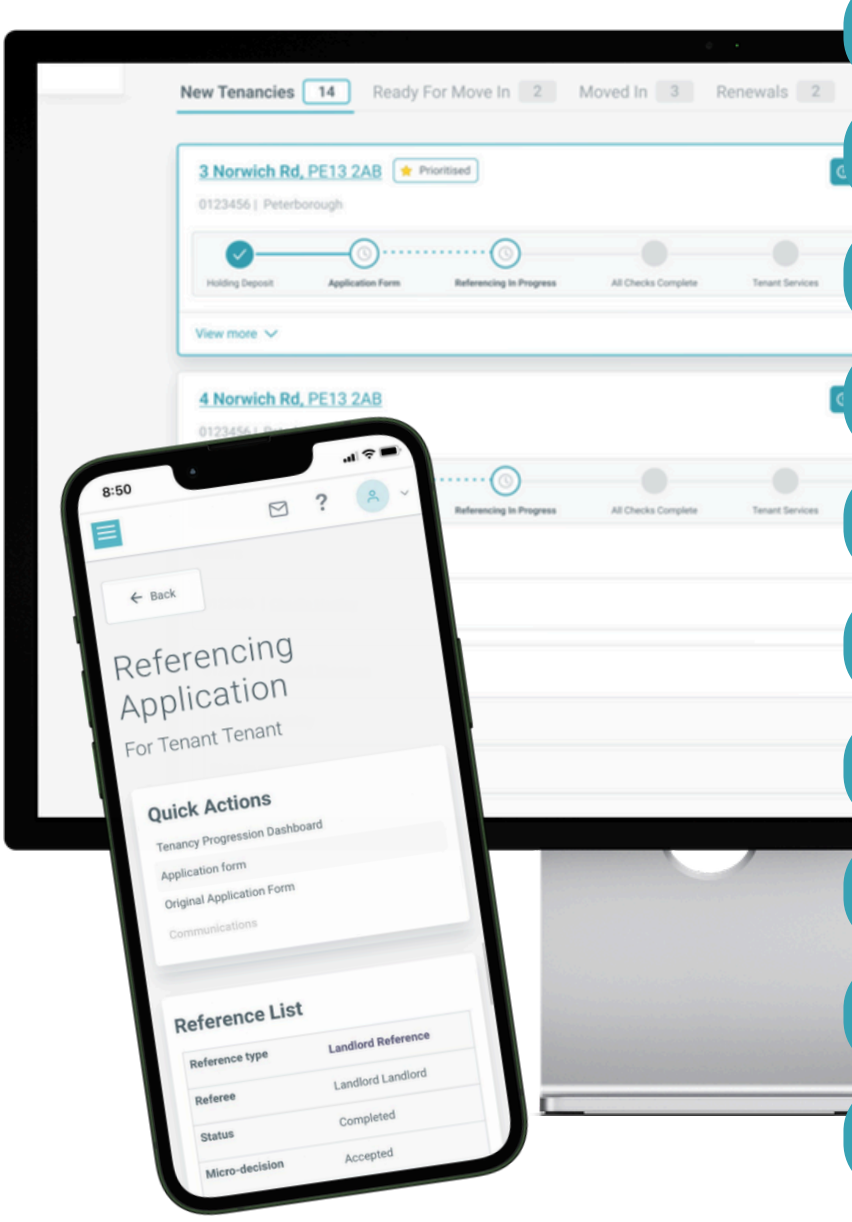
PLUMBING



- [ ] Report dripping taps or reduced water pressure.
- [ ] Let the agent know if pipes appear frozen or noisy.
- [ ] Keep internal doors open to allow warm air to circulate.

BOX FROM THE LETTINGS HUB the home for lettings

At The Lettings Hub, we're always here to support you through the ever-changing lettings landscape. With the Renters' Rights Act introducing new regulations, staying updated is crucial. That's why we offer a variety of resources to help you navigate these changes smoothly. From webinars and blogs to tailored guides, our platform is packed with expert insights. Be sure to follow us on LinkedIn and bookmark our Renters' Rights Hub for the latest updates, tips, and advice.



- Tenant PreQualification
- Elite Referencing
- IDVT Know Your Customer
- Section 13 Rent Reviews
- Contract Updates
- Rent and Legal Protection
- Professional Guarantor
- Pet Damage Insurance
- Holding Deposit
- BOX Audit and Compliance