

Residential Tenant's Handbook



This is an important document
with information about your tenancy.
Please read through it as soon as possible.

Scotmid
property

Scotmid Property Hillwood House 2 Harvest Drive,
Newbridge EH28 8QJ

Tel: 0131 335 4400 Fax: 0131 335 6506

resiproperty@scotmid.co.uk

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Welcome to your new Scotmid property,

we are glad to have you as a tenant and hope that you enjoy your tenancy. This tenant's handbook has been designed to inform you about your tenancy and property. Please do take the time to read it, if we can clarify any of the issues within the handbook, please do not hesitate to contact us. A list of contact numbers is included below.

At Scotmid Property we are committed to providing a trouble free and friendly housing experience. Should you have any comments or suggestions please contact 0131 335 4535.

General Enquiries:

Scotmid Property Office Hours: 8.30am - 5.00pm (Mon-Fri)

Telephone: **0131 335 4535 or 0131 335 4503** E-mail address: resiproperty@scotmid.co.uk

Emergencies:

Outwith Office Hours only (inc public holidays where office is closed) 0131 335 4400

Please note we do not close for standard public holidays with the exception of Christmas and New Year. See Page 6 for emergency definitions.

Gas Emergency Number: 0800 111 999

Please call this number in the first instance if you smell gas anywhere.

Loss of Electrical Power: 0800 092 9290 (or 0330 1010 222 from a mobile phone)

If you experience a complete loss of power please call your area provider, which can be confirmed by checking your utility bills. Scotmid cannot repair faults due to a supply issue, only your area provider (usually Scottish Power) can do that.

Payment of Rent

Rent payments must be made by standing order on the 28th of each month. Your property number must be included as a reference on all payments. This can be found on your lease documentation and rental invoice. If your property number is not included it may delay allocation of your payment and you may incur interest charges.

Please note that a standing order is entirely controlled by you, Scotmid cannot set them up on your bank account or cancel them on your behalf. If there are any problems with payments please contact your bank in the first instance.

If you have any difficulties making a rent payment, please call: -

Residential Property Manager: 0131 335 4535

E-mail address: resiproperty@scotmid.co.uk

Property Assistant: 0131 335 4503

E-mail address: propertyadmin@scotmid.co.uk

Rental Payment Problems

If you experience problems paying your rent please contact our office and speak to a member of staff. Do not ignore the issue as that can result in your tenancy being brought to an end. If for any reason your rent has not reached us we may try to contact you to alert you to the problem. Please keep your contact details up to date by informing us of any changes throughout your tenancy.

Your Tenancy

There are two types of lease agreement and depending on when you moved into the property will determine the type of lease agreement you have signed. The two types are:

Pre 1st December 2017, the lease agreement you will have signed is a Short Assured Tenancy (SAT) for an initial minimum period of six months continuing on a two monthly basis after the initial period. The initial period duration and the notice periods required to terminate the tenancy are set out in the tenancy documentation.

Post 1st December 2017, the lease agreement you will have signed is a Private Residential Tenancy (PRT). There is no initial minimum period of tenancy and the notice periods required to terminate the tenancy are set out in the tenancy documentation and associated addendum.

Please note only named persons on the lease agreement must occupy the premises.

Your lease agreement includes details of the date your tenancy begins, the agreed monthly rental due, together with other relevant terms and conditions. Please take the time to read through it carefully. If you are unsure about anything, please feel free to contact one of our helpful staff, who will be happy to assist you. You should always keep a copy of your lease agreement in case you need to make reference to it at a later date.

Your deposit will be held with a Tenancy Deposit Scheme for the duration of your tenancy. Details of the scheme will be sent to you by Scotmid once your deposit has been transferred.

If you wish to leave the property you must give notice in writing. As stated above the written notice period you are required to give Scotmid is set out in the tenancy documentation and associated addendum. The notice period is strictly two months (unless otherwise stated in your lease agreement). When vacating the property at the end of your tenancy it is your responsibility to cancel the standing order. A Representative from Scotmid will acknowledge your written notice letter and arrange to inspect the property. Please note: If you do not receive written confirmation regarding your notice letter please contact Scotmid as soon as possible to confirm it has reached us. Depending on your lease agreement, notice is calculated from different dates of receipt, please refer to your lease agreement for further details or feel free to contact one of our helpful staff.

Remember to check the inventory for the property, which you were given at the beginning of the tenancy, and return it to us in the prepaid envelope provided within 7 days of the start of your tenancy. When vacating, leave the property clean with all items located in the correct rooms as per the inventory.

Please take care not to mark the walls or damage the decor during your tenancy. Do not put any holes etc in the walls and take care not to chip painted woodwork when bringing in or removing furniture. Laundry should not be dried over radiators as this can cause the wallpaper to lift from the walls. You may be charged for any damage when you vacate.

Remember to remove all of your belongings, including furniture, from the property prior to checkout. Scotmid will dispose of any items/furniture remaining in the property after this time and the cost will be deducted from your deposit. Items cannot be kept 'for the next tenant'.

To facilitate the return of your deposit, all keys must be returned on or before the vacating date (late return of any keys may result in a daily rental charge being applied). Please be aware that part or all deposit can be withheld to reimburse Scotmid for any damage that may have occurred to the property during the tenancy as well as any cleaning charges that are required. Please see Deposit Return section for details.

General Advice about what to do in an Emergency

If you find yourself in the middle of an emergency, your common sense and instincts will usually tell you what to do. However, it is important to:

- Make sure 999 has been called if people are injured or there is a threat to life
- Not put yourself or others in danger
- Follow the advice of the emergency services
- Try to remain calm and think before acting, and try to reassure others
- Check for injuries – remember to help yourself before attempting to help others

(Extracted from Preparing for Emergencies, What you need to know, HM Government.)

Emergency Repairs:

If you do experience an emergency outwith office hours, please call Scotmid Head Office on 0131 335 4400 to report the issue. Non urgent repairs reported as an emergency will result in the callout charge being passed on to the tenant.

Emergency repairs would include:

- No heating or hot water between October 1st and 31st March only or at any time of the year if there is a vulnerable person living in the property – a young baby, or someone who is elderly or disabled.
- Heating system giving off fumes – **call Transco on 0800 111 999.**
- No cold water (*check with neighbours first to see if it affects other homes as it may be a mains issue. If Scotmid is called in this instance tenants may be charged the callout fee.*)
- A burst or leak that at least fills a household bucket overnight. Turn off water.
- Any burst, leak, water penetration that is affecting electrics. Turn off electricity.
- Complete or part power failure in the property (check trip switches and neighbouring properties before calling as it may be your area provider).
- Electrical fitting smoking or scorching (also turn off the electricity).
- Leaking soil pipe.
- Blocked toilet. Please try to unblock it yourself in the first instance. (Please note if your toilet is not flushing this is not classed as an emergency and you should call within normal working hours).
- Blocked drain with sewage coming up.
- Large volumes of rain coming in through the roof or windows.
- Flooding into the property.
- Lock broken, door broken or window broken – but only if it makes the property not secure. (Tenant may have to pay for this repair where it is a result of tenant negligence or damage).
- Tenant locked out of flat call Scotmid on 0131 335 4400 for advice in the first instance. (The tenant may have to pay for any callout to effect entry in this instance.).

Repairs

Please report all repairs to Scotmid Property Helpdesk; please note that this service is for repairs to maintain the property to the standard it was when you took over the tenancy. All calls made to the helpdesk will be logged by our staff, and dealt with as soon as possible, unless an emergency which will be dealt with immediately. All issues should be reported as soon as they are identified, tenants should avoid leaving issues unattended as we cannot treat non emergency issues as an emergency due to a delay in reporting it to us. Please give as much detail as possible about the nature of the problem. And please remember if you do not report it we cannot fix it.

Once you have agreed an appointment for access with a contractor, failure on the tenant's part to keep the appointment may result in the tenant's liability for a call out charge.

General Maintenance:

Small maintenance issues such as changing light bulbs and changing smoke alarm batteries should be carried out by tenants themselves during the tenancy. The property should be kept adequately heated and ventilated to avoid burst pipes/condensation. Ensure drains are kept clear by periodically using drain cleaner and ensuring that food, grease, oil etc is not put down drains. Tile grouting and bathroom/kitchen seals should be kept clean to avoid premature deterioration due to mould build up. Clean, descale and disinfect shower heads regularly (leave them in a bleach solution with hot water before rinsing thoroughly). Appliances should also have filters regularly cleaned (washing machine and vacuum cleaner) and be emptied/soap drawers and housing cleaned regularly. Doing the aforementioned keeps wear and tear to a minimum and helps maintain the life of fittings/products.

When you move in or when returning from a holiday of more than a few days make sure you run taps and showers for at least 2 minutes. This helps ensure any water left standing in pipes while the property was empty is flushed out of the system. In general, make sure that hot water is set to around 60 degrees whether you have a hot water tank or instant hot water. Setting the temperature too low on a combi boiler (instant hot water) will lead to the boiler continually cutting out and not heating the water properly.

Other maintenance issues to keep the property wind and watertight and in the condition it was when you moved in should be reported to our office.

Sometimes there are basic checks tenants can carry out which would solve the problem without the need for a contractor and time to be taken to allow access.

Appliances:

Washing machine – Check the filter is clear and the soap drawer is clean. A blocked filter or soap drawer can cause the machine to stop functioning correctly.

Vacuum cleaner – Make sure it is emptied and the filter is cleaned regularly. Small appliances – Check if the fuse needs replaced.

Boiler

Please do not try to fix the boiler yourself. The below can be safely checked however if you are in any doubt please call our office

- Check the pressure gauge. Boiler pressure should be between 1 and 1.5. Our staff can help you to re-pressurise the boiler or can visit to do this for you.
- Check it is switched on at the wall. During a power cut your boiler will not work.
- Check the timer is set correctly. Check the water temperature is set high enough.

Drains

Try using drain cleaner or plunger.

Always use a drain trap/cover to stop food etc going down and becoming trapped.

Gas

If you smell gas or suspect a leak call **Transco on 0800 111999** in the first instance.

Power Failure

If full power failure check with neighbours in case it is a supply issue. Call your local area provider (details can be found on your utility bills) to report a problem.

If part power failure check your trip switch is set to the 'on' position. For lights change the bulb in the first instance.

Radiators

If your radiator is warm at the bottom and cold at the top it may need bled. You will need to check your boiler pressure after bleeding any radiators.

Smoke Alarm

If the alarm is beeping sporadically the battery may need changed. All mains wired smoke alarms will have a battery back-up.

Toilets

If blocked you must try to unblock it yourself. This can be done using a plunger in most instances.

Gas Safety

All properties with gas appliances or supplies require an annual Gas Safety inspection. As part of the inspection, a “Landlord’s Safety Certificate” is issued by a Gas Safety Registered Heating Engineer. This inspection is necessary to comply with existing legislation.

The annual inspection date may not coincide with the start date of your tenancy. When the inspection is due an appointed heating engineer will contact you to make an appointment convenient with yourself. It is important that access is given, and your assistance in this matter is appreciated.

On completion of the gas safety inspection, you will be issued with a certificate which you must keep within the property. Please do not remove this at the end of your tenancy – it belongs to the property, and will be required for the new tenant.

Note: If you think you may have a gas leak, please do not use any electric switches or any naked flames such as a match, or pilot light for a cooker or fire. You should turn off the gas supply at the meter, open external doors and windows to let the gas out and then contact Transco on 0800 111 999 in the first instance.

If you have gas within your property:

A copy of your current gas safety certificate will be provided to you at the time of your lease signing.

Gas Central Heating Systems

Radiators may occasionally need bled to keep your system working efficiently. Please contact our office for advice and assistance. If bleeding the radiators themselves tenants should always check the pressure on the boiler before and after doing so to ensure the pressure remains at the correct level, normally between 1 and 1.5. If the pressure has fallen the system will need repressurised. If you require any assistance with this please contact our office and speak to a member of staff.

General Advice

Drains:

When substances other than waste water are flushed down the drain, this can cause problems. For example, fats and oils can solidify and cause smells and blockages and using too much washing powder can cause excess to clog up pipes.

The following must not be flushed/poured down the drain:

- waste food
- paints and solvents
- fats, oils and greases
- disposable nappies and wipes
- sanitary products and wipes
- bandages and dressings
- animal waste
- cotton wool and cotton buds
- razor blades
- fuel

(extracted from Dealing with problems with drains and sewers, HM Government)

Condensation:

There is always some moisture in the air, even if you cannot see it. If the air gets colder it cannot hold all the moisture and tiny drops of water appear. This is condensation. You may notice it when you see your breath on a cold day, or when the mirror mists over when you have a bath. Condensation occurs mainly during cold weather, whether it is raining or dry. It appears in places where there is little movement of air. Look for it in corners, on or near windows, in or behind wardrobes and cupboards. If left untreated condensation can form mould on surfaces. Some ways to reduce condensation are:

Produce less moisture: Cover pans, dry clothes outdoors. Wipe away and mop up any moisture appearing on walls, windows, sills and other surfaces.

Ventilate to remove moisture: Increase external or fan ventilation of the kitchen and bathroom when in use and shut the door. When going to bed close the door and keep a window ajar or when getting up open the window and keep the door closed for a period of time to get rid of the moisture produced overnight.

Heat your home a little more: If possible, keep low background heat on all day, with background ventilation. Turning heating up and down causes condensation when the air surfaces cool down and is less cost efficient.

(extracted from Keep your home free from damp and mould, HM Government)

Legionella Information & Advice

Although we would stress that there is no cause for alarm, as a precautionary measure, we must highlight the possible dangers from legionella. We have provided this information to advise you on how best to minimise any risk of infection.

What is Legionella?

- Legionella is a bacteria that can live in domestic hot and cold water pipes and tanks
- The bacteria can survive low temperatures and grows rapidly at temperatures between 20°C and 45°C. The bacteria is killed at higher temperatures and this is the main method used to control the risk in domestic water systems.
- Legionnaires' disease is a pneumonia-like illness caused by exposure to the bacteria.
- Although the risk from legionella in frequently used domestic hot and cold water systems is very low, it should not be ignored.

How can Legionnaires disease be caught?

- The infection is caused by breathing in water droplets or spray-mists which have been contaminated by the bacteria. Those most at risk include elderly people, smokers and those suffering from long-term illness.
- It is not contracted through drinking contaminated water and cannot be passed from person to person.

What can residents do to reduce the risk from Legionella?

- If your home has a hot water tank/boiler make sure that the water temperature is set at a minimum of 60°C on the tank/boiler thermostat, if you need help or advice on doing this please contact our office. If you have a combi boiler with instant hot water you will not have any hot water tanks supplying the property but may still have a cold water tank supplying the bathroom cold taps.
- Regularly run all cold water taps for at least two minutes to flush them out. For hot water taps and showers make sure they run at full temperature for at least two minutes. For infrequently used taps (bath taps if you normally use the shower) it is recommended that this is done weekly.
- Regularly clean your shower head and hose, if you have one, with a mild disinfectant solution.
- If your house is going to be unoccupied for more than two weeks at any time, and particularly in the summer, drain down your water system and refill it on your return. If you need help or advice on doing this please contact us in advance of your holiday

By following these basic rules you will minimise any risk to you and those in your household from Legionella.

Utilities/Council Tax

Tenants are responsible for paying all utilities and council tax for the property for the duration of the lease. We will write to the utility provider and local authority to advise them you have moved in providing dates and readings (where available) and request that they liaise with you directly regarding the set-up of your accounts. Please ensure you return your inventory with the meter readings taken by you the day your lease began. If you do not take meter readings your bills may be estimated by the utility provider. Please liaise direct with your local authority if you are claiming any council tax discounts.

If you do not hear from your utility provider/local authority for some considerable time please contact them direct to set up your accounts and payments.

Please note that Scotmid do not make requests for specific tariffs and have no input on setting tariffs or any charges made by the utility provider or local authority. If you have any queries regarding the charges made to you during your tenancy please contact your utility provider or local authority direct.

If you have a fault with your meter during your tenancy please contact your local area provider (this information can be found on your utility bills) in the first instance. Scotmid is not permitted to carry out repairs on meters as these belong to the local area provider. If you have complete loss of power during your tenancy please check with neighbours before contacting Scotmid. If your neighbours have also lost power this may indicate a power cut in your area which is outwith our control and must be reported to the local area provider direct. In Scotland the area provider is normally Scottish Power but please check this on your utility bill or with the utility company.

Please do not change the gas or electricity suppliers without informing Scotmid in writing. Tenants are prohibited from installing or having installed pre-payment meters. In the event that these conditions are breached the landlord will pass on any associated costs to reinstate the meter or identify the supplier, together with an administration fee of £150 + VAT. We will read the meters at the time of the checkout.

Neighbours

Please try not to disturb your neighbours, especially during anti-social hours. Remember that every individual has the right to enjoy peace and quiet within their own home. Keep noise from televisions, stereo equipment etc to a minimum.

“It is a legal requirement of the landlord to take lawful forms of action to resolve any issues regarding anti-social behaviour of occupants and visitors to the property in question” (Anti-Social Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004: Section 68)

If you are experiencing difficulties that are not being resolved, please contact Scotmid Property in the first instance. Scotmid will take action as appropriate and where the law allows.

Communal Areas

This may be the first time you have experienced living in a tenemental property with shared or communal areas. All residents within a tenement are responsible for ensuring that communal areas are kept to the required standards. Each resident must take their turn at cleaning the communal stair areas. If you haven't already asked your neighbour for details, please do so. And remember to take your turn.

Rubbish should not be left or stored in the property or communal areas. Rubbish should be presented for collection on the due date or put into the communal bins provided by the council. If in doubt, ask your neighbour when collections are made or contact your local council.

Smoke Alarm Testing

In line with current regulations it is the tenant's responsibility to test the smoke alarm once a week by pressing and holding the test button (see paragraph 12 of your lease). You should change the battery if it fails during your tenancy (the detector will emit a short beep every few seconds if the battery needs changed), but should the alarm itself become faulty please report the matter to Scotmid as soon as possible. Please note, even if your smoke detector is mains wired it will have a battery which may need replaced. If we send our contractor out to change a smoke alarm battery you may be charged.

Smoking Policy

Smoking is not permitted in any property or within any communal areas. Any damage caused by tenants or tenants visitors smoking will be deducted from the deposit.

Window Cleaning

During the tenancy it is the tenants responsibility to clean the windows in the property. Where there are sash & case windows these open in a specific way to allow cleaning of the outsides. Please contact our office and we can send you details of how to open up the window so that the bottom sash swings in giving access to the entire window. Alternatively please have your windows professionally cleaned from time to time.

If your windows have been painted prior to moving in they may stick slightly at first. We do try to avoid this happening as much as possible however if you are unable to open the windows because they stick or are 'painted shut' due to recent works please advise our office and we will arrange to have that rectified.

Vacating the Property

The property must be cleaned to a 'professional standard' at the end of the tenancy and all items belonging to tenants must be removed from the property. There is no exception to this. A cleaning and vacating guide will be sent to tenants with the vacating pack when notice is received. Please ensure you follow this guide as it will help with prompt return of your deposit. All keys must be returned at the final inspection, late return of keys will incur a daily rent charge for each day they are overdue.

If the property is furnished all items must be located in their original rooms as per your inventory. If you have not kept a copy of your inventory please contact our office and a copy can be supplied.

Cleaning is of the utmost importance when getting ready to move out. Please ensure you follow all of the instructions given to you in the vacating pack. Any areas missed will incur at least a minimum cleaners callout fee. Remember areas such as tile grouting, washing machine soap drawer, skirtings and doors, kick plates in the kitchen etc.

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