



Longford County Council Home Maintenance Handbook for Tenants



Revised 2022
This handbook should be read in conjunction with Longford County Council
Tenancy Agreement

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1: About this handbook

You are now a tenant of Longford County Council, the local Housing Authority for all of county Longford. This handbook tells you about:

- your role and responsibilities as our tenant
- our role and responsibilities and the services we offer
- what you can and cannot do to the property as a tenant
- the rules and standards you must accept as a Council tenant

Consider this handbook as a guide to our services rather than a legal document. You will have to sign a Tenancy Agreement before you move into your home and that clearly sets out your legal position. It is a good idea to keep this handbook in a safe place so you can refer to it whenever you need to. It should be read in conjunction with your Tenancy Agreement.

What do you think?

To deliver a quality service, we need your input. Please contact us and let us know your views.

- Write to us: Housing Section, Longford County Council, Town Hall, Market Square, Longford N39 C5F2
 - Drop in to: Town Hall, Market Square, Longford.
 - Phone: 043 3343499
 - Email: housing@longfordcoco.ie

Your personal data

We promise that the personal data you provide to our Housing Section will be processed as set out in the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Acts.

You can find full details of Longford County Council's Privacy Policy on our website www.longfordcoco.ie

Follow us on    

2: Welcome to your new home

Longford County Council would like to welcome you as our new tenant. The property we are going to rent to you will become your home.

Before you move in

All new tenants must attend pre-tenancy training. It is an opportunity for you to meet with us and ask any questions that you may have. Your obligations as a Longford County Council tenant will be explained to you and we will also outline our responsibilities as your new landlord.

Before you move in:

- ✓ Contact your power supplier to check that you are connected, and that the account is in your name. You need to do this because the Council will contact the existing supplier within a week of the start of your tenancy to inform them that Longford Co Council is no longer responsible to pay the charges. Failure to do so may result in the electricity supply being stopped.
- ✓ Ask us for permission if you are putting up a TV Satellite dish, as we need to make sure this won't cause structural damage to the property.
- ✓ Notify An Post (the postal service) that you have changed address.
- ✓ Update the Electoral Register so you are registered to vote at your new address. Go to checktheregister.ie and see if are registered.
- ✓ Organise household contents insurance against fire, theft and accidental damage like flood and water damage. (The Council will only insure the structure of the building.)
- ✓ Organise a method of waste disposal when you move in. During your tenancy you may be asked to provide proof of this collection. You need any of the following four proofs, keep them to hand:
 - receipts from a Civic Amenity Site (with your name and address)
 - bin collector details
 - form signed giving consent to share a bin
 - receipts from a compactor (with your name and address)

See section 5. 'What you are responsible for' for more information on waste disposal

Sometimes, the water may be turned off when you first arrive at your new home. This will have been done to prevent burst pipes from damaging your home while no one was living there. You should be able to turn the water supply back on at the stop cock, which is usually located outside where the mains water pipe enters the building or in your kitchen, below the sink unit.

3: Repairs and maintenance - Who does what?

To retain the dwelling in a habitable condition, repairs and maintenance are necessary. The tenant shares responsibility for these repairs and maintenance with the Council, as set out in the terms of the tenancy agreement which all tenants must sign before getting the keys to their home.

Our Housing Maintenance Section

This section is responsible for managing and repairing the Council's rented housing stock, which includes your home.

Rent needs to be up to date

Any time you ask us to make a repair to your home, we check your rent account. We will only provide you with a full maintenance service if your rent account is up to date.

What we do – and what you do

We are responsible for structural, major plumbing and electrical repairs. You are responsible for all other regular maintenance to your home. We explain more about responsibilities in the next two chapters.

Our Housing Maintenance Section will help you answer your request for housing repairs you have. It will forward requests to our maintenance crews.

If you need to notify the Council of maintenance problems in your home by

- phone 043 3343303 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday
- email housingmaintenance@longfordcoco.ie
- In an emergency outside of office hours by calling 1800 211 525

Leave your phone number

If you make a request for maintenance or repair, make sure you leave a contact phone number so that the maintenance crew can contact you before they come to your home. You can also make a maintenance request by calling to our offices.

How do we classify requests?

We list all requests for repairs or maintenance on our system and classify them as:

- Emergency
- Urgent
- Routine

They are then forwarded to our maintenance supervisor who, if necessary, allocates each job to one of our maintenance crews.

Planned Maintenance

Planned maintenance is general repair and maintenance of a preventative or longterm nature. It includes items such as window and door replacement, electrical or insulation upgrading etc. This work is normally applied to a number of houses and is generally undertaken by contract.

4: How we classify repair requests

We aim to provide a fast and effective repair service to you and other tenants. To achieve this within the limited budget and fulfil our obligations to our tenants, we prioritise repairs depending on how urgent we think they are. See table on next page.




Remember: Make all normal requests for repairs and maintenance to 043 3343303 or email housingmaintenance@longfordcoco.ie

In an emergency, the outside office hours number is 1800 211 525.

Only emergency repairs will be carried out after hours. Examples of emergency repairs include:

- Major plumbing leak
- Dangerous electrical fault
- Major storm damage
- Failure of entire electrical system
- Lack of water supply to dwelling

Note: Before you request a repair, check the list in the following chapter to see whether the repair is your responsibility or the Council's.

Category class	Example of repairs	Likely response time
 Emergency Where we think there is a potential risk to human life.	Major electrical faults, House fire, flooding, storm damage, roof collapse.	Within 24 hours
 Urgent Where we think there is the potential for damage to the property.	Defective wiring/fitting Leaking pipework, cylinder, water tank Wastewater treatment system, blocked sewer, leaking roof	Within 3 working days
 Routine Routine repairs are general stock repairs. We do them whenever finance is available.	All other types of repair	Within 12 weeks
Planned maintenance	Replacing windows and doors, painting, repairing driveways or footpaths	Central government funding dependent
Energy upgrades	Upgrading insulation and heating	Central government funding dependent

5: What you are responsible for

This section tells you what you are responsible for inside and outside your home. It also tells you about your responsibilities.

Inside your home, you have responsibilities for:	
✓	plumbing and bathroom
✓	heating system
✓	finishes (cracks in walls and so on)
✓	electrical repairs
✓	general repairs
✓	draught proofing of doors and windows
✓	Repair any plumbing leaks caused by the removal of fittings for tiling / flooring etc

Plumbing and bathroom

As a tenant, you must:

- seal shower tray and bath edges
- maintain and ensure regular service of the heating system
- make sure no disposable nappies, baby wipes or sanitary protection are flushed down toilets. Do not place anything in the cistern. If you do not do this and they cause a blockage, you may be charged for clearing it
- replacement or repair of toilet bowl, wash hand basin, bath, toilet cistern and cover if it is cracked and leaking. Exceptions will be made when issue is as a result of wear and tear
- pay to replace or repair toilet seats and handles
- remove all blockages from sinks, kitchens, baths and showers
- remove limescale from any electric showers provided by the Council
- repair and maintain the shower – if you installed it
- repair any damage to floor coverings caused by a water leak
- repair the flushing mechanism on your toilet
- repair and maintain bathroom extractor fan
- replace and repair shower doors
- replace or repair faulty sink or bath stoppers and chains and
- repair or replace splash back tiling on baths, showers, and sinks

Please note that you must have our written permission before you can install a shower unit, and what you propose to install must meet our standards.

Heating system

As a tenant, it's your responsibility to:

- replace fire cheeks (fire surrounds) or stove glass and seals
- maintain adequate heating and ventilation to prevent condensation,
- repair the fireplace if it is coming away from the wall
- clear any air locks in the heating system
- release air locks in pipes and make sure that any air locks caused by the boiler running out of oil are properly vented by a competent person insured to do this

If you have oil central heating, you are not allowed to fit a monitoring device to any tank provided by the Council which does not come with a built-in monitor. This is to prevent you causing damage to the tank. Also, you should avoid tilting or moving your oil tank as this puts debris (pieces of material) into the burner and can cause serious damage to your heating system and can cause leaks / spillages (see page 24).

You should avoid running out of oil as your oil line may become air locked and need to be bled. You will be responsible for arranging this. Dip your tank regularly. If you have less than 300mm (1ft) of oil left in the bottom, order oil immediately.

If the water supply to the house is cut off but your cold water storage tank is full, it is still safe to run your central heating but use your domestic water sparingly as you risk running the storage tank dry and creating an airlock. If you have a back boiler in your fire/range (ie: if your fire/range heats water or radiators in your home) only light a small fire if your water is off.

Air to Air Heat Pumps

Air to Air Heat Pumps give a comfortable, energy efficient heating solution for your living room and bedrooms. The heat pump system heats the room by circulating hot air around all parts of the room.

Using a remote controller, you can adjust your room temperature, flow rate and operation mode. Each indoor unit has its own remote controller with holder fixed to the wall. The tenant is liable to pay for a new remote controller (€85) if the original is lost or damaged. It is also the tenant's responsibility to replace the batteries in each remote controller as and when required. The Council are responsible for the maintenance of all indoor units at the approved service intervals.

Please note that you must have written permission from us before you can install a new heating system or change the heating system already there.

Finishes

It's up to you as our tenant to:

- repair internal plaster cracks
- repair or replace any damaged or missing wall, shower, floor and fire tiles
- repair internal woodwork such as floors, skirting boards and hot press doors
- replace any flooring damaged by leaks
- decorate inside your home, using anti- mold paint where it's needed
- provide curtain rails and window boards
- repaint any discoloured ceilings or walls after water leaks

Electrical repairs

You must:

- repair any appliances that you install, including electric fires and heaters not installed by the Council
- make sure you do not overload sockets

The Council takes no responsibility for wiring to sheds or any other wiring installed by the tenant.

Please note it is an offence to change electrical circuits, circuit boards or wiring unless you are a registered electrician.

Outside your home, you have responsibilities for:

✓	the garden (if you have one)
✓	satellite TV dishes and aerials
✓	windows and doors
✓	gullies, gutters, downpipes
✓	general repairs

Garden

In the garden, you must:

- maintain your garden, hedges, fences and garden boundary walls
- cut the grass in your front and back gardens regularly
- make sure that your front, side and back gates work properly
- maintain any garden sheds or fuel sheds provided by the Council
- not allow refuse or waste to accumulate on any part of the garden

Satellite TV dishes and aerials

You will be responsible for any damage caused to the outside of your home by people you allow to put up satellite dishes or TV aerials. We recommend that you use a registered and properly insured installer for such works. If the Council must repair damage caused to your home by a dish or aerial installer, you may have to pay for this.

Please note, you are not permitted to attach anything to the chimney

Gutters, gullies, and downpipes

You are responsible for making sure:

- your gutters and downpipes are not blocked with leaves or other debris
- your rainwater gully traps are kept clear and free of silt, leaves or other deposits from gutters

General

As part of your responsibilities as a Council tenant, you are expected to:

- make sure rubbish is never stored for longer than is necessary in your house or garden
- keep external paintwork in good order
- maintain and repair electricity and phone cabinets
- control pests (see notes on vermin, page 14)
- arrange all phone and broadband connections

You must replace (or maintain):

- broken glass caused by destruction or damage by burglary, housebreaking, larceny or theft
- damaged locks, hinges, handles, catches and restrictors on outside doors and windows
- missing keys for outside doors
- draught-proofing on windows and doors You must also regularly paint the timberwork on your windows

It is your responsibility to follow the relevant laws (Waste Prevention Bye-Laws). This guide will help you to do that.

How to manage your bins

You have 3 choices in the way you get rid of your waste. You can:

- take part in a household waste collection service run by an authorised waste collector.
- bring your waste to a Civic Amenity Site or other authorised facility.
- share a bin with another household

An inspector will call

Like a TV licence, inspectors will soon call to households who do not have a contract with an authorised bin company. If a household doesn't have proper waste arrangements in place, they will face a €75 fixed fine. To avoid prosecution, you need to pay this within 21 days if you get such a notice.

You are obliged to provide proof of participation in an authorised waste collection and failure to do so to the satisfaction of the Council may result in further action being taken against your tenancy.

You need any of the following four proofs, keep them safely:

- receipts of Civic Amenity site (must contain name or address of household)
- bin collector details
- form signed giving consent to share a bin
- receipts from a compactor (must contain name or address of household)

On bin collection day

Please make sure that you put your bin out after 7pm the day before it is due to be collected and take it in by 9am the day of the collection. Bins are not permitted to be stored in communal areas, laneways and should not be left outside the boundary of the property.

On the day the bin is being collected, you must not:

- overload the bin
- place bags on or beside the bin
- include hazardous waste and electrical and electronic equipment

Please bring all hazardous waste and electronic equipment to your local Civic Amenity Site.

Hazardous waste	Electronic equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• batteries• cooking or engine oil• paints• aerosols	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• TVs• computer monitors• printers• cables

You are responsible for keeping your wheelie bin in good condition and in a location where it doesn't cause any problems for your neighbours. It should always be left outside your own property and not in an area that causes obstruction.

We ask you to please allow bin collectors to do their jobs and be a good neighbour and not add rubbish to a neighbour's bin without permission.

Recycling – What goes where

We are all responsible for the environment and recycling effectively is essential. MyWaste.ie is a great website for information on what materials can be recycled.



- Nappies
- Ashes (Must be cooled and tied in a bag)
- Tin Foil
- Aero board
- Contaminated & Wet Paper
- Unwashed recyclables



- Medical waste
- Paint cans, motor oil
- Wax or petroleum
- Rocks, bricks and gravel
- Hazardous waste
- Clothes
- IT Equipment
- Batteries
- Electrical Goods
- Glass



All material should be loose (not in bags), clean and dry.



- Clean Dry Paper
- Newspapers, Magazines
- Clean Dry Cardboard boxes
- Packaging
- Juice and Milk Cartons
- Clean Aluminium cans
- Clean steel cans
- Plastic bottles
- Plastic containers
- Clean plastic film
- Carrier bags
- Metal biscuit sweet tins

- Glass
- Aeroboard, Styrofoam
- Polystyrene
- Aluminium foil or foil wrap
- Batteries, razors
- Bulbs, cd's
- Clothes, blankets
- Shoes or clothes hangers
- Electrical goods
- Food waste
- Grass or garden waste
- Kitchen roll
- Tissue paper, no nappies
- Construction waste
- Building waste

Please bear in mind that one contaminated bin can contaminate the entire load & all items must be HAND sorted by our operatives at our facility afterwards.



- Meat, poultry, fish
- Shellfish
- Bones
- Egg
- Dairy products
- Plate scrapings
- Table scraps
- Fruit
- Vegetable
- Bread, dough
- Pasta, grains
- Cereals
- Coffee grounds
- Filters and tea bags
- Soiled kitchen towels



- Glass
- Metal
- Plastic
- Rubber
- Textiles
- Soil
- Nappies
- Grass or garden waste

DO NOT USE PLASTIC BAGS AS LINERS IN THE BIN

Your new recycling list!

Clean,
Dry and
Loose



www.recyclinglistireland.ie



Roinn Cumarsáide, Gníomhaíthe ar son na hAeráide & Comhshaoil
Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment

What FOOD WASTE CAN I recycle?



What CANNOT BE PLACED in your food waste recycling bin?



For more information, visit Ireland's Official Guide to Waste Management

www.mywaste.ie

mywaste

6: What the Council is responsible for

The Housing Department Maintenance section is responsible for the management and control of the Council's rented stock, this includes structural repairs and alterations on Medical grounds or in emergency situations. Examples of emergency repairs include smoking fuse board or burst water tank.

On signing your TENANCY AGREEMENT, you have assumed responsibility for repairs of a non-structural nature to your Council rented dwelling.

If there is a potential risk to human life you can call the emergency line out of hours on 1800 211 525

7: You must pay for what you damage

Longford County Council will not be responsible for the repair of any items where:

- Damage was caused by the tenant
- Unapproved alterations were carried out by the tenant
- Neglect or failure of tenant to properly maintain
- You will have to pay the cost of repairing any willful or malicious damage to your home. You will also have pay to fix any damage caused by any work that you carried out or got somebody to carry out for you.

The Council decides who is responsible for repair or maintenance works not set out in this handbook.

Repair of electrical or gas fitting or installation/plumbing

The Tenant will be responsible for any electrical repairs arising from his/her interference with the electrical installation and if the Council must execute repairs arising from such interference, the cost of such repairs will be charged to the tenant. Where it is the tenant's responsibility to repair any electrical, gas or plumbing issues, the work should be carried out by a qualified and competent contractor. Where such a contractor carries out any works in a Council dwelling, the name, address and insurance details of the contractor must be forwarded to the Housing Department together with a brief description of the work carried out.

What the Council does not pay for

Please remember that we will not pay to repair your home if you have:

- caused the damage or allowed it to be caused
- made unapproved alterations to your home
- neglected to maintain your home

Vermin

Longford County Council are not responsible for the control of rodents or pests. You as the occupier of the property are responsible for getting rid of vermin such as rats, mice, ants and wasps from your home or garden. It is up to you to contact a reputable pest control company to do this. You can also contact the HSE Environmental Health Officer on 043 3350182.

Insurance

The Council does not insure the contents of your home. We advise that you take out your own household insurance. Even minor leaks or fires can cause devastating damage to property. We do not insure your furniture, floor coverings, belongings or decorations against theft, fire, vandalism, burst pipes and other risks.

In the event of a tenant failing to carry out repairs for which he/she is responsible, such repairs may be carried out by the Council and the cost of same charged to the tenant. The Council will not accept any liability in respect of damage which may have been caused to the contents of the house because of any delay in carrying out these repairs.

You must obtain the Council's approval in writing before starting any improvements, alterations or additions to your home. Tenants must complete an "Authorisation to carry out works" form, which can be obtained from our offices or on our website.

You may need planning permission for certain works and permission from the housing department does not in any way pre-empt the planning process and decision.

The Tenant will be charged for rectifying unapproved alterations. The proposed work must not compromise the future use of the dwelling and the work must be undertaken by a competent contractor who is health and safety compliant. All works must be carried out in accordance with the current Building Regulations and comply with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and Construction Regulations 2013. Certificates must be provided on completion where required. All such construction become the property of the landlord and are not removable by the tenant on termination of the tenancy/transfer, nor is any compensation allowable in respect of them.

Examples of construction work on your house, which may come within these regulations, would include employing somebody to complete:

- Building an extension, porch or garage
- An attic conversion
- Re-fitting a kitchen etc
- Re-slating a roof
- Getting solar panels or skylight fitted etc. DIY work does not come within the regulations.

8. Alterations – make sure you ask first!

You must get the Council's approval before you make even minor structural alterations (changes) to your home. You have agreed to this in your tenancy agreement.

Permission and safety

The Council will only give you permission if you can show them that it is safe for you, to arrange these works yourself.

We will not refuse permission without a good reason, and we will explain our reasons to you.

But always remember, you must get permission in writing before work starts. If we refuse permission or set down conditions that you must accept, you will have to accept these, otherwise, you will be in breach of your tenancy.

Unapproved changes

If you go ahead with unauthorised alterations, and don't, within 21 days of being asked to, reverse the changes, we may do this. We can enter your home and restore it to how it was before you began work. If we must do this, we will pass the full cost of doing the work on to you.

Written permission needed

You must get written permission from us if you want to:

- erect a shed, a wall, gates and boundary walls
- change the electrics, plumbing or gas systems in any way. (This includes running electrical lines to external sheds which are not part of the original house wiring system or installing a gas fire.)
- install a stove (see page 24)
- take out or change kitchen units or bathroom fittings
- install a shower
- move radiators or install your own central heating

You must never build on your boundary walls, nor must you use them to support a shed or any other kind of structure. They are not built to support extra weight and may collapse.

Changes never allowed

You must never make the following alterations without permission:

- make changes to MCB Board (fuse board)
- convert your attic space — we can make you pay the full costs of undoing the conversion
- interfere with structural roof timbers
- remove or alter any internal walls
- concrete any area in your front or rear garden

Permission for structural changes

If you want to apply for permission to make structural alterations, you must give the Housing Department:

- details of the extent of work you are proposing
- drawings to include
- plans, elevation and sections of the work you want to do
- a statement from the designer or architect confirming that your proposal complies with our building regulations
- a statement from the designer or architect outlining what planning permission will be needed and applied for details of the contractor who will carry out the work, including details of their insurance

The Council will not consider your application until it has all these details.

Installing goods and fittings

If you buy goods intending to fit them yourself, or to ask the council to fit them for you, the Housing Department will not install them for you. This includes items like:

- pre-packaged kitchens
- windows or doors
- gas cookers (must be fitted by certified fitter)
- gates

Remember that you are responsible for any improvements that you make to your home. If you leave or hand back your keys, your tenancy, you will not be able to recover the cost of these improvements.

Electricity supply and heating and ventilation

When you begin your tenancy, your house will have an electricity supply. You are responsible for contacting an electricity supplier to give them an initial meter reading so they can open an account in your name.

If the electricity supplier asks for a 'new customer' deposit, you will have to pay this.

If you decide to switch to a 'pay as you use card' supplier, you must ask the Housing Maintenance Section for permission to do this. If you move out of your property, you should contact your supplier with a closing meter reading to close your account.

Energy efficient house

As Longford County Council moves towards more environmentally- friendly and efficient houses, you may be allocated a house with a heating and ventilation system that you're not used to.

If you are allocated one of these energy-efficient houses, we will show you how to operate the heating system before you move in. We will pre- set your home to the most efficient heating format and we will explain to you what this means.

Under no circumstances should you interfere with or allow others to access the controls without getting advice from our engineer.

Energy improvements

We carry out work to improve the energy efficiency of our Council homes every year. These improvements include:

- putting up external insulation
- upgrading heating systems (including controls)
- replacing windows and doors
- improving ventilation
- erecting solar or PV (photovoltaic) panels
- insulating walls and attics

If your house has been or is going to be upgraded with external wall insulation, you might like to know about the benefits this brings. It will:

- save you money on heating bills
- improve the energy efficiency in your home
- reduce condensation
- prevent damp and mould
- make your home more comfortable
- improve the look of a building
- reduce the amount of maintenance your home needs
- help the environment by ensuring that you burn less fossil fuel

External insulation is designed to be almost maintenance-free and self-cleaning. You won't need to paint it and it should last for at least 25 years. If it gets grubby, don't power wash it – just wash it with warm water.

Prohibited to fix certain items to walls

To protect the walls of your home, you are not allowed to drill holes or make nail holes to fix any of the following items to walls:

- hanging baskets
- handrails or grab rails
- digital TV dishes
- equipment for cable and broadband services
- bulkhead or sensor lights
- hose wheels
- outside taps
- vents or extractor vents
- maintenance on downpipes
- alarm boxes
- house number plates

Other rules

- Ball games: Do not play ball games against house or boundary walls
- Ladders: Be careful using ladders against externally insulated walls. You can easily damage the insulation surface if the ladder has a sharp or angled edge
- Damaged cracks externally: If you have any damaged areas or large cracks in your external insulation, please contact the Housing Maintenance Department

Showers over baths

You are not allowed to place an electric shower over a bath as this can cause major problems. We may remove these types of showers for any of the following reasons:

- poor installation
- leaking ineffective shower curtains or screens
- the danger of slips and falls
- wiring not up to standard
- bath not suited for use as a shower base
- broken seals around the bath leading to leaks

9: How to deal with condensation

If you complain to us about condensation in your home, we will only visit your home to inspect the damp areas if we believe you have tried all steps to resolve the issue.

We usually allow you at least 6 months to solve the problem before we will call to your home to inspect it.

Main causes of condensation

The main causes of condensation are:

- not opening windows, especially in bathrooms
- keeping window vents permanently closed
- drying clothes in rooms with the windows closed
- The temperature of your home

Ventilate your home

You are responsible for making sure that your home is ventilated to prevent moisture from building up inside and mold developing.

If there is any damage to your home due to condensation and mold, you are responsible for repairing any damage and preventing it from happening again.

Avoid condensation

You will avoid a build-up of condensation if you:

- make sure that air vents are clear and open to allow air to flow into a room
- avoid, as much as possible, drying clothes indoors
- keep your curtain lengths above floor level to allow air to circulate
- make sure your tumble dryer (if you use one) is the condenser-type. This will minimise the moisture it releases
- Ventilate kitchen and bathroom during use by turning on extractor fans and by opening a window slightly
- Keep the heating on low all day during cold weather

Remember: the only lasting cure for severe mould is to control the factors that contribute to excessive condensation. Refer to Controlling Condensation and mould leaflet for other useful information.

To give you an idea of how much extra water can be produced in your home in a day, here are a few illustrations:

Activity	Water produced daily
2 persons living at home	3 pints
A bath or shower	2 pints
Drying clothes indoors	9 pints
Cooking and use of kettle	6 pints
Washing dishes	2 pints
Bottled gas heater	4 pints
Total moisture added in one day = 26 pints or 14.8 litres	

Reduce the potential for condensation in the home by doing the following:

- Hang washing outside to dry
- Use tumble dryer making sure it is vented to outside air if it is not a condenser type machine
- Don't dry clothes on radiator
- Cook with pan lids on
- When filling your bath, run the cold water first then add hot water – it can reduce the steam by 90%
- Bottled gas heaters should not be used; they produce about 8 pints of moisture from an average sized gas cylinder

Ventilation can help to reduce condensation by removing moist air from your home and replacing it with dryer air from outside. If warm air cannot escape through an open window or air vent, it moves around until it finds a cold surface where it cools and forms condensation.

10: Chimneys, oil tanks and stoves

Chimney cleaning

Get your chimney cleaned regularly. We recommend you have it swept as follows:

Type	Frequency
Wood burning fires	Twice a year when in regular use
Solid Fuel fires	Once a year if you use smokeless fuel, twice if you use coal
Oil Burners	Once a year
Gas Fires	Once a year if designed for sweeping
Stoves/Ranges	Twice a year

Make sure that whoever cleans your chimney is:

- qualified
- insured to do the job
- tax-compliant
- willing to give you a receipt on headed paper

If we need to do repair work to your chimney, you will need to have it cleaned before we start. We will ask you for a receipt to prove you have done this.

If our Housing Maintenance Section must do structural repairs on your chimney, they will send you with a certificate which you should show to the person cleaning your chimney. This certificate will have cleaning instructions showing how to prevent further damage to the flue.

We will place an extra copy of this certificate and instructions in or near your fuse box. If you burn solid fuel, avoid using wet timber as it can harm your chimney.

Fire brigade charges

It is important to clean and maintain your chimney because if the fire brigade have to call to your home to put out a chimney fire, you will have to pay the call out charge. You may also have to pay a substantial bill if your chimney is damaged in a fire that could have been avoided by keeping it clean. If we must repair your chimney because of a chimney fire, we may charge you for the repairs we have to make.

Oil tanks

If your home has oil-fired heating, you must not interfere with any part of it. For example, you must never:

- tilt or prop the tank as this can cause damage to the pipe work and allow dirt from the floor of the tank to enter the system (and can cause leaks or spillages)
- set up your own 'homemade' system which disconnects the main tank provided to you
- spill oil when topping up your oil tank
- interfere with any straps which hold the tank in place

If we find that you have raised or tilted your oil tank, we may refuse to respond to your maintenance request. If we must make a repair, we may charge you for the call out and for the repairs we must make.

If you have, or suspect you might have, an oil leak please contact the Council immediately on 1800 211 525

Stoves

You must get written permission from the Council's Housing Maintenance Section before you install a stove into your home.

A poorly fitted stove will put you and your family at risk of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. A stove burns significantly hotter than an open fire and the flue liners inside your chimney may not be able to cope with the increase in temperature. If that happens, the liner may crack and break up. This is dangerous because it can cause a chimney fire or allow poisonous carbon monoxide to leak through damaged liners into your home.

You are 10 times more likely to suffer from a carbon monoxide leak or a chimney fire if your stove is not properly fitted. If you choose to install your own stove, you must:

- have approval from the Housing Maintenance Section
- give a Compliance cert signed by a registered installer to the Housing Maintenance Section from the installer after the stove has been fitted
- arrange to have a survey of your chimney by a registered inspection company to ensure that it is suitable before the stove is installed (this costs up to €300)
- be able to show that the chimney flue is completely lined
- install a carbon monoxide alarm

If the Council Housing Maintenance Department allows you to install a stove, you are responsible for all stove and chimney repairs from the date it was installed.

If your house has a stove already installed, this will have been done by a fully qualified installer who is certified and registered. You should

You should only use the type of fuel that your stove has been designed to burn. Some stoves burn only wood, while others are multi-fuel, which means they can burn special coal and wood. Burning the wrong fuel and rubbish will block up the flue and increase the danger of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

Do not burn the following in your stove:

- household rubbish which could produce a variety of toxic emissions
- disposable nappies
- green or wet wood which won't give off heat but will produce a lot of smoke and creosote (a very dangerous by-product of burning wood)
- metals or plastics
- glossy or coloured papers (magazine pages, product packaging)
- painted or varnished wood, trim or other wood by-products
- driftwood — salt-water driftwood is corrosive and can produce toxic fumes, while fresh water driftwood may contain silt and gravel
- Styrofoam containers such as disposable cups, plates or food packaging

Many of these will produce hazardous fumes indoors, as well as chimney emissions that can be harmful to others and to the environment. Some are also additional risks to your stove and can create a dangerous build-up of creosote in your chimney.

11: Transferring – what you need to know

If you have been successfully approved for a transfer and plan to leave your home, we will agree a time with you to send our inspector to check the condition of the property. After the inspection, we tell you if any work needs to be done to bring the property back up to standard.

We expect that your home will probably show signs of normal wear and tear and we will take that into account.

What we expect

If you are going to transfer or leave your home, we expect you to leave your home in a fit and proper state.

This means you need to remove:

- all rubbish, furniture and bins
- all carpets, lino and other flooring — unless you have a special agreement with the Council
- all decking outside the property — without burning it.
- contents of sheds and attics

We also expect you to:

- restore the gardens, pathways and entrances to their original condition
- empty and clean all presses, drawers, doors sinks, baths and toilets
- repair any damage, such as holes made to support shelves or hang pictures or ornaments
- have the chimney swept (if necessary)
-

Important: Before you can take up a housing transfer, you must agree that you will pay the cost of any extra repairs or cleaning that the Council must do — over and above normal pre-letting repairs. If you need to, you can add this charge to the rent you will pay over the following year.

Those tenants who wish to undertake significant works at the property will be expected to pay a deposit (minimum €500). This deposit which will be refunded at the time of transfer/vacating, if there are no significant costs incurred by the Council to reinstate it to the required standard prior to reallocation.

12: Health and safety

As our tenant, you are responsible for making sure you provide a safe and tidy workplace for any workers we send to your home. We will need this to carry out routine repairs, maintenance work or any remedial work we think is necessary. We expect the following conditions to be respected.

General

- The work area must be clean and tidy before work starts
- Young children must not be allowed to access the work area or be left unattended in your home during repair works
- All pets must be controlled and kept clear of the works area
- You must comply with all reasonable instructions given by the Council or the repair team. Remember: these are given to keep the place safe for you and your family, the council staff and contractors during repair works
- Your home now is a place of work and so smoking is prohibited

Talk to us

- All communication between you, your family members and Council staff or contractors must be conducted in a respectful and calm manner
- You must tell Council staff or contractors about any hidden hazard or risk before they start work
- Tell Council staff before they start work if anybody in your home has a medical condition that is likely to be affected by the work they will carry out

Important phone numbers:

- To notify the Housing Maintenance Section about missing or damaged valve or manhole covers, phone 1800 211 525
- To notify Irish Water about a problem with your water supply, ring Irish Water on 1850 278 278 or 01 707 2828.

Fire safety

Smoke alarms give you early warning of a fire in your home. In homes where fire fatalities happened, 8 out of 10 did not have a working smoke alarm.

- Fit a smoke alarm to the center of the hallway ceiling and to the center of each upper floor landing ceiling
- Fit a smoke alarm in every room (except bathrooms) to protect your home
- Fit a heat alarm in the kitchen
- Test your smoke alarms at least once a week
- Change the battery right away when you hear the warning beep

Escape plans

- Know what to do when you hear a smoke alarm so you and your family can get out safely
- Make an escape plan and practice with everyone who lives with you
- Plan at least two ways out in case one way is blocked by fire or smoke
- Have a meeting point in a safe place outside the house
- Keep your way-out clear day and night. Keep the keys to doors and windows nearby
- Know where the nearest phone is to call the fire service
- If you hear the fire alarm, check doors with the back of your hand for heat before you open them
- If they are warm, the way might be blocked by fire
- Do not go back into a burning house for any reason
- Plan to go to the safest place in case you cannot get out of the building
- Make sure there is a phone or personal alert in the room to call for help
- Make sure there is a window so you can either get out or call for help
- Stay by the window if you can't get out
- Close the door, seal the bottom with towels or blankets to stop smoke getting in

Routine fire safety check

Every night:

- Turn off all non-essential electrical appliances.
- Do not leave any electrical equipment charging.
- Turn off gas appliances
- Put out candles and naked flames.
- Place a spark guard in front of open fires.
- Empty all ashtrays.
- Keep your way out completely clear.
- Close all doors.

To prevent a fire

Avoid:

- Smoking when you are in bed, tired or on medication
- Leaving the room when there are candles burning
- Leaving young children alone near an open fire or cooker
- Leaving your mobile phone or laptop on your bed or couch (These devices heat up quickly when even slightly covered over)
- Leaving matches and lighters where children can get them
- Leaving the room when a chip or frying pan is on, even for a minute
- Overloading electric sockets – one socket, one plug
- Using electric appliances that don't work
- Running electrical appliances from a light socket
- Using a heater or the cooker to dry clothes
- Using petrol or paraffin to light a solid fuel stove
- Borrowing batteries from the smoke alarm

Having mirrors over fireplaces with real fires. Your clothes might catch fire if you stand too close to look in the mirror

Make sure to:

- Check your house for electrical devices left on (only leave on essential electrical equipment at night such as the fridge)
- Charge or use devices like phones and laptops on a solid surface that will not burn easily
- Clean your chimney and service your heating system at least once a year
- Use a spark guard in front of open fires
- Keep your gas cylinder outside, on solid ground and away from anything hot
- Use a proper holder for candles
- Keep a suitable fire extinguisher and fire blanket in the kitchen
- Empty ashtrays before you go to bed. Run the contents under the tap before you bin them
- Store hot ashes in a non-combustible container outside and away from anything that may burn (allow to cool down for a number of days before you dispose of them)
- Repair or replace faulty electrical appliances immediately
- Do a fire safety check before you go to bed
- Close all doors at night

The tragic truth about fire

- About 46 people die in fires in Ireland every year
- Tragically, most of these deaths could be prevented if they had a working smoke or heat alarm fitted in the home
- Smoke inhalation (breathing in smoke) not heat or flames – causes most fire deaths
- It can take as little as 3 minutes to die from smoke inhalation
- Most fires happen at night when people are asleep
- Smoke does not always wake people but can put them into a deeper sleep
- Smoke and heat alarms do not 'put out' fires
- 10-year smoke alarms are available (as ionization or optical alarms) and are fitted with a long-life lithium battery or a sealed power pack
- A recent national survey on smoke alarm ownership found that over 300,000 households in Ireland do not have a smoke alarm

See Appendix 1 for more information on fire prevention.

Final word

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide. If you have any questions or suggestions about it, please talk to our Housing Maintenance Section. We want you to enjoy a safe and comfortable home.

Longford County Council

Appendix 1

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is understood to be a largescale, long-term shift in the planet's weather patterns and average temperatures. The evidence includes changing rainfall, changes in nature, sea level rise, higher temperatures, melting glaciers, melting ice sheets etc. There are lots of factors that contribute to the Earth's climate. However, scientists agree that the Earth has been getting warmer in the past 50 to 100 years due to the human activities of extracting and burning fossil fuels (peat, gas, coal & oil).

Climate Action means urgent measures to tackle climate change and its impacts. It falls into two broad categories: Climate Change Mitigation & Climate Change Adaptation.

Climate Change Mitigation means all action taken to prevent, reduce, slow down, stop or reverse climate change. This is achieved by cutting emissions through energy efficiency, utilising renewable energy, using public transport, electric vehicles, and tree planting for example.

Climate Change Adaptation means taking action to prepare for and adjust to both the current effects of climate change and the predicted impacts in the future. An example of this is the provision of flood protection and associated defence systems.

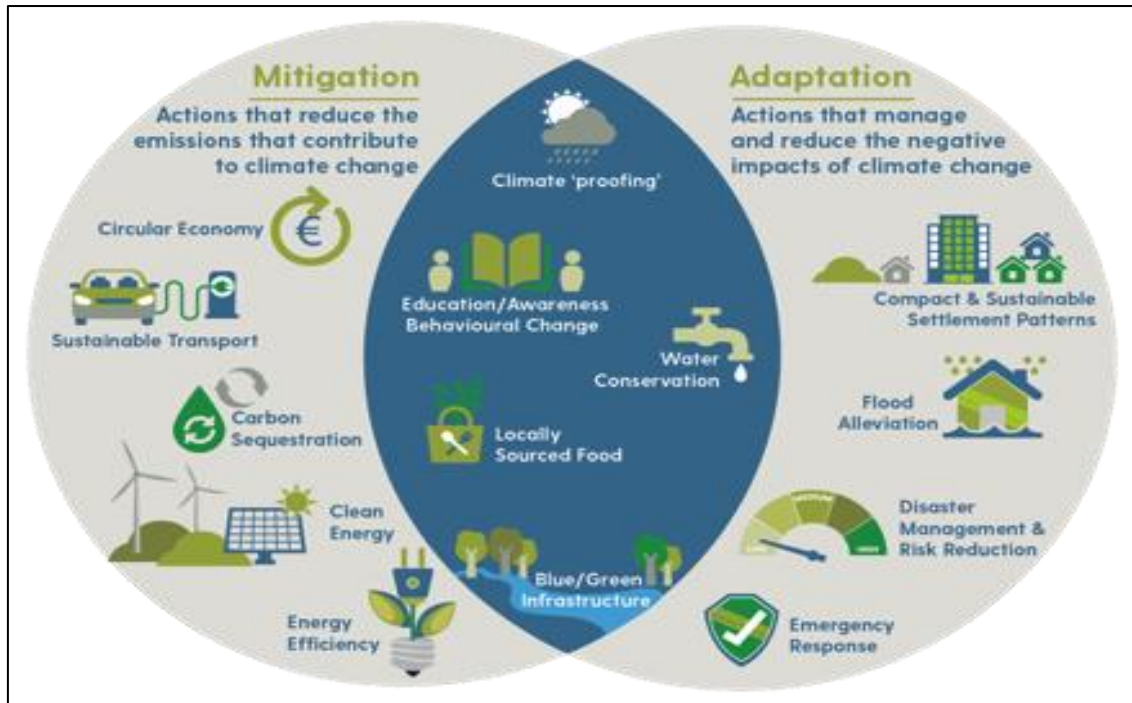
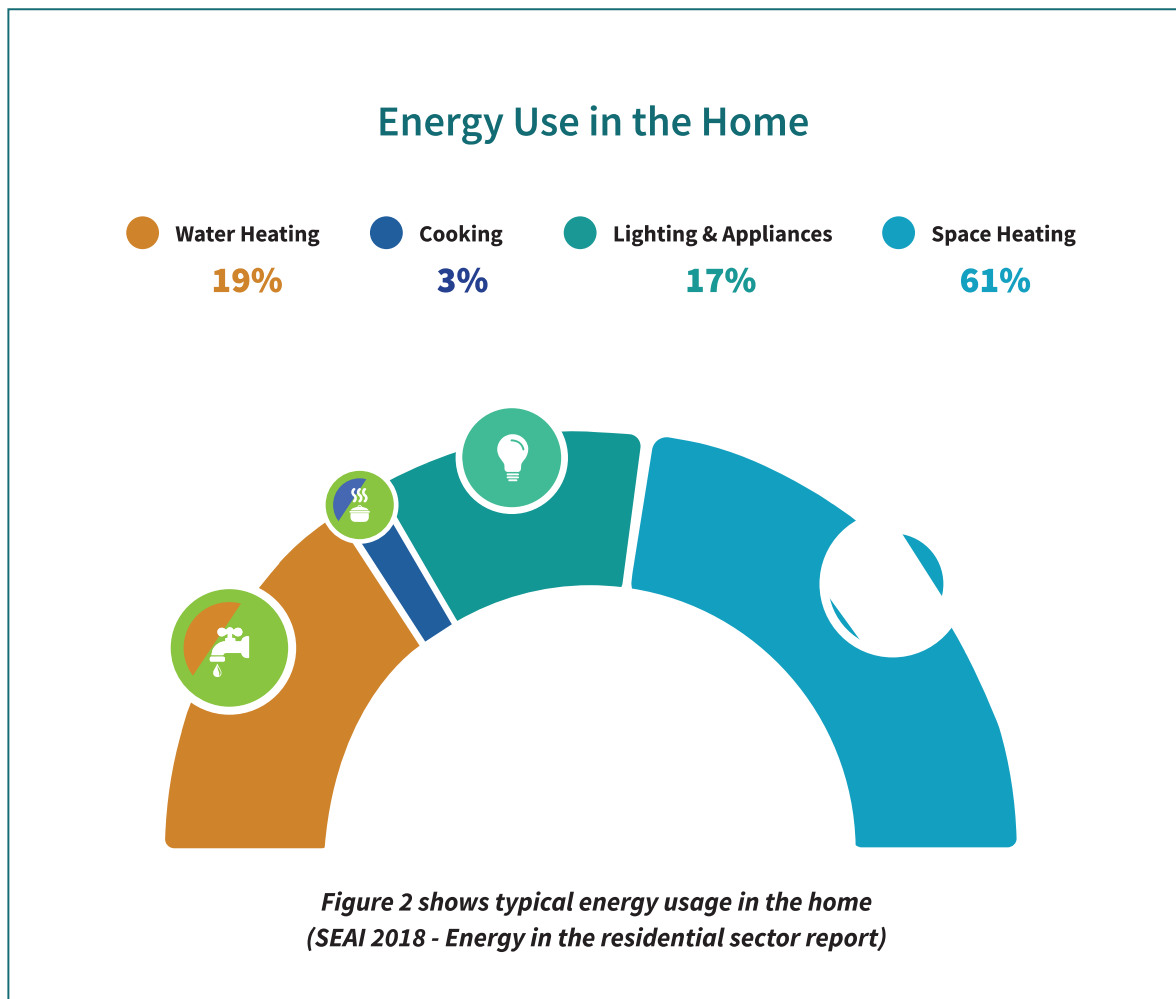


Fig 1: Mitigation V Adaptation (CARO)

CLIMATE ACTION - MITIGATION

Energy Efficiency in the Home

Most of Ireland's energy comes from imported fossil fuels like oil, coal, peat and gas. We use these fuels to heat our homes and to power our electrical appliances. While these fuels provide us with heat and electricity, they are also a major contributor to climate change. Figure 2 shows where we typically use energy in the home.



Energy Saving Tips for Heating

Approximately 60% of the energy used in Irish homes goes towards heating it.



Turn down your thermostat. If you turn the thermostat down by just one degree, you can reduce your heating bill by 10%. The thermostat for your living/kitchen area should be set at 18-20°C, while hallways and bedrooms can be cooler, ideally between 15-18°C.



Close doors between rooms that are heated and unheated to keep the heat in.



Move furniture away from radiators. When trying to stay warm at home during winter be strategic about your furniture placement. Place your desk, bed or sofa around any heat sources, without blocking them.



Avoid drying clothes on your radiators. This lowers the quantity of heat released by the radiators, so the boiler must run for longer to achieve the same room temperature, thereby using more fuel overall.



Tackle draughts. Cold air can come up through the floor and from around your skirting board. Close the curtains in the evenings to keep heat in. You can purchase a relatively cheap draft stopper/draught excluder for external doors.



Bleed your radiators on a regular basis. If there is air in your radiator your boiler burns longer.

Saving tips for Domestic Hot Water

Approximately 25% of the energy used in Irish homes goes towards heating domestic hot water.



Take a shower rather than a bath. A regular shower uses only 20% of the energy it takes to heat the water for a full bath.



Pumped electric showers are one of the biggest energy users in the home. By reducing your shower time, you could save a lot of energy and water.

Energy Saving Tips for Lighting

Lighting accounts for 10-15% of the electricity bill. To help reduce this energy use, it is good to maximise natural daylight when we can.



Always turn off lights when you leave a room and adjust your blinds or curtains to let in as much light as possible during the day.



Replace old light bulbs with LED energy efficient options, which can use 90% less electricity and last 10- 20 times longer than ordinary light bulbs.



Select the lowest wattage bulb needed to light the room/area and consider the size of the space and how much natural light the space gets.



Position your furniture so you make the most of natural light.



Using task lighting for reading or at your office desk can significantly reduce the energy consumption of general lighting in a room.



Keep lights clean. A dusty light bulb or a dirty lampshade can obstruct as much as half the light. Dust the bulb and wipe or wash the shade regularly.

Energy Saving Tips for Appliances

Many homes use modern automated electrical appliances which consume considerable amount of electrical power.



About 90% of the energy used for washing clothes is spent on heating the water. Unless you are dealing with clothes that are heavily stained, run your washing machine on a low temperature. Only run full loads in your washing machine and dish washers.



Using the clothesline is the most energy- efficient alternative for drying clothes. If you do not have adequate outdoor space or live in an apartment, place a dryer rack by an open, sunny window.



Adjust your fridge/freezer temperature. Your fridge should be between 3-5°C and your freezer should be between -15-18°C.



Defrost the inside of your freezer at least every 6 months to help it run efficiently.



Turn off all appliances at night or when not in use. They can use a lot of energy on standby mode (e.g., TV, computer).



When purchasing electrical devices, ensure you upgrade appliances to A+++ rated. Low-cost devices may not work out cheaper over their lifetime.



Only fill your kettle with as much water as you need.

Energy Saving tips for Cooking

One way you might not have considered, is to conserve energy while cooking and preparing meals at home. Not only will this make a big difference over time, but it will also save you quite a bit of money.



Do not open your oven door too often during cooking times, as you can lose 20% of the accumulated heat.



For energy-efficient cooking, match your pan or pot with the right sized ring on your stove.



Always cover your pots and pans – the water will boil faster and use less energy to heat your food.



Boil water in a kettle rather than heating water on the stove for cooking purposes.



A dirty stove top prevents pans from sitting flush to the surface, making it much less effective when heating.



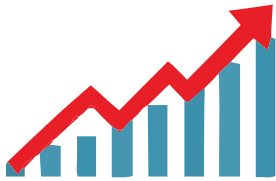
Never put hot food directly into the fridge or freezer. Allow it to cool first.



When re-heating small portions of food, it is advisable to use the microwave rather than the oven or grill. It can save 80% of the energy used to cook or warm them up in the oven.

Managing Your Electricity Meter

Reading your electric meter regularly will assist you in controlling your electrical usage and help you to budget for the year.



Electricity is at highest demand between 7am- 9am in the morning and 5pm-7pm at night. Electricity is at peak production during these times and is typically more carbon intensive. Try to use electricity outside these times.



Many new appliances have delay start timers and this can help avoid peak time usage.



Meter Reading

Ensure your bill is accurate. Some suppliers may send you reminders to submit an accurate meter reading. Sometimes electricity bills are estimated. This is denoted by “e” on your bill. It is important that you send actual reads “a” to your supplier. If you receive an estimated bill and it is significantly higher or lower than your actual meter reading you can submit a meter read after your bill issue date and the supplier will adjust the next bill for you. Make a note of the number, reading from left to right. Please ignore the figures in red or surrounded by a red box. And remember, if you have night storage heaters, you’ll have two of these meters.



Make sure you shop around for the best electricity prices for your needs. Check out price comparison websites to do this.

Conserving Water

Water is a precious, natural resource. Water conservation requires governments, local authorities, industries, the agricultural sector, and householders to get involved in the process. It must be a combined effort to preserve our largest natural resource.



Flush the toilet only when necessary - depending on the age and size of your cistern one flush can use up to 9 litres of water



Keep a bottle of tap water in the fridge for nice cold water instead of running the tap.



Use a basin in the sink. It is useful for washing dishes and collecting the water you use to rinse off fruit and vegetables – this can then be used for watering plants.



Turn off taps while brushing teeth or shaving.



If you need to wash your car, use a bucket and sponge, instead of a hose.

Tips for Severe Weather Events



Have an adequate supply of fuel for heating and cooking.



Have a water container to ensure a supply of drinking water.



Check local news and weather forecasts and heed all weather warnings issued. Be aware of weather events – Status Yellow, Orange, Red.



Stay away from the sea and coastal areas during severe weather events.



Keep your home warm: Minimising all draughts and leave your heating on low for longer periods.



Have batteries for torches and alternative light sources in the event of power cuts.



In the event of a flood, the local authorities and emergency services will provide the principal emergency response.

Tips for Flooding



If possible, avoid contact with floodwater as it may be contaminated or polluted, for example with sewage.



If you must walk, cycle or drive through floodwater, take care of underwater hazards that you may not see, for example, open manholes.



If you must leave your vehicle, be wary of strong currents and debris.



Remember 150mm (6 inches) of flowing water can sweep you off your feet and 600mm (2 feet) of water can float your car.



Move valuables and other items to safety above the flood level or upstairs if possible.



Put sandbags or other suitable flood resistant barriers at any openings where the water could enter your house.



Do not park your car in a flood risk area - have a prearranged place that you can safely move your car to if you have time.



Find out if you live in an area at risk of flooding by speaking to neighbours and the Local Authority. The OPW flood maps also shows areas that may be at risk of flooding. (See www.floodinfo.ie)



Emergency numbers – have a print-out and store electronically on your phone.



Have medication to hand (if needed). Make up a flood kit and ensure everyone knows where to find it. A flood kit should include a torch, some warm and waterproof clothes, a battery or wind-up radio, a mobile phone, rubber gloves, rubber boots, a first aid kit, blankets, and children's essentials, if required.

Evacuating your home in the event of an emergency



Always cooperate with instructions from emergency services and local authorities.



Keep any chemicals or fuel in watertight containers and if possible, move to above flood level to ensure that they do not spill into the flood water and cause an additional hazard.



Turn off electricity and water at the mains.



Switch off gas or oil boiler at the control panels or mains.



Always be careful when re-entering your property after a flood as there may be structural damage or contamination because of floodwaters. Electric, gas or home heating fuels-should be checked by a professional before re-entry following a flood.

In the Event of a Snowstorm



Listen to the weather forecast regularly and check your emergency supplies, whenever you are expecting a winter storm or extreme cold.



Check that you have sufficient home heating fuel for your home.



Protect yourself from frostbite and hypothermia by wearing layers of warm, loose-fitting, lightweight clothing.



Get out your flashlights, batteries, first aid kit and other emergency supplies.



Stay away from fallen power lines.



Use a shovel to remove snow from your driveway. You can prevent ice forming by spreading salt on the area that you have cleared. Never use boiling water to clear snow as it may re-freeze and cause the formation of black ice.



If you will be using a fireplace or wood-burning stove, you should have a good supply of dry, seasoned wood.



Have warm clothing and blankets on hand, and stock non-perishable food items and necessary medications to last you and your family for several days.



Drive only if you absolutely must and be sure your car has adequate fuel and an emergency supply kit. This can include one gallon of water (4.5 litres), flashlights with extra batteries, extra clothing, blankets and a first-aid kit.

In the Event of a Heatwave



Drink more water than usual and do not wait until you are thirsty to drink more. Muscle cramping may be an early sign of heat-related illness.



Check on a friend or neighbour.



Limit your outdoor activity, especially in the afternoon when the sun is hottest.



Limit your exposure to the sun by staying in the shade. If you must go out in the sun, wear sunscreen as indicated on the package.



Wear loose, lightweight, light coloured clothing.



Schedule workouts and practices earlier or later in the day when the temperature is cooler.



Check the local news, social media for health and safety updates.

