Co-operative housing Ireland

Member Handbook









Out of Hours Emergency Number

You should contact the out of hours emergency line when the following occurs:

- Where major damage is caused to the property
- Where damage may cause a risk to life or safety
- When CHI's offices are closed

Please do not contact the emergency number unless you are certain it is an emergency and there is a risk to your life or the property.

Out of Hours

01 6403074

The out of office service is available from 5pm to 9am, weekends, public holidays and over Christmas.

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Contents

Welcome Message 03

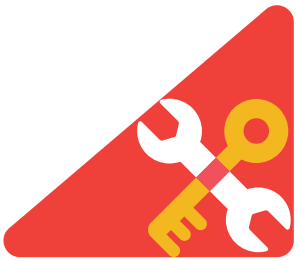
About Co-operative Housing Ireland 04

Tenancy Agreement 12

Rent 18

Repairs & Maintenance 26





Condensation 39

Residential Tenancies Board 43

Leaving your home 46

Safety in your home 49

Security in your home 55

Winter Months 58

Frequently Asked Questions 63





Welcome

Welcome to your new Member Handbook. Whether you are an existing member or have just joined your local co-operative and are moving into your new home, this handbook will give you a range of useful information about your tenancy, your home and being a member of a co-operative.



Please take time to familiarise yourself with your new handbook and if you have queries or wish to discuss any of the information included, your Neighbourhood Specialist will be available to assist you.

Member = Tenant

About Co-operative Housing Ireland



The co-operative housing movement in Ireland has been represented, promoted and developed by Co-operative Housing Ireland (CHI) since 1973. Since then, Co-operative Housing Ireland has helped to provide more than 8,750 homes across Ireland. These were a mix of homes for ownership, homes in shared ownership between the member and the co-operative, and homes for rent.

Co-operative Housing Ireland continues to develop new co-operative homes and provides a range of services to local co-operatives. These services include training, support in policies and procedures, and help in raising standards. Co-operative Housing Ireland is committed to continuous improvement and works closely with the local co-operatives to improve the quality of services provided to members.

Each new member must join their local co-operative and buy €80 worth of shares before they can sign a tenancy agreement. Your details are kept on the local co-operative share register.



CHI is committed in helping to address Irelands current housing and homelessness crisis. We work in partnership with Local Authorities, private developers, other approved housing bodies and central government in the development and management of new and existing properties.

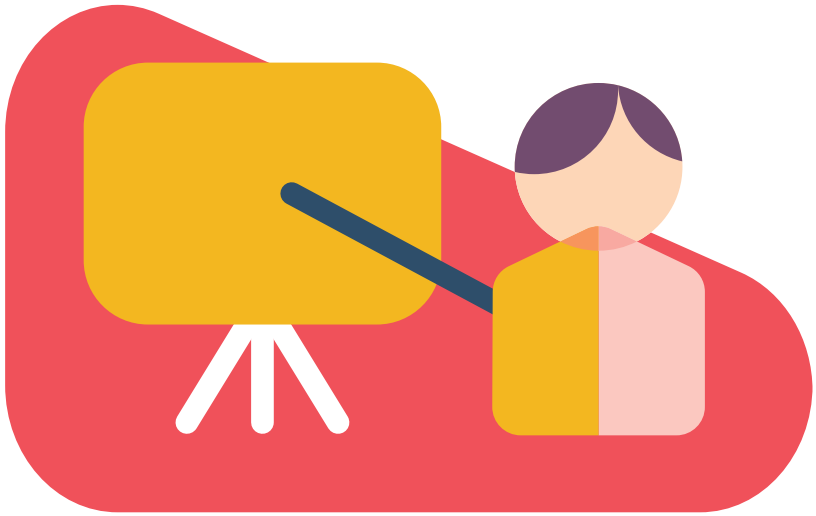
On an annual basis CHI is expanding as an organisation and is proactively responding to the housing and homelessness crisis by delivering good quality social homes for individuals and families on Local Authority social housing waiting lists.

When you are allocated a home with the co-operative housing movement, you become a member of a local co-operative. A thriving co-operative needs its members to get involved and contribute to building the community. Training and support for your co-operative is available through CHI. As a member you are encouraged to help to organise community events and look out for your neighbours. If you have an idea for a community project talk to your local co-operative or your Community Engagement Specialist.

As a member of the co-operative, you have bought shares in your local organisation and have a say in decisions that affect you. The shares that you have bought entitle you to participate in the running of your local co-operative as a member. Shares are returned to you if your membership ceases. They are not a security deposit for your home.

Every year, your local co-operative will organise an Annual General Meeting (AGM) that you will be invited to attend. At the AGM, you will be able to stand for election to your Local Management Committee. The Committee oversees the work of the Local Co-operative.

The AGM will also select up to three delegates who will have the power to vote at Co-operative Housing Ireland's AGM. The Local Co-operative can also nominate a member to be put forward for election to sit on the Board of Co-operative Housing Ireland. The Board of Co-operative Housing Ireland is responsible for setting the goals of the Organisation and for overseeing the work of Co-operative Housing Ireland staff.



Your Co-operative

Our Vision

Our Vision is of a society where everyone has access to housing delivered co-operatively.

Our Mission

Providing homes co-operatively to meet the needs of our communities by working in partnership:

- to enable vibrant and sustainable communities
- to be a voice for delivering housing co-operatively and for those in housing need
- to support co-operative and other community-led housing initiatives

Our Values

Set of core beliefs held by the organisation which guide our behaviours as an organisation and what we expect of our staff, suppliers, partners and collaborators with whom we work.

- Co-operative
- Respect and professional
- Inclusion
- Sustainability
- Passion

Member Service Support

Co-operative Housing Ireland have offices in various locations around the country.

Member Service Support is vital to any service and CHI recognise how important this is for our members.

Administrative staff members will aim to resolve most queries as a first point of contact.

Where a Neighbourhood Specialist or Manager is required all information will be passed to the relevant staff member who will return your call and deal with your query in due course.

In accordance with GDPR regulations and CHI's own confidentiality policy, all calls, emails and information provided to CHI will be kept private and confidential.

Contacting CHI

If you have a query or concern, please contact our Member Services Hub

7th Floor, The Generali Building, Navan Road, D15YT2H

Phone: 01 6403074

Email: info@cooperativehousing.ie

If you wish to email about a repair, please email

repairs@cooperativehousing.ie

Regional Offices

Cork Office
Unit B3, Ground Floor, Emmet House, Barrack Square, Ballincollig, Cork, P31 PC85

Enniscorthy Office
Unit 5D, Enniscorthy Enterprise and Technology Centre, Milehouse Road, Enniscorthy, Co Wexford, Y21 AW2R.

Galway Office
Unit 4, Doughiska Retail Park, Doughiska Road Galway, H91 CK83.

Limerick Office
Unit B8 LEDP, Roxboro Road, Co. Limerick, V94 C66H.

Complaints and Compliments

We always welcome the feedback and comments of our members. Your positive comments let staff know when they are doing a good job. Sometimes events occur that mean you may feel that you need to complain about the level of service you have received.

CHI will work with you to try and resolve problems as quickly as possible. If you wish to make a formal written complaint using our Complaints Procedure please contact your local office who will arrange for the necessary forms to be sent to you.

Tenancy Agreement



Your **Tenancy Agreement** is a **legal document** which creates a legal agreement between you and Co-operative Housing Ireland. Prior to receiving keys to your home, every member is required to sign a Tenancy Agreement. The agreement is also signed by Co-operative Housing Ireland and a copy is provided to you.

Prior to signing your Tenancy Agreement, your neighbourhood specialist will provide you with a copy of the agreement for you to review and ensure you understand the terms and conditions.

The tenancy agreement is a legally binding document for all members of the family who live in the property.

Please keep a copy of the tenancy agreement in a safe place for further reference.

The rights and responsibilities of both Co-operative Housing Ireland and the member are set out in your tenancy agreement.

The handbook will briefly outline the roles and responsibilities further below. As Co-operative Housing Ireland is also an approved housing body, changes to the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2015 means all tenancies must be registered with the Residential Tenancies Board (for further information see Page 44).

Probationary Period

The probationary period is the period of six months from the date of commencement of your tenancy.

During this 6-month period you do not have security of tenure and the tenancy can be terminated.

At the end of the 6-month period you will then receive statutory protection for 5.5 years providing no breach of the terms of your tenancy agreement has taken place.

Co-operative Housing Ireland's Responsibilities towards our Members

1. To ensure you receive a good member service from all staff when you have queries or require information.
2. To maintain our properties to a high standard.
3. To keep to the terms of the tenancy agreement.
4. To carry out repairs to your property in line with our agreed repair and maintenance timeframes.
5. To set your rent in accordance with the relevant rent scheme and to send a quarterly statement of your rent account.
6. To take out insurance on the structure of the property.
7. To register the signed tenancy with the Residential Tenancies Board.

8. We will provide enough notice of rent or service charge increases or decreases.
9. We will facilitate waste storage and collection where contractually required.
10. To manage nuisance and anti-social behaviour by taking necessary action against anyone who persists in engaging in anti-social behaviour.
11. We will treat your personal data with utmost confidentiality.

Members' responsibilities towards Co-operative Housing Ireland



1. To keep to the terms of the signed tenancy agreement.
2. To pay your rent on time and in advance as agreed with the customer service team.
3. Submit details of household income on an annual basis when requested and declare all persons resident in the home along with their income level.
4. Give CHI adequate notice if you wish to vacate and surrender the property.
5. Ensure fixture and fittings are in place when vacating the property.
6. To keep your home and garden in a clean and tidy condition.
7. Not to sublet the property or any part of it.

8. To be aware you cannot pass your tenancy to another family or individual.
9. To not operate a business from the property.
10. Allow access to our contractors to complete repairs and maintenance to the property.
11. To allow access to CHI staff when requested.
12. To not carry out any structural alterations or improvements to the property without getting written permission from CHI.
13. To dispose of household rubbish in an appropriate manner.
14. Do not engage in any noise, nuisance or anti-social behaviour that may affect your neighbour.
15. To respect your neighbours and actively support your local Co-operative.
16. To take action when something gets damaged or breaks. If something in your home is not working and needs repairing it may be your responsibility or CHI's (see chapter: 'Repairs and Maintenance').

Examples of Nuisance Behaviour

- Playing loud music
- Loud and disruptive arguments
- Dog barking and fouling in common areas
- Dumping or burning of rubbish in the estate
- Kicking a ball off a neighbour's wall
- Using loud appliances or undertaking noisy work such as hammering or drilling during unsocial hours
- Inconsiderate parking



Examples of Harassment

- Racist or sexist behaviour or language
- Threatening to use violence
- Using abusive or insulting language towards members
- Damaging or threatening to damage another person's home, possessions
- Writing threatening abusive or insulting letters/graffiti in common areas
- Interfering with the peace and comfort of other people on the estate and neighbourhood

Examples of Criminal Behaviour

- Sale and supply of drugs
- Harassment/assault of other tenants
- Vandalism and Graffiti
- Dangerous driving of cars or other vehicles within estates
- Maliciously damaging the property

Rent



The rent amount payable by each member is based on their household income, family size and the cost of management, caretaking and maintenance of the co- operative dwellings.

On most CHI properties a Local Authority Differential Rent applies. Some older properties have rent calculated using a different rent scheme agreement. A member of the Customer Services Team will explain to you prior to the allocation of the home, how your rent is calculated and the Rent Scheme your rent is based on. If you are an existing member with a query about your rent calculation, your Income Specialist will be happy to answer your questions.

Members are required to pay the rent amount due for each month as per the tenancy agreement.

Responsibility

It is the members (including joint members) responsibility to the pay the rent weekly in advance, in accordance with the tenancy agreement.

Rent is an essential source of CHI's income and pays for the ongoing maintenance of your home and your estate. Rents must be paid to enable CHI to deliver an effective and efficient housing management service to our members.

Members who do not pay rent or fall into arrears are placing their tenancy at risk.



Rent is due a month in advance

On the day of key handover, it is the members responsibility to lodge one months' rent in advance prior to receiving your keys. Proof of payment is required on the day.

Rent is payable monthly in advance and is to be paid by the 14th of each month. For example, if your rent is €30.00 per week, you would be paying €1,560 for the year. Your monthly rent would be €130.

CHI's Rent Year

CHI's rent year runs from July 1st for 52 weeks until the beginning of the following July. (However, if your income changes within that 12-month period please contact your Income Specialist as you may be eligible for a rent review).

Annual Rent Review

Members are required to provide full and accurate details during each rent review year about their household's gross income and family size (including the income details of all adults over the age of 18 years residing in the dwelling). This information must be provided on request, usually during April of each year.

How can I pay my Rent?



There are different options available to members when paying rent:

- Standing Order: through your own bank account
- Our Payment Portal on the CHI website (cooperativehousing.ie) which accepts debt and credit card payments
- Electronic Transfer: using your bank's online system
- Household Budget Scheme: If you receive your social welfare payment from the post office
- Post Office Card: Rent Swipe Card at any Post Office
- Telephone Payments may be made only in exceptional circumstances

Standing Orders, Household Budget, and online payment are the most convenient options available when paying your rent. The above options can be discussed with your Income Specialist who will facilitate any further queries you may have.

NB: It is important to use your occupancy reference number as the forwarding message to CHI when paying by standing order or electronic transfer to ensure your payment is credited to your account as quickly as possible.

Payment Records

CHI will monitor your rent account on a monthly basis using our IT Housing Management System.

You will receive a quarterly statement from your Housing Officer showing the rent you are being charged and the rent you have paid.

Members can also request a rent account statement from your local Member Service Office or by speaking to your Income Specialist.

Members are responsible for monitoring payment records. Members are requested to keep receipts of all payments made.

Where you feel some rent is not accounted for on the rent statement, please make an appointment with your Income Specialist to discuss. Please note, no payments can be credited to your account without proof of payment.

Missed Rent Payments

When you signed a tenancy agreement with CHI a commitment is made for rent payments to be made on time and in advance.

If you have missed a rent payment it is important to contact your Income Specialist informing them of the missed payment and when you will make the payment.

CHI through monthly checks of rent accounts will try to ensure members are made aware as soon as possible if the rent account falls into arrears.

Continuous non-payment of rent is a serious breach of your commitment to CHI and failure to pay rent may result in you losing your home. It may also exclude you from access to social housing in the future.

CHI have a rent arrears process in place and your Income Specialist will take necessary steps to ensure the arrears are addressed with you.

If appropriate, CHI may set a rent arrears agreement that you can manage in line with your income and outgoings. Failure to adhere to such an arrangement may put your tenancy at risk.

Money Management

It is important for you to manage your income and expenditure once you begin renting a home.

If you are finding it difficult to manage your money some help and support can be found through the following services, MABS (Money Advice and Budgeting Service).

www.mabs.ie

MABS provide a free and confidential service from all members of the public.

Service Charges

Depending on the type of estate or apartment block you live in, a service charge may apply to your rent. Your Income Specialist will let you know if one applies, prior to you accepting a home from CHI.

Service charges are a financial charge to recoup costs of shared services to a property block or estate.

These services are additional to those that CHI usually provides but are a necessary part of the estate you live in.

CHI will review service charges on an annual basis to ensure that members get the best rate.

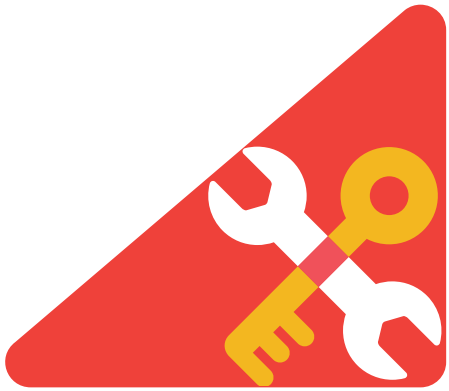
Types of Service Charges that may apply to your home

- Bin Collection
- Management Agency Fees
- Additional cleaning services in communal areas
- Additional staff for caretaking duties
- Heating and lighting of lobbies and other common areas
- Grass cutting of common areas
- Lifts, door entry systems, fire alarm panels

The above are some examples of additional charges made to ensure members live in a safe and clean estate.



Repairs & Maintenance



If something in your home is not working and needs repairing it may be your responsibility or CHI's. Before contacting CHI can you please read through the follow sections and find out who is responsible.

If you believe that CHI is responsible to carry out the repair you will need to:

- Call **01 6403074** or email **repairs@cooperativehousing.ie**
- Provide the details of the repair problem
- Provide your current contact number

Once the above details are provided to the CHI staff member, a work order will be processed to one of CHI's approved contractors who will contact you about fixing the repair.



How will CHI respond to a repair request?

Type of Repair	CHI's Response Time	Notes
Emergencies (No heating during cold weather, no drinking water) major leak	24 Hours	You or an alternative person must be available to allow access to the contractor. Where an emergency repair is made safe and further works are required, we aim to get these works complete within 2-3 working days.
Urgent (Example: heating system failure, electrical or plumbing issue)	5 Working Days	Please provide an up to date contact number which will be passed to the contractor who will make access arrangements with you.
Routine	28 Working Days	Pending the repair request, a CHI staff member may inspect a property within the 28 working days prior to sending out a contractor. This will be pre-arranged, and you will be notified in advance.

Inspections

In certain circumstances CHI staff members may wish to carry out an inspection of the repair request prior to having a contractor call to your home.

If this is the case, CHI will contact you prior to calling to your home and arrange an appointment.

Where an appointment is made, and nobody is at home at the time of calling it is your responsibility to arrange a further appointment with CHI.

Also, CHI may wish to check the quality of the repair carried out by a contractor. Please facilitate CHI with access to ensure our contractors are providing quality repairs for you.

Out of Hours Emergency Number

You should contact the out of hours emergency line when the following occurs:

- Where major damage is caused to the property
- Where damage may cause a risk to life or safety
- When CHI's offices are closed

Please do not contact the emergency number unless you are certain it is an emergency and there is a risk to your life or the property.

Out of Hours

01 6403074

The out of office service is available from 5pm to 9am, weekends, public holidays and over Christmas.

Members Contents Insurance

You are responsible for insuring your personal and household items against any accidental damage, fire, theft or leak.

CHI will insure the structure of your home, i.e. the walls and roof. **CHI is not responsible for your furniture or personal belongings**.

It is important to note that broken glass in windows or doors is also your responsibility and ask if your insurance company covers this.

CHI would advise you to get quotes from numerous insurance companies and remember to include the broken glass.

We always recommend that you have contents insurance or else you run the risk of personal belongings being damaged which are expensive to replace after a flood/leak/fire or burglary.

Repair Responsibilities

External Responsibilities

Tenant

- Maintenance of garden
- Repair and replacement of defective doorbell
- Repair and replacing of any shed fitted by the member
- Replacing broken glass and window-panes
- Re-fixing loose handles to doors and windows
- Replacing lost keys to front doors and windows
- Replacing lost or stolen fobs
- Replacing letter boxes
- Replace timber fence panels
- Maintain the interior in accordance with the tenancy agreement.

Repair Responsibilities

External Responsibilities

Co-operative Housing Ireland

- Structure and exterior of the building
- Repair and maintain gutters and downpipes
- Chimney stacks and cowls
- Roof leaks and repairs
- Periodically paint or soft wash the exterior of buildings when required
- Maintain open spaces and common areas (unless taken in charge by the Local Authority)
- Repair any steps and pathways that are a means of access to dwellings
- Repair boundary walls and concrete posts for fences.
- Lighting in common areas and hallways
- External structural cracks
- Means of supplying water, gas and electricity to homes
- Maintain common area heating.

Repair Responsibilities

Internal Responsibilities

Tenant

- Minor plaster cracks
- Replacing plugs and chains to sinks, wash basins and baths
- All internal decoration of walls, ceilings and woodwork
- Unblocking sinks and waste pipes
- Installing washing machine, cooker, fridge freezer and any another appliance purchased by the member
- Re-fixing of door to fit over floor coverings
- Replacing meter cupboard doors
- Damage caused by you, another member of your household or visitor
- Members responsibility to get contents insurance in the event floor coverings or contents are damaged
- To adequately ventilate your home to prevent condensation.

Repair Responsibilities

Internal Responsibilities

Co-operative Housing Ireland

- Structural damage caused by fire
- Structural repairs to walls, ceilings, skirting boards, and drains except where damage was caused by the member
- Adequate means of ventilation
- Repairing fixtures and fittings provided by CHI to the tenant
- Fire Extinguishers will be serviced where provided by CHI.

NB: It is important to note where fire damage is caused by the negligence of the tenant (such as burning incorrect fuel) the cost of repairing the damage may transfer to the tenant.



Repair Responsibilities

Electrical

Tenant

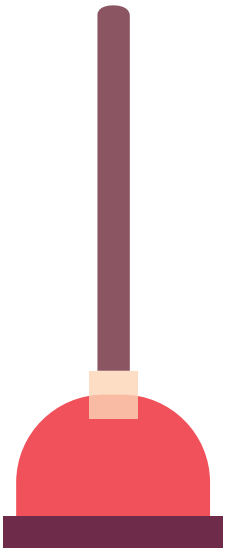
- Replacement of light bulbs
- Extractor fans and cooker hoods to be cleaned and maintained by the member
- Installation of appliances such as cookers, washing machines etc.
- Any damage caused to units not caused by wear and tear will be replaced by the member
- Replacement of fuses (main supply only)
- Smoke alarm batteries
- Any electrical changes must be notified and approved in advance and be completed and certified by a qualified electrician. A copy of the certificate is to be given to your Neighbourhood Specialist.

Repair Responsibilities

Electrical

Co-operative Housing Ireland

- Replacement of batteries in heating control and stats
- Smoke and heat detectors mains operated provided by CHI
- Wiring sockets and switches due to reasonable wear and tear
- Extractor fans and cooker hoods to be replaced if originally supplied by CHI
- Fire Blanket where it was used to tackle a fire
- Communal TV system in apartment blocks (unless there is a management company in place)
- Immersions switches
- Carbon monoxide detectors where fitted by CHI
- Repair of electrical heating units due to wear and tear.



Repair Responsibilities

Plumbing

Tenant

- Clearing of rainwater and surface water gullies
- Unblocking sinks, baths and waste from toilets
- Damage to baths
- Bleeding radiators
- Airlocks as a result of running out of oil
- Toilet seats and covers
- Shower curtains, rails and poles
- Shower heads, hoses and rails
- Leaking taps (However where the works require a plumber CHI will arrange but re charge you)
- Taking responsibility to prevent frozen pipes during winter months. Please revert to winter ready section of the handbook.

NB: You will be re charged where wipes, nappies or excess toilet paper has caused a blockage.

Repair Responsibilities

Plumbing

Co Operative Housing

- Repair or replacement of wash hand basins, toilet cisterns through fair wear and tear
- Unblocking of drains, sewers and waste pipes in communal blocks where there is no management company responsibility
- Electric and power shower replacements through fair wear and tear
- Repair of water storage tank and ballcock
- Repairs to boilers and hot water cylinders
- Maintenance of external waste pipes and drains
- Burst pipe repairs unless the property forms part of a communal building with a management company
- Servicing of boilers
- Heating/hot water pumps and timers
- Radiators through fair wear and tear
- Toilet bowl and cistern
- Oil boilers unless the member has run out of oil
- Gas boilers
- Underfloor heating systems.

Condensation in the Home



What is Condensation?

Condensation occurs when the air gets colder and cannot hold all the moisture and water appears on surfaces such as windows and walls.

Condensation can be associated with not heating or ventilating your home. Therefore, CHI have appropriate ventilation systems in place, such as wall and mechanical ventilation units.

It is important for you to open your windows daily to allow the flow of air into your home.

NB: Where you suspect condensation or mould is developing in the property and you have tried to eliminate or control by using the above tips, please contact repairs@cooperativehousing.ie especially where black mould growth is occurring in your property.

How to prevent condensation in your home

There are many ways you can prevent condensation from occurring in your home:

- Cooking with pan lids on
- Turn the heat down when the pot begins to boil
- Use the mechanical ventilation system in the kitchen
- Avoid drying laundry on the radiators
- Dry washing outdoors where possible
- Don't leave kettles boiling
- If drying clothes indoors place in the bathroom with the door closed, window open and extractor fan turned on
- Do not use your gas cooker to heat your home
- Vent tumble driers to outside
- Keep your trickle vents open and unblocked
- Ventilate bathrooms after use
- Use extractor fans where provided
- Wipe excess condensation off windows and surfaces during the morning time
- During cold weather it is essential to heat your home.
- Kitchens and bathrooms require the most ventilation due to cooking, washing, bathing, and drying creating the highest levels of moisture in your home
- During bath time run the cold water first and then the hot water. This will reduce the steam hitting window and wall surfaces
- Allow space in and around furniture and wardrobes
  Do not overfill wardrobes as it restricts the circulation of air.

Mould

How do I remove Mould?

If you find mould in your property, wipe it off immediately with water using a sponge or a cloth.

Do not use washing up liquid.

Apply bleach to the wall or use a recommended mould removal product from any DIY store. Please wear rubber gloves and read the instructions carefully.

Some handy tips below if you have had mould:

- Dry clean any mildewed clothes
- Shampoo carpets
- Do not brush or vacuum clean mould
- Following treatment redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint that helps prevent mould
- Do not overcoat with ordinary paint, emulsion or wallpaper.

If black mould develops in your property this is due to excessive moisture and may signal the ventilation, insulation or heating may need to be checked.

Please contact our repairs team where black mould is noted, and this will be inspected. All CHI units are acquired and constructed in line with the building regulations at the timeof construction, however your property may need planned upgrades from time to time.

Remember: The only way to prevent mould from occurring is to eliminate dampness. This is most commonly caused by condensation and poor ventilation.

Residential Tenancies Board



Approved Housing Bodies now come under the remit of the Residential Tenancies Board following the enactment of relevant sections of the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2015.

What does this mean for you and Co-operative Housing Ireland?

This means that you and CHI now have access to dispute resolution services of the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB).

Previously this service was only open to private rented tenancies, however since 2016 Approved Housing Bodies are required to register all tenancies with the RTB.

Who are the Residential Tenancies Board?

The Residential Tenancies Board was set up under the Residential Tenancies Act 2004. The RTB provides information to tenants and landlords on their rights and obligations.

It also provides policy advice to Government on the rented sector.

Services provided by the RTB

1. Register of Tenancies – your tenancy will be registered with the RTB.

2. Dispute Resolution – The RTB provides a confidential dispute resolution service. tenants or landlords can access this service.

3. Research and Information – The RTB provide research reports on issues in the rental sector. They also provide information to tenants, landlords and the public regarding the rented sector.

RTB Information and Contact Details

Website: www.rtb.ie

One stop shop: onestopshop.rtb.ie

Phone Numbers: 0818 30 30 37 or 0818 30 30 43
or 01 702 8100

Postal Address:
Residential Tenancies Board
Po Box 47
Clonakilty
Co. Cork

Leaving your Home



A member may end up having to leave their home for the number of reasons including a transfer to another area, termination of the tenancy or a voluntary ending of a tenancy.

Where you wish to leave your home and hand the property back to CHI, you are required to write/email to your co-operative office or Neighbourhood Specialist outlining your intent to vacate the property.

You must give CHI at least 4 weeks' notice in writing prior to vacating your property.

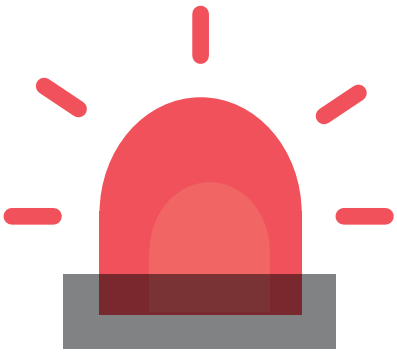
On receiving your written instruction, a member of staff will arrange an appointment to visit your home and carry out a pre-surrender inspection of your property.



Prior to handing back the keys to CHI you must ensure the following is complete:

1. The gas and electricity providers have been contacted to inform them of the termination of the tenancy
2. All furniture, belongings and rubbish have been removed
3. The property is in a clean and tidy condition
4. No damage has been caused to the property
5. Water, electricity and central heating systems are running and working
6. Keys have been returned to a member of CHI staff
7. The rent account for the property is up-to-date and that any standing orders have been cancelled
8. The rent card is returned to a member of CHI staff.

Safety in your home



Fire Safety

The three rules to ensure you are safe from fire are as follows:

1. **Prevention** – The best way to be "fire safe" is to ensure that fires never happen
2. **Detection** – A fire alarm that works will give you time to get everybody out of the house
3. **Evacuation** – Get out and stay out where a fire occurs. Please help younger children, elderly or sick people that may be in your home

Fire Detection

- Ensure smoke detectors are tested once a week
- Contact CHI where batteries are beeping and need replacing
- Please ensure the fire blanket provided to you remains where it was fitted by CHI

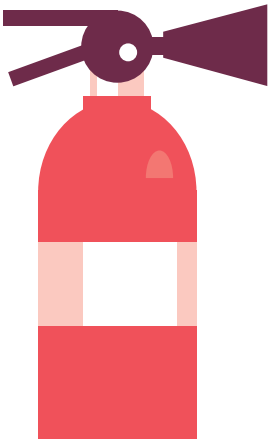
NB: It is important to discuss how serious fire safety in the home is with all members of the tenancy agreement.

What to do if you detect a fire in your home

- If there is smoke, keep low as the air is cleaner
- Get everybody out as quickly as possible
- Call 999 or 112
- Ask for the fire service
- Listen to the operator's advice
- Speak in a calm manor
- Give the details requested by the operator
- Do not hang up until the operator advises you to do so
- Always remember –
  Do not re-enter a home that is on fire. Wait for the fire brigade to come
- Contact CHI to inform them a fire has occurred

NB: It is important that you and your family are aware of escape routes and emergency exits for apartment blocks. Do not block escape routes such as stairs, windows and emergency doors in apartment complexes.

How to prevent a fire in your home



- Do not smoke when you are in bed, tired or on medication
- Keep children away from the cooker unit when cooking
- Do not use a deep fat fryer
- Never leave pots or pans attended for long periods of time.
- Avoid the handles of pots and pans turned over the work surface to avoid burning
- Never leave candles unattended or lit at night time
- Always use a proper holder for candles
- Do not use petrol to light solid fuel
- Close all doors at night
- Never wedge open a fire door – a closed fire door could save your life
- Do not charge your phone overnight
- Do not charge e-scooters/bikes in your home/building

NB: Always check your property when going to bed to ensure no cigarettes, candles or electrical equipment is turned on that may cause a fire.

- Is your cooker off?
- Is the fire guard in front of a fire that was lit earlier?

Electrical Safety

- Do not leave unused appliances plugged in overnight
- Do not overload your sockets
- Do not touch bare wires
- Never touch an electrical appliance that is wet.

Gas Safety

- On an annual basis CHI will service all boilers in our properties. It is your responsibility to ensure access can be arranged with our contractor to ensure your boiler is serviced
- Never attempt to alter the gas meter, repair or service the heating system
- If there is an issue with the gas boiler, please contact your local office
- Please do not store gas cylinders in your property.

If you smell gas in your home, please do the following,

- Turn off the mains gas supply
- Open windows and doors
- Extinguish any flames, i.e. candles
- **Do not switch anything on or off**
- Contact Bord Gais with immediate effect
- Bord Gais contact number is 1850 20 50 50
- Vacate the unit until you're advised it is safe to re-enter.

Security in your Home



The following are simple steps members can take to reduce the risk of your home being broken into and improve the security in your home:

- Please ensure you always lock your doors and windows when you leave the property
- Pull your curtains at night time
- If you will be away from your home for a number of days and nights, please ask a family member, friend or neighbour to check on your property
- Please be careful updating social media where you intend to be away for a few days
- Leave a light on if you go out at night or use timers
- Ensure any windows or doors that are broken are fixed immediately
- Lock all side gates
- Lock your sheds
- If you lose your house keys please change the locks immediately.

- CHI advise you to not leave keys under door mats, flowerpots or anywhere in the front or back garden of your property
- Do not leave valuables in sight and lying around.
- Where a house alarm is fitted please use it
- Do not let anyone into your property until you are satisfied it is safe to do so
- Don't leave keys on hall tables near letter boxes.

If you live in an apartment block also bear in mind the following:

- Ensure the entrance door or gate is closed or locked behind you
- Do not pace an object in front of the entrance door to keep it opened
- Do not give any person the keypad entrance code.
- If the entrance door is broken please contact CHI or managing agent immediately
- Please keep all entrance doors and emergency doors clear of any obstructions.

Winter Months



Preparing for Winter Months

During periods of severe weather, it is important to obtain the latest weather information and updates to help prepare during times of weather warnings.

Weather warnings are presented in three categories:

Status Yellow Weather Alert

Be Aware

The concept behind YELLOW level weather alerts is to notify those who are at risk because of their location and/or activity, and to allow them to take preventative action. It is implicit that YELLOW level weather alerts are for weather conditions that do not pose an immediate threat to the general population, but only to those exposed to risk by nature of their location and/or activity.

Status Orange Weather Alert

Be Prepared

This category of ORANGE level weather warnings is for weather conditions which have the capacity to impact significantly on people in the affected areas. The issue of an Orange level weather warning implies that all recipients in the affected areas should prepare themselves in an appropriate way for the anticipated conditions.

Status Red Severe Weather Warning

Take Action

The issue of RED level severe weather warnings should be a comparatively rare event and implies that recipients take action to protect themselves and/or their properties; this could be by moving their families out of the danger zone temporarily, by staying indoors or by other specific actions aimed at mitigating the effects of the weather conditions.

Being Prepared Means Thinking Ahead

- Have a small supply of non-perishable, easy-to-prepare foods
- Keep extra supplies of essential medication in case it is difficult to get to the doctor/pharmacy
- Have an adequate supply of fuel for heating/cooking and if possible, a suitable alternative should the main supply fail
- Have batteries for torches and alternative light sources in the event of power cuts
- Have a water container to ensure a supply of drinking water
- Know how to turn off your water supply in the event of burst pipes (usually under the sink in the kitchen and outside)
- Keep mobile phones charged up – have local emergency numbers in your phone
- Have a suitable snow shovel (but any shovel or spade will do)
- Know your EIRCODE

Check on your neighbours if elderly or vulnerable.



How to help avoid pipes bursting

- Leave a light on in the attic
- Open attic trap door to allow heat in
- Leave heating turned on at lower settings
- Warmth offers protection against burst pipes so keep your home warm
- Where your property may be vacant over a cold spell keep your heating on timer and have somebody you trust keep an eye on your home

If a Pipe Bursts in your home

1. Turn off the water supply from the outside stopcock and under your kitchen sink.
2. Turn on taps to drain the system
3. Turn off all central heating systems
4. If water comes in contact with electricity turn off electricity supply
5. Contact CHI office or out of hours emergency line

Frequently Asked Questions



Other Questions Regarding your Tenancy Agreement

Can I have a pet?

In a house, yes. We also allow accredited service dogs in apartment buildings. CHI have a policy on pets. Please note that 'restricted' dog breeds are not permitted in our homes.

Large animals or dangerous/illegal pets are not permitted.

In apartments and buildings with shared communal areas may not be allowed under the house rules. This will be explained to you prior to taking up a tenancy with CHI.

Pets are your responsibility and need to ensure you clean up after them.

You may be requested to re-home a pet that is causing noise disturbance for neighbours.

Can I purchase my home?

No, CHI do not sell off their properties.

You will be entitled to security of tenure and long-term rental once you abide by the terms and conditions of the tenancy agreement.

Can I move somebody into the property?

Not without CHI's consent.

If you wish for a partner, friend or family member to reside in your home, you must first contact your Neighbourhood Specialist. You must have been living in your home a minimum of 6 months before you can start this process.

Your Neighbourhood Specialist will advise you to complete CHI's Housing Needs Assessment form to gather all relevant information in relation to the person you seek to move in.

The person will be interviewed, their income details taken and a garda check carried out prior to any approval. If this person has a previous criminal record they may be refused.

If overcrowding occurs as a result of this person moving in, they will be refused.

You will be informed in writing if the person has received approval to reside or not.

Can I make alterations to my home?

Not without the consent of CHI.

You can redecorate your home by painting and putting up wallpaper etc. However, you cannot make any structural alterations to your home without the written consent of CHI.

Please contact your Neighbourhood Specialist in writing where you are seeking consent to make any structural alterations. This will be reviewed by CHI and you will be notified in by letter of the decision reached.

Can I pass my tenancy to a family member?

If the unfortunate situation arises where you pass away, there is no automatic succession rights to the tenancy for your children. This will need to be approved through the relevant Local Authority.

Generally, a person seeking succession of the tenancy would need to be listed as a resident of the tenancy for at least 2 years and be declared on the rent account.

Can I apply for Transfer?

If you have lived in the same CHI property for 2 years or more, you have the right to apply for a transfer through your relevant Local Authority.

It is not CHI's responsibility to transfer you or assess you for a transfer.

Can I paint my home?

Internally – Yes you can paint your home. Members are responsible for internal redecoration at least once in every 5 years.

Outside – No you cannot paint your home unless you have received written permission from your Neighbourhood Specialist under the conditions you can paint your home, members will be required to use the same colour paint that currently exists to keep in line with your surrounding neighbours.

Can I put up a Satellite Dishes?

Yes – however satellite dishes may not be attached to the front of a house. It must be attached to the side or rear of the property.

Under no circumstances should more than one dish be attached to a building. Members will be requested move or remove dishes installed incorrectly at their own expense.

Adaptations for disabled or older persons

A situation may arise where a member may need to adapt their home to help with access or mobility issues.

If you need adaptation or mobility works, please contact your Neighbourhood Specialist who will offer advice on your options.

Various options may involve a transfer to a more suitable property through the Local Authority's transfer list or making an application to the relevant Local Authority for a grant under the Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme or Mobility Aids Grant Scheme. CHI do not pay for adaptations or any shortfall in a grant aid.

CHI do not pay for adaptations or any shortfall in a grant aid.

What is a joint tenancy?

A joint tenancy is a tenancy that is shared between two adults or more who reside permanently in the dwelling, usually couples.

Where one member of the couple wishes to vacate the property, they will surrender their right to the tenancy.

Please let your neighbourhood specialist know if one of you wishes to surrender their part of a joint tenancy and we will talk you through the process.

What happens if I have more children?

If you have more children, and as a result, your housing needs change, please arrange to discuss your options with your Neighbourhood Specialist. This may require you to apply for a transfer through the Local Authority.

Please provide us with a copy of your child's birth certificate and your Income Specialist will review your rent.

Member Services Hub

Our Member Services team takes calls and emails from members all over the country.

Our Member Services Advisors can log repairs and answer questions about your tenancy. Where a Member Services Advisor cannot answer your question, they will arrange for a staff member in the right department to give you a call back. When calling about a Repair, please refer to pages 31–38 of this Handbook to determine whether your repair is something that is your responsibility or Co-operative Housing Ireland's responsibility.

Our aim

The Member Services team aim to resolve most calls at your first point of contact and provide you with an efficient service. Where they are unable to resolve your issue on the first point of contact, they will direct your query to right team.

Our ethos

When you contact the Member Services team, you'll speak to a person, not an automated service. Our team works hard to help you with your query, and we treat every member with dignity and respect. We ask that you treat our colleagues the same.

Our ask

We regularly review our service and try to find ways that we can improve the service that you receive. Every month, we contact a random sample of our members who had a repair fixed by us recently to get their feedback. We welcome and encourage your feedback as this helps us to develop our standards and policies.

If the phone lines are busy and your query is not urgent, please contact us via email to:

- **Repairs query:** repairs@cooperativehousing.ie
- **General query:** info@cooperativehousing.ie
- **Rent query:** rentreview@cooperativehousing.ie

When contacting us by email, please include your full name, full address, phone number and as much detail about your query that you can provide. This will help to expedite your query when a member of staff is reviewing your email.

Out of Hours Service

We are here to support you 24/7, 365 days a year. Should you need support when the Member Services Hub is closed (after hours, on weekends or on bank holidays), please contact our Emergency line on (01) 640 3074 and press option 1 to speak to our out-of-hours team.

Tip: Cut out the below card and keep nearby so you can contact us easily.



How can you contact us?

Member Services Hub opening hours:
Monday to Friday, 9:00am – 5:00pm

Phone number: (01) 640 3074

Email address: repairs@cooperativehousing.ie / info@cooperativehousing.ie

Out of hours phone number: (01) 640 3074 (and press option 1)

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