

## Cold Weather Precautions: Keeping Your Home Cosy and Damage-Free This Winter Expert Advice from a Property Maintenance Specialist

As the frosty fingers of winter begin to grip our homes, it's essential to prepare your property to withstand the harsher conditions that lie ahead, and ensure a safe, comfortable, and energy-efficient season. Freezing temperatures can pose significant risks to your home, particularly to water and heating pipes. A burst pipe can lead to extensive water damage, structural damage, and costly repairs. Thankfully, with a few simple precautions, you can keep your home safe and sound throughout the frosty months. To prevent such mishaps and ensure your home remains warm and functional throughout the winter, please follow these comprehensive guidelines:

### Preventive Measures for a Trouble-Free Winter

#### Maintain a Low Level of Heat

Ensure that your property maintains a consistent, low level of heat throughout the day and night, even if it's unoccupied. This will prevent pipes from freezing and bursting, especially if the property is vacant for more than 24 hours.

#### Check the Boiler Frost Thermostat is Operational

This mechanism automatically activates the heating system when temperatures drop near freezing, preventing the pipes from freezing.



#### Locate and Ensure Accessibility of Stop Taps

Familiarise yourself with the location of all stop taps in your home. Ensure they are easily accessible for quick access and functioning correctly, allowing you to quickly shut off the water supply in case of a pipe burst.

#### Inspect Waste Pipes and Boiler Overflow Pipes

Regularly inspect waste pipes and boiler overflow pipes for signs of icing or freezing.

This can obstruct the flow of water and prevent your boiler from operating correctly.

#### Thaw the Boiler's Condensation Pipe Before Calling an Engineer

If your boiler malfunctions, check if the external condensate pipe is frozen.

Thawing the condensate pipe with warm water may resolve the issue without the need for a callout.



#### Address Minor Leaks Promptly

Don't ignore minor leaks or dripping taps. Prompt attention can prevent further damage and costly repairs. Report any minor leaks or dripping taps to your letting agent or landlord.

Even small leaks can escalate into significant damage over time.

## Emergency Response: Tackling Burst Pipes

In the unfortunate event of a burst pipe, follow these steps immediately to minimize damage and restore functionality.

### Turn Off the Stop Tap Immediately

Upon detecting a burst pipe, immediately turn off the stop tap to halt water flow and minimise any damage to the property and contents.

### Drain the Sink Taps

Open all sink taps to drain as much water as possible from the system.

This helps reduce the extent of water damage.

### Drain Down the Heating System (If Affected)

If the burst pipe affects the heating system, locate the system drain and bleed valves and drain down to release pressure quickly.

### Locate and Contain Leaks

Identify the source of the leaks and place containers to catch the escaping water.

Temporarily wrap leaking pipes with lagging material to minimise the water flow and prevent further damage.

### Report the Incident Promptly

Inform your letting agent or landlord about the burst pipe without delay.

They will arrange for the necessary repairs, restore the water supply, and assess any damages.



## Your Legal Responsibilities: Maintaining The Property to Prevent Damage

### Unblocking Sinks and Bleeding Radiators

Tenants are expected to take reasonable steps to maintain their property, including unblocking sinks and bleeding radiators.

### Liability for Damage

UK law has established that tenants are expected to take reasonable precautions to maintain their properties, including unblocking sinks, bleeding radiators, and taking the preventive measures outlined above. Failure to take these precautions may result in liability for any resulting damage.

## Emergency Assistance and Further Guidance

If you encounter any plumbing or heating issues during the winter season, don't hesitate to contact your letting agent or landlord for a prompt resolution.

**For additional help and guidance, please visit [HelloMaintenance.co.uk](https://www.hellomaintenance.co.uk) or call us on 03303 413 236, we're here all day, every day.**

