



Comhairle Contae an Chláir
Clare County Council

Áras Contae an Chláir

**Bóthar Nua, Inis, Co. an Chláir
New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare
T: 065 6821616 www.clarecoco.ie**

Clare Local Authorities

**Tenant's Handbook
Eolaí na Thionónta**

For your information

Acknowledgements

Clare County Council's Fire & Emergency Services Department
National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management; Department of the Environment, Community
& Local Government
Dublin City Council

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Introduction

Clare Local Authorities are pleased to give you a copy of its tenant handbook. As your landlord, Clare Local Authorities are taking this opportunity to remind you of the wide range of services available to you as one of our tenants.

This handbook is an important element in the flow of information between the Local Authority and its tenants, while also outlining your rights and responsibilities.

For your added convenience, a list of contact telephone numbers including emergency numbers is included in this handbook.

How can I contact the Local Authorities Housing Department?

The Housing Department is responsible for the provision, management, maintenance and control of the Local Authority housing stock.

We can be contacted at:-

Housing Section
Clare County Council,
Áras Contae an Chláir,
New Road,
Ennis,
Co. Clare

Telephone: 065 68 46334/065 68 46403

Fax: 065 68 66058

Email: info@clarecoco.ie

Web: www.clarecoco.ie

You can call without appointment to the Housing Department during normal office hours for general housing enquiries. Please note however that specific appointments will have to be made to meet the Housing Officer and certain other staff members.

Tenancy Conditions

The conditions of your tenancy are set out in detail in your Tenancy Agreement. For your convenience, the main points are summarised below.



How does my Tenancy operate?

- The dwelling must be used as your main home.
- You must not, save with the consent of the Local Authority, cease to reside in your dwelling for more than six weeks in any period of fifty two weeks.
- The dwelling must not be used for business purposes of any kind.
- Rent must be paid in full every week.
- You must provide full details of all household income and circumstances.
- You must return your Rent Review Form when requested.
- Only domestic pets may be kept and these must be kept under control.
- You must give four weeks notice when surrendering the tenancy.
- You must look after the dwelling properly.
- You must not make alterations to the property without the prior written consent from the Local Authority.
- Authorised officers of the Local Authority must be allowed to enter and inspect the dwelling at reasonable times or carry out necessary work.
- You must not take in lodgers or sub-tenants.
- You and your household, including visitors, shall not cause nuisance, annoyance or disturbance to neighbours including:
 - Harassment or violence or threats of violence.
 - Unreasonably loud noise of any kind.

Tenants evicted for breach of these conditions will be regarded as having deliberately rendered themselves homeless and will not be rehoused by the Local Authority.

Your Housing Options

The Local Authority provides suitable accommodation to qualified applicants, in accordance with its Social Housing Allocation Scheme. In doing so, we hope we have satisfied your housing needs. However, changes in your household circumstances may mean you have to review your housing needs, and you should, therefore, be aware of all the housing options open to you.



Housing transfers

Local Authority tenants may apply to transfer to alternative accommodation. The Local Authority will consider transfer applications in order to facilitate:

- Large families to move from overcrowded conditions
- Senior citizens and other smaller households to move to smaller and more appropriate accommodation
- Reasons of exceptional medical circumstances, where the transfer would facilitate medical care needs, e.g. ground floor bedroom & sanitary facilities
- The transfer of tenants to and from other housing authorities on conditions mutually agreed between the authorities
- Mutual exchanges

How soon after I become a tenant can I apply for a transfer?

Applicants for transfer will not normally be considered unless tenants are residing at their current address for a minimum of two years.

Can the Local Authority refuse to consider a transfer request?

Yes. The Local Authority will refuse to consider a transfer request in the following cases:

- **Rent Arrears**
If there are rent arrears or an agreed arrangement to clear the arrears has been made and not adhered to.

- **Non-Compliance with Tenancy Agreement**

If there are issues of non-compliance with the Local Authorities Tenancy Conditions.

- **Anti-Social Behaviour**

Tenants or members of their household who engage in anti-social behaviour will not be considered for transfers and may put themselves and their family at risk of eviction by the Local Authority. See chapter on Anti-Social Behaviour for further information.

- **Non-Disclosure of Information**

The Local Authority may also refuse to offer a transfer:

- Where a transfer applicant refuses to disclose any information which is requested either for the purpose of assessing the application or for estate management purposes.
- Where a transfer applicant will not authorise the release of data/information about the applicant by other agencies where it is required for estate management purposes.
- Where a transfer applicant provides false or misleading information either on the application form or at a subsequent interview. Section 33 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1992 provides that an applicant supplying false or misleading information shall be liable to a fine on summary conviction not exceeding €1,270.
- Where a transfer applicant refuses or neglects to disclose all household income

When I am applying for a transfer can I choose the area?

Transfer applicants, in the same manner as all housing applicants, may select up to three areas for which they wish to be considered for housing.

Can I transfer with a tenant of another Local Authority?

Yes. Provided both Local Authorities agree and that your track record and that of the other applicant is satisfactory, with no rent arrears or proven complaints of anti-social behaviour.

What happens if my spouse / partner is the tenant and he/she dies or leaves?

Where death or departure of a tenant takes place, the Local Authority will normally facilitate the continuation of a tenancy by the surviving spouse/partner.

What happens to the tenancy if my parents are the tenants and they die or leave?

On the death or departure of both parents, the Local Authority will normally facilitate the continuation of tenancy by a family member, provided that he/she has been living in the dwelling for at least two years immediately prior to the death or departure of the tenant, and had been declared for rent assessment. Each case will be examined on its own merits.

Can I buy my dwelling?

At present there is no option available to purchase your dwelling. It is likely however that a new tenant purchase scheme will be introduced in the future by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.

Therefore, if you wish to purchase your dwelling in the future, you should contact the Housing Section for details.

If I surrender my dwelling, can the Local Authority assist me in buying a private dwelling?

Yes. There are several ways you can achieve this:

The Mortgage Allowance Scheme can help you if you wish to buy a private dwelling and surrender your existing dwelling to the Local Authority. This scheme gives a subsidy towards mortgage payments over the first five years of the mortgage.

You may also be able to take out a House Purchase Loan from Clare County Council. In order to apply you must be a First time buyer, be in permanent employment for a minimum of 2 years, have a satisfactory savings record and have 2 letters of refusal from banks or building societies. Contact the Housing Loans Section for further information.

Vacant Dwellings

Vacant dwellings in an estate can become a target for anti-social behaviour. If you intend surrendering your dwelling, you must give the Local Authority a minimum of four weeks written notice. Arrangements can then be made to have the property re-let, and avoid any problems associated with vacant units.

Contact Numbers

Housing Allocations:

065 68 46334 or 065 68 46403

Tenant Participation

A partnership in Estate Management

When you were allocated a dwelling by the Local Authority, you became more than just a tenant. You became a member of the community in which you live. This Local Authority encourages you to become actively involved in your estate and is eager to hear your views and suggestions on how your estate can be improved.



What does Estate Management involve?

In order to provide a better level of service in its estates and to encourage greater tenant involvement, the Local Authority has a dedicated estate management unit. Members of the estate management unit are available to meet with the tenants and residents associations on a regular basis and to respond to queries. The aim is to improve the overall co-ordination of services in estates, the enhancement of the estate and to achieve better communication between residents and the Local Authority.

How can I become involved?

We want you as a tenant to participate and have a say in running your estate. Join with us by working with your Residents Association and help make your estate a better place to live. One way of achieving this is to enter your estate in the Best Kept Local Authority Estate Competition.

Best Kept Local Authority Estate Competition

This competition is an annual event and open to all Clare Local Authority estates. The competition is divided into categories according to the number of dwellings within the estate. An award is given to the first three places in each category and further individual honours also awarded including the Overall Winner, Judges Special Award and Youth Involvement. The competition acknowledges the hard work and achievements of residents in the care of and enhancement of their dwellings and the open spaces within the estate.

Residents Associations

If there is no residents association operating in your area and you and your neighbours are interested in establishing one, why not find out more by contacting the estate management unit in the Housing Section, New Road, Ennis.

Contact Numbers

Estate Management:

065 68 46334 or 065 68 46403

Rents

The Rents Section will assess your rent and deal with any queries you may have about your account, methods of payments, arrears or evictions. Some general questions are answered below, but you can call the Housing Section at any time with more specific queries in relation to your account on 065-6846334 or 065-6846403.



How can I pay my rent?

Heretofore it has been the Local Authority's policy to provide its tenants with as broad a range of payment methods as possible, including:

- Household Budget Scheme – deductions from Social Welfare
- In person at Local Authority offices
- Through your Account Manager
- Through the bank via standing order or direct debit

As and from April 2013 new tenants of Local Authority are required to pay rent by way of the household budget scheme or direct debit/standing order. In the future, it is likely that all tenants who are recipients of social welfare will have their rent deducted at source.

How is my rent determined?

It is determined using the Local Authority's Differential Rent Scheme. Rents are assessed on total household income in a manner which ensures that the amount you are charged in rent is reasonable and does not lead to undue financial difficulties. A copy of the scheme is available on request.

What if another person in the house is in receipt of income?

All household income is assessable for rent. Household income is the total income of the tenant and all members of the household.

What if my circumstances change?

You should keep the Local Authority informed of any change in household circumstances. For example, you should let us know when:

- A person in your household loses a job
- A person in your household gets a job
- A person with an income joins the household
- A person in the household starts claiming Social Welfare
- There is a death in the household
- There is a birth in the household

You must notify us of these changes by contacting the Housing Section and your rent will be adjusted accordingly.

What if I don't notify the Local Authority when my circumstances change?

When changes in your circumstances come to light, your rent will be re-assessed based on your current circumstances. Rent accounts will be reviewed and updated accordingly.

What can I do if I am unable to pay my rent?

The way in which your rent is calculated means that you should be able to afford your weekly rent. If, for any reason, you are unable to pay your rent, please inform the Local Authority immediately. It is in your interest to inform the Local Authority of your difficulties at the outset, and to try to avoid your rent account falling into arrears. If you are in arrears, the sooner you tackle the problem the better the outcome.

How do I make an arrangement to clear rent arrears?

You should contact the Housing Office or your Account Manager. The next step is to work with your Account Manager to agree a reasonable plan to clear off the arrears. It is imperative that you stick to an agreed arrangement, and your arrears will reduce over time.

Will I be taken to Court for rent arrears?

Yes, if you refuse to come to a reasonable agreement or if you do not keep to an agreed plan, the Local Authority will serve a Notice-to-Quit and institute legal proceedings to recover vacant possession of the Local Authority property. Proceedings will only be halted on payment in full of all outstanding arrears and costs to the Local Authority.

Contact Numbers

Rents Section:

065 68 46334 or 065 68 46403

Anti-Social Behaviour

The Local Authority is committed to the ideal that tenants of the Local Authority and residents living near tenants of the Local Authority are able to enjoy living in their dwellings free from anti-social behaviour and from nuisance behaviour that detracts from their quality of life.

The Local Authority adopted an Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy in accordance with the Housing Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 2009, and is available on

<http://www.clarecoco.ie/housing/council-housing/anti-social-behaviour/>



What happens if Anti-Social Behaviour occurs?

The Local Authority will take the following responsive measures in dealing with anti-social behaviour:

- Record and investigate complaints in a fair manner and within specified timeframes.
- Facilitate complaints to be made in a variety of ways; by phone, in writing, or face to face to Housing staff.
- Commit to initiating an investigation into complaints.
- Involve relevant agencies - for example an Garda Síochána, Department of Social Protection, The Health Service Executive and any other agency where considered appropriate.

What enforcement measures will be taken by the Local Authority if Anti-social Behaviour occurs?

Following investigation if it is found that tenants are engaged in anti-social behaviour and have breached the tenancy agreement, warning letters will be issued. The warning letters will give opportunity, where appropriate, for a tenant to remedy the breach and comply with requirements. If this does not resolve the matter the Local Authority will institute legal proceedings.

Warning: Due process will be dispensed with in the event of anti-social behaviour involving the production or sale or supply of drugs by a tenant. In such a case, eviction or exclusion proceedings may be taken by the Local Authority.

The Local Authority will enforce the legislation in the most serious of cases as outlined in the Local Authority's policy in implementing the legislation

Confidentiality

The Council will facilitate complaints to be made in a confidential manner. The council will assume that a complainant requires the complaint to be dealt with in conditions of complete confidentiality unless the complainant states (in writing) otherwise.

Access to complaints records is restricted and written records are stored in a secure area at all times.

Contact Details

Email: asbcomplaint@clarecoco.ie

Estate Management: 065 68 46334 or 065 68 46403

Protecting Your Home

Garda statistics indicate that most house break-ins are carried out on the spur of the moment. There are a few simple steps that you can take to prevent a break-in.



- Always close your windows and lock the doors when you go out, even if it is only for a few minutes.
- Make sure that you do not leave tools or ladders lying about in the garden of your home.
- Never leave keys on a string behind the letter box, hidden under the door mat or in other 'secret' places. Thieves can usually find them!
- If you have to go out at night time, consider leaving a light on in the bedroom or living room. You might consider fitting an automatic control which turns on a light at dusk. Controls like this are available from most large do-it-yourself (DIY) stores.
- Cancel milk and newspaper deliveries when you go on holiday and tell a responsible neighbour that you will be away.
- Never leave valuables lying around where they can be seen through a window.
- Thieves may try to gain entry to your home by posing as officials or workmen. Never let a stranger into your home unless you are certain of his/her identity. Take the following precautions:-
 - Ask to see the caller's identity card. Examine the photograph and ask the caller to spell his/her name.
 - If the caller does not have an identity card ask them to call back later and use the extra time to check with the organisation they represent.
 - Telephone the Gardaí if you are suspicious.
- If you are unfortunate enough to be burgled, it will improve your chances of getting your property back if you have kept the serial numbers of equipment and taken photographs of your personal property, and valuables, e.g. bicycles, televisions, etc.

Contact Numbers

An Garda Síochána:

999 or 112

Housing Maintenance & Tenant's Charter

The Housing Department is responsible for the management of the Local Authority's housing stock and as the landlord, maintains the right to inspect their housing stock.

The Tenancy Agreement sets out responsibilities of the tenant while residing in the property.



General

The Local Authority is responsible for some but not all repairs. In general terms, the Local Authority takes responsibility for the repair and maintenance of items affecting the structure of the properties.

The tenant is responsible for the repair of any wilful or malicious damage; damage as a result of burglary and damage caused by negligence. In all circumstances where, at the discretion of the Local Authority, such damage is made good by the Local Authority, the cost of the repair will be charged to the tenant.

Structural Repair

Local Authority Responsibility	Tenant Responsibility
The Local Authority is responsible for the structural repair of roofs; windows and doors; floors, ceilings and walls; staircase, chimney; damage caused by wet or dry rot; fascia board, soffit, gutters and downpipes.	The tenant is responsible where it is evident the damage to the structure was caused by Satellite TV aerial installation or by the tenant carrying out unauthorised works to the property.
	The tenant is responsible for the repair of broken glazing of external windows and doors howsoever caused.
	The tenant is responsible for decorative repairs to include the filling of internal plaster cracks and floor covering.
	The tenant must ensure that all window hinges and locks are oiled annually and are in proper working order.
	The tenant must ensure that external timbers on windows and doors are painted / treated (at least once every two years).

Sanitary Facilities

Local Authority Responsibility	Tenant Responsibility
The Local Authority is responsible for the provision of a toilet; wash hand basin and fixed bath/shower with a supply of cold water and the facility for the provision of hot water.	The tenant is responsible for ensuring the drains to the main sewer are free flowing; the cleaning of gully traps and internal waste pipes; the repair/replacement of toilet seats and the provision of sink and bath stoppers.
The Local Authority is responsible for the maintenance of the internal plumbing system of the property.	
The Local Authority is responsible for the maintenance and insulation of water storage tanks and hot water cylinders.	
The Local Authority is responsible for the maintenance of the main sewer/ WWTP serving the property.	

Heating

Local Authority Responsibility	Tenant Responsibility
The Local Authority is responsible for the provision of a fixed heating appliance in all habitable rooms.	The tenant is responsible for venting air locks in radiators.
The Local Authority is responsible for the safe and effective removal of fumes to the external air.	The tenant is responsible for ensuring that an air lock resulting from running out of oil is properly vented by a competent person with appropriate insurances.
	The tenant is responsible for ensuring the chimney of the property is cleaned annually by a competent Contractor with appropriate insurances.
	The tenant is responsible for maintaining back boilers and stove in such a manner that prevents the build up of soot on the appliances.
	The tenant is responsible for adequate heating of the property to prevent condensation.
	The tenant is responsible for the provision of replacement fire grates and fire fronts and replacement parts for solid fuel stoves/ranges.

Ventilation

Local Authority Responsibility	Tenant Responsibility
The Local Authority is responsible for the provision of adequate ventilation in all habitable rooms.	The tenant is responsible for adequately ventilating the property to prevent the build up of moisture in the property thus preventing condensation and mould. Where such condensation occurs, the tenant must take steps to address the damage and prevent future occurrence.
The Local Authority is responsible for the provision of adequate ventilation for the removal of water vapour from the kitchen and bathrooms.	

To Control Condensation Remember the Key Points

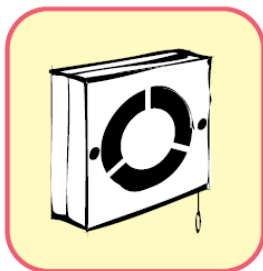


**Reduce the Amount of
Moisture You Produce**



**Reduce the Number of
Cold Surfaces in Your
Home**

**Improve the
Ventilation**



**Maintain an
Adequate Room
Temperature**



Lighting

Local Authority Responsibility	Tenant Responsibility
The Local Authority is responsible for the provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms.	The tenant is responsible for the replacement of bulbs on the property.
The Local Authority is responsible for the provision of adequate artificial lighting in all circulation routes and rooms for use by the tenant.	The tenant is responsible for the replacement of the bathroom globe (shade only).
The Local Authority is responsible for ensuring any room containing a bath or shower is adequately screened to ensure privacy.	

Fire Safety

Please refer to chapter on Fire Safety for advice on fire prevention.

Where **mains operated smoke alarms** are provide by the Local Authority the tenant must not under any circumstance disconnect or in any other way interfere with the smoke alarm.

Local Authority Responsibility	Tenant Responsibility
The Local Authority is responsible for the provision of either a mains wired smoke alarm or at least two 10-year self-contained battery operated smoke alarms and a fire blanket.	The tenant is responsible for the replacement of batteries in regular smoke alarms and for ensuring that the smoke alarm is working at all times.
The Local Authority is responsible for the provision of emergency lighting in all common areas within a multi-unit building.	

Refuse

Local Authority Responsibility	Tenant Responsibility
The Local Authority is responsible for the provision of adequate area for the storage of refuse (not including bins).	The tenant is responsible for ensuring the proper disposal of refuse. The tenant must be in a position to prove compliance with waste legislation.
	The control of vermin/pests in the property is the responsibility of the tenant. Where it is evident that the management of refuse is contributing to the presence of vermin in and around the property, the tenant must take immediate action to address the vermin/pest issue.
	Under the Litter Act, each householder is obliged to keep the footpath and garden adjoining their property free of litter. Any road gully on or at the side of the pavement should be litter free. Refuse, nuisance or offensive matter should not be allowed to accumulate and should be secured appropriately prior to collection.

Electrical

You should not interfere with **Mains Fuses or Electrical Fittings**. Main fuses are the responsibility of the Electricity Supply Board (ESB).

In all circumstances where damage and/or alterations to the electrical system are carried out without prior written consent from the Local Authority and such damage is made good by the Local Authority, the cost of the repair will be charged to the tenant.

Local Authority Responsibility	Tenant Responsibility
The Local Authority is responsible for the maintenance of the electrical system of the property.	The tenant is responsible for the replacement of bulbs and fuses.

Gas

If at any time you smell gas in the property you must contact Bord Gais on 1850 20 50 50.

Local Authority Responsibility	Tenant Responsibility
The Local Authority is responsible for the maintenance of the gas service to the property.	In properties with card meters the tenant is responsible for ensuring the gas boiler is re-set by an RGII gas installer with appropriate insurances.
The Local Authority will service the gas boiler in accordance with manufacturers recommended service intervals.	

Internal and External Circulation Areas

Local Authority Responsibility	Tenant Responsibility
The Local Authority is responsible for amenity areas (only if taken in charge by the Local Authority); lighting in communal laneways and stairs.	The tenant is responsible for maintaining the garden, walls, fences, gates and hedges in a tidy condition, and for any laneway/walkway adjoining the property.

Requests for repairs

If you have a maintenance request or any query on the maintenance of the property, you should contact the Housing Maintenance Section on 065 68 46289 / 065 68 46206.

Please be advised that your communication must comply with Clare Local Authorities Customer Charter, otherwise the Local Authority will not be in a position to process the maintenance requests.

On receipt of the request/query the Local Authority will advise if the repair is your responsibility and if so the matter will be closed. If the repair is the responsibility of the Local Authority the repair request will be logged and categorised.

All repair requests, for which the Local Authority is responsible, are recorded and referred to the relevant Clerk of Works. The Clerk of Works will then make contact with you to arrange access and/or to advise that a Contractor has been appointed to undertake the repair. The Local Authority will forward your contact details to the nominated Contractor to arrange the repair.

It is important to note that, except in the case of emergency repairs, regard will be had to any arrears on a tenants rent account in dealing with their request for repairs.

In order to provide an acceptable level of service for the maintenance of properties, repairs are categorised, with the appropriate response times as follows:

Category	Timescale
<u>Emergency</u> – works where it is considered that there is a potential risk to human life e.g. electrical repairs	2-3 working days for the works to be completed
<u>Urgent</u> – works where it is considered that there is the potential for damage to the property e.g. internal plumbing	5-10 working days for the works to be completed
<u>Routine</u> – tenant requests for repairs where it is considered that there is no risk to the tenant or the property e.g. damage to internal fittings	closed out within 6 weeks
It is the aim of the Local Authority to respond to maintenance requests within the above time scales, subject to available resources and the co-operation of the tenant.	

Alteration Work to properties

As tenant you must receive prior **written** consent from the Local Authority for any works to or within the curtilage of a local authority owned property.

In order for the Local Authority to consider applications for works to properties you must submit the following information to the Housing Department:

- Details of the scope of works to be undertaken
- Drawings to include plans, elevation and sections of the proposed works
- Statement from the Designer confirming compliance with current Building Regulations
- Statement from the Designer advising of the Planning status for the works
- Details of the proposed Contractor to include but not limited to Insurance and Health and Safety details

The Local Authority will then consider the application and revert.

Alterations for People with Disabilities

Under the Housing Grants schemes, the Council will consider your application for alterations to the property to accommodate the needs of a member of the household with a disability. Further details are available from the Housing Department. You should note that medical and other evidence will be required to accompany your application.

Where works are undertaken to fulfil your duty as tenant you must ensure that you engage a competent Contractor. The Contractor, with appropriate insurances, engaged to carry out the works must have regard to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act and associated Regulations, the works must be in accordance with the current Building Regulations.

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013 (SI No. 291 of 2013) came into effect on the 1st of August 2013. This legislation has imposed new responsibilities on homeowners. The Health and Safety Authority has produced two short guidance documents to assist duty holders in understanding and complying with the Regulations as follows:

- Guide for Homeowners
- Guide for Contractors and Project Supervisors

If you intend to carry out works on a Local Authority property you must ensure you consult and comply with these guidance documents.

The tenant shall be charged for any unnecessary call-outs for inspection of items that transpire to be the tenant's responsibility or any wilful or malicious damage; damage as a result of burglary and damage caused by negligence.

The rates will be charged based on the costs incurred by the Local Authority.

In order to avoid call out charges please heed these useful tips:

- Don't put cooking oil, fat or motor oil down sinks or toilets, if the blockage is found to have been caused by this activity the charge will apply.
- Don't put nappies, towels, kitchen cloth, baby wipes, paper or any other object, other than toilet paper, into toilets. If a toilet sewer blockage is found to have been caused by a foreign object the call out charge will apply.
- Fit your waste outlet pipe with a mesh filter and clean it regularly.
- Do not burn plastic or nappies in the fire place or stove

Other useful tips include:

- Know the location of your mains water stopcock in the event of a leak.
- Know how to shut off electricity in your house in the event of an electrical fault.

The Local Authority may consider requests to execute "tenant responsibility repairs" in exceptional circumstances. If you feel you need assistance in the maintenance of the property, you should contact the Housing Maintenance Section for further information and assistance.

Should I insure my home?

You should insure the contents of the property including personal possessions. Contact your local insurance company or broker. The Local Authority insures the structure of the property against fire and storm damage only. The Local Authority bears no responsibility for loss or damage to the contents of the property (including floor covering).

What if I lock myself out of my house?

If this happens, the Housing Maintenance staff will help you to get back in, but there will be a charge for the service, including any damage that results. You should arrange to have extra keys cut yourself, but if you subsequently vacate the house, you must hand all keys over to the Local Authority.

Can I keep pets in a rented dwelling?

You are allowed to keep domestic pets such as a dog or a cat as long as they do not create a nuisance or become a source of annoyance. You are prohibited from keeping poultry, horses or other non-domestic animals. Notwithstanding this, dogs which are considered dangerous, e.g., Alsatian, pit bull terrier, Rottweiler etc., shall not be kept on the premises or in the vicinity of the premises. If domestic pets are kept you must ensure that no nuisance is caused. All domestic pets shall be kept under control.

Disposal of Household Refuse

You are responsible for the legal disposal of your household refuse therefore you are required to avail of the services of a permitted Waste Disposal Operator.

Refuse should only be stored in your wheelie bin and the bin placed at your gate on collection day. Refuse must not be stored in gardens or communal areas or emptied into gulley traps, drains or sinks. Your refuse is your property until it is collected. It is illegal to engage in open burning of waste. You may be taken to Court and fined for disposing of refuse incorrectly.

You risk eviction from your home for failure to dispose of your refuse in the proper manner.

Contact Numbers

Housing Maintenance Section: 065 68 46289 or 065 68 46206

Fire Safety at Home



To Prevent Fire

Don't	Make sure to
✗ Smoke when you are in bed, tired, or if you have consumed alcohol or are on medication	✓ Clean your chimney and service your heating system at least once a year
✗ Leave the room when there are candles burning	✓ Use a spark guard with open fires
✗ Leave young children alone near an open fire or cooker	✓ Keep your gas cylinder outside, on solid ground and away from anything hot
✗ Leave matches and lighters where children can get them	✓ Use a proper holder for candles
✗ Leave the room when a chip or frying pan is on even for a minute	✓ Keep a suitable fire extinguisher and fire blanket in the kitchen
✗ Overload electric sockets – one socket, one plug	✓ Empty ashtrays before you go to bed. Run the contents under the tap before you bin them
✗ Use electric appliances that don't work	✓ Repair or replace faulty electrical appliances immediately
✗ Run electrical appliances from a light socket	✓ Do a fire safety check before you go to bed
✗ Use a heater or the cooker to dry clothes	✓ Close all doors at night
✗ Use petrol or paraffin to light a solid fuel stove	

Fire Detection

Smoke alarms give you an early warning of a fire. 82% of fires that kill people are in homes with no working smoke alarm.

✓ Ensure either a mains wired smoke alarm or two 10-year self contained battery operated smoke alarms are fitted in the property
✓ Test your smoke alarms at least once a week
✓ Vacuum your alarm casing to remove dust every six months
✓ Change the batteries every year
✓ Change the battery right away when you hear the warning beep

Plan for Escape

Know what to do when you hear a smoke alarm so you and your family can get out safely.

- ✓ Make an escape plan for your home and practise with everyone who lives with you
- ✓ Plan at least two ways out in case one way is blocked by fire
- ✓ 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

Fact!

Over 1,000 people every year attend casualty with burns or scald injuries. (HIPE & NPRS Unit ESRI)

Fire Safety Checks

A fire safety check only takes a few minutes but it could mean the difference between life and death. Make it part of your routine before you go to bed.

Every night:

- ✓ Switch off all appliances not in use at night
- ✓ 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

Danger of Fire in the Home

Please have regard to the following fire risks and observe the information and advice to avoid the occurrence of fire in the home:

Your home is at risk of fire from:

- Unattended cookers (particularly late at night);
 - Cigarette smoking;
 - Matches, open fires, candles, heaters.
-
- Older people and young children are most often the victims of fire
 - Be sure to keep matches, candles and lighters out of the reach of children and do not leave young children alone in the dwelling
 - Use secure fire guards with open fires
 - Do not smoke in bed
 - Switch off all appliances not in use at night
 - Ensure that the property has at least one working smoke alarm, preferably one on ground floor and one on first floor, and fire blanket. If the property does not have a Smoke Alarm contact Housing Maintenance Section – 065 68 46289 / 065 68 46206
 - Ensure that the smoke alarm is working properly at all times and replace the battery regularly
 - Only one electrical appliance should be plugged into any outlet - *One Socket One Plug*
 - At night, you should close doors to all rooms. Don't open a door if you suspect there is a fire in the room
 - All gas and electrical appliances should be used and serviced in accordance with manufacturer's instruction
 - Christmas Time – It is very important that particular care is taken with Christmas tree lights and any lighted decorations

What do I do if the chimney goes on fire?

Call the fire brigade. Close doors and windows to reduce the draught. If possible, move furniture and carpets away from the fireplace. After a chimney fire, call the Housing Maintenance section – 065 68 46289 / 065 68 46209.

What is the advice about open fires?

Use a fireguard and always check that it is in position before going to bed. Never carry hot coals from one fireplace to another. Avoid banking fires too high.

Should special care be taken with gas cylinders?

- Yes. Always keep cylinders upright and switch off at the regulator when not in use.
- Never seal ventilators as it is important that each room with a gas heater has adequate ventilation.
- Don't store cylinders indoors and return empty cylinders promptly.
- Check flexible hoses and couplings regularly for signs of wear and tear.
- It is advisable to avoid using portable gas heaters. However, if in use keep well clear of curtains and furniture and place them where they cannot be knocked over.
- Gas or oil heaters should never be moved when in use.

Be careful when using portable electric, gas or oil heaters

- X Don't use heaters near furniture, curtains or beds**
- X Don't leave heaters on when you go to bed**
- X Take care if pets are near the heaters**
- X Don't use heaters to dry clothes**

What should I do if my chip-pan goes on fire?

- Turn off heat source.
- If a chip-pan catches fire, use a fire blanket or the correct extinguisher – or smother the flames with a lid, large plate or a well dampened towel.
- Do not attempt to move the pan or use water to put out the fire.

ADVICE

Never leave a chip-pan unattended

**If you have to answer the phone/door, turn off the power
and move the pan to a cold ring/hob**

What to do in the event of a fire in your home:

Your first priority is to get everyone out of the house and then to call the fire brigade.

Call 999 or 112

- ✓ Ask for the fire service
- ✓ Speak calmly and clearly
- ✓ Give your address and phone number.
If you are calling on your mobile, say what county you are in
- ✓ Only hang up when the operator tells you to

Plan for a safe place in case you cannot get out of the house

- ✓ If your escape routes are blocked by fire/smoke, go into a room with a window, close the door and stuff a blanket/towel or carpet at the bottom of the door to keep out smoke. If you cannot get out, stay by the window to alert the Emergency Services. Do NOT evacuate from an upstairs window except as a last resort.
- ✓ Make sure there is a phone or personal alarm in the room to call for help

Don't:

- ✗ Go back into a burning house for any reason
- ✗ Borrow batteries from the smoke alarm
- ✗ Have mirrors over fire places with real fires. Your clothes might catch fire if you stand too close to look in the mirror

Facts !

- On average 46 people die each year in fires in Ireland
- Fires do not always happen to other people
- The next fire could be in your home

For more general information, please log on to www.firesafetyweek.ie

Useful Telephone Numbers



Service	Telephone Number
Emergency: Gardaí, Fire Brigade, Ambulance	999 or 112
Mid Western Health Board Administrative Headquarters	065 68 28525
Ennis General Hospital	065 68 24464
Mid Western Regional Hospital, Dooradoyle, Limerick	061 301111
Mid Western Regional Maternity Hospital, Ennis Road, Limerick	061 327455
ESB	1850 372 372
Bord Gais	1850 20 50 20
Money Advice & Budgeting Service (MABS) Harmony Row, Ennis	076 1072430
Citizens Information Centre, Ennis	076 1075260
Clare County Council Headquarters	065 68 21616
Clare County Council (Out of Hours)	087 4169496

