

Repairs Handbook

Resident's Edition



www.accentgroup.org

September 2017

How to contact us

Report a repair on-line*:



<https://login.accentgroup.org>

- ✓ 24 hours, 7 days a week
- ✓ View your repairs history
- ✓ Check the status of any repair you have reported

*Non-emergency repairs only (see page 12 for details)

Report a repair by phone:



0345 6780 555

Our contact centre is open 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday, and 8am to 12pm on a Saturday.

Outside of these times you can still report emergency repairs using this number. All non-emergency repairs should be reported during office hours or by using the Customer Portal.

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What is this handbook for?

This handbook provides information about the repairs we carry out in your home. It also explains what we need to know in order to arrange your repairs quickly and efficiently.

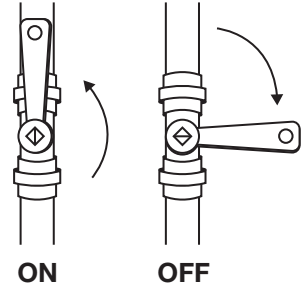
You'll also be able to:

- ✓ know what to do in an emergency
- ✓ find out how to report a repair
- ✓ learn what repairs you are responsible for
- ✓ find out what is an emergency repair
- ✓ find out what is a non-emergency repair
- ✓ find out about our service standards

Gas leaks

If you smell **GAS** you should:

- Put out all flames, turn off the gas (see diagram) and open windows so the gas can escape
- Leave your home and call **National Grid** free on 0800 111 999 – it's important to use a phone outside of your home (using a phone inside, even a mobile, could spark an explosion)



If you smell **GAS** you should not:

- Use any naked flames such as matches or cigarettes
- Turn on any electrical switches or operate telephones or mobiles

Your responsibilities

- Make sure air vents do not become blocked
- Allow us access to carry out the annual gas safety check in your home (see below)
- Report any gas appliance repairs to us without delay

Gas safety checks

Our responsibilities

- We have a comprehensive policy that helps us deliver total gas safety for our residents
- If your home has a gas supply we will arrange for a Gas Safe registered engineer to carry out a gas safety inspection every 12 months – this is a legal requirement

To turn off your ELECTRICITY...

Know where the consumer unit/fuse board is in your home.
Turn the mains switch to the OFF position

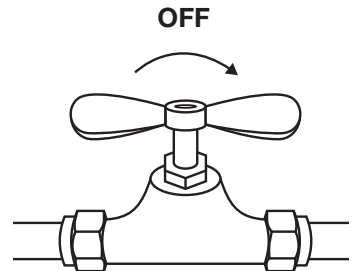
Make your home safer...

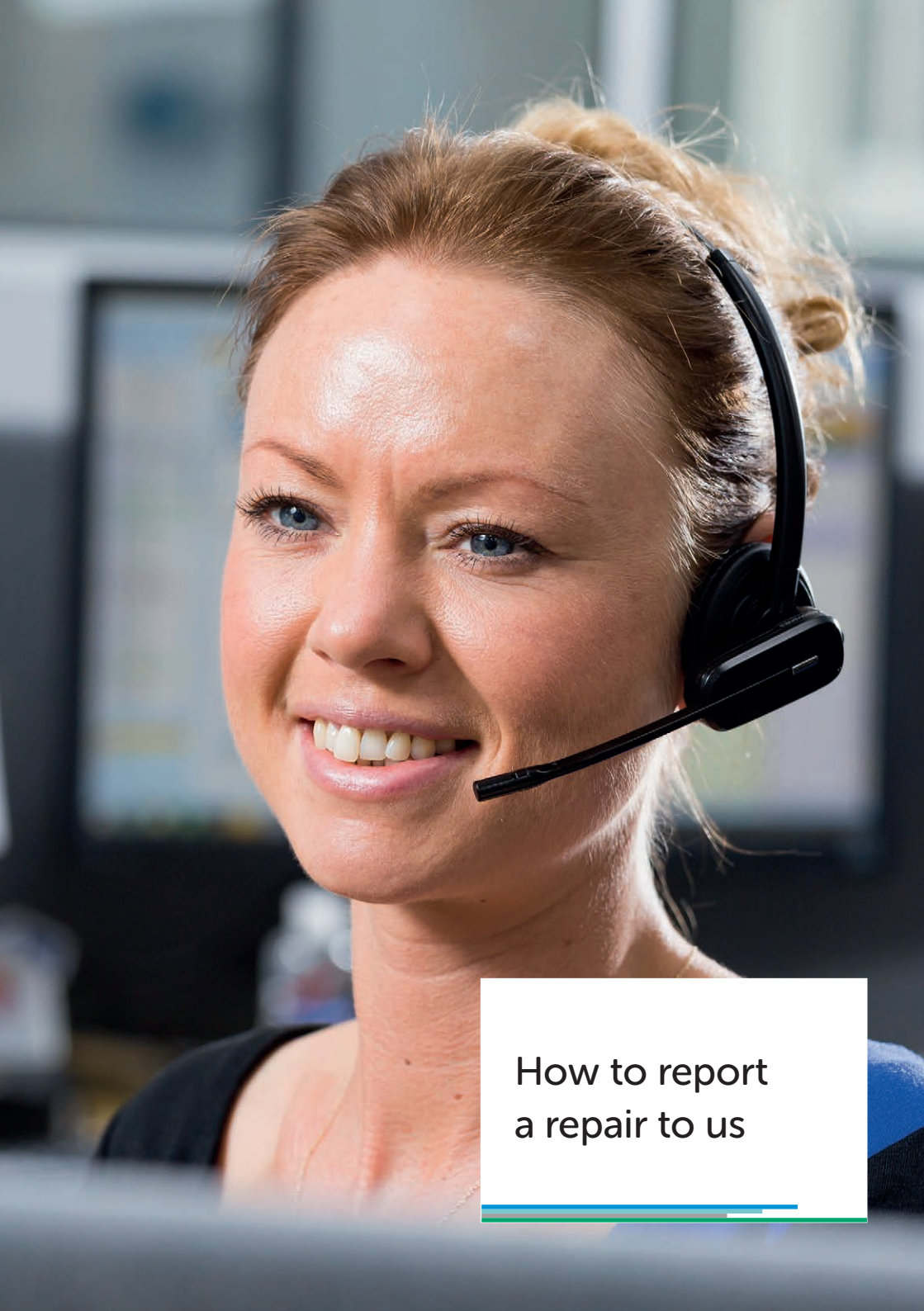
- Do not overload sockets and do not wire more than one appliance into each plug
- Never touch switches or plugs with damp or wet hands
- Turn off and unplug all electrical appliances that are not in use (it will also save money)
- When using electrical appliances, always follow the manufacturer's instructions
- Allow us into your home to carry out a full electrical safety inspection every 5 years, to inspect all fixed wiring and sockets

To turn off your WATER...

Turn the main stop tap to the right (clockwise) if you want to shut off the water (eg to prevent flooding). Know where the stop tap is, and make sure you can turn it.

As we upgrade kitchens and bathrooms we are now installing Sure-Stops which will allow you to turn the water off using a switch.





How to report
a repair to us

How to contact us

Report a repair on-line*:



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Report a repair by phone:



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Our contact centre is open 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday, and 8am to 12pm on a Saturday. Outside of these times you can still report emergency repairs using this number. All non-emergency repairs should be reported during office hours or by using the Customer Portal.

When you contact us let us know:

- ✓ Your name, address and a phone number
- ✓ Details of the item that needs repairing
- ✓ When you will be at home
- ✓ Any circumstances we need to take into account, such as if you are hard of hearing or if you have difficulty getting to the door

When assessing your repair we will:

- ✓ Check if the repair is our responsibility (page 18)
- ✓ Tell you how quickly we can deal with the repair

We will then arrange the repair and if:

- ✓ Your repair is an emergency (page 10), we will ask you to stay at home until our operative arrives (unless it is unsafe for you to do so)
- ✓ Your repair is not an emergency (page 12) we will offer you an appointment (am or pm)

Emergency Repairs

Responded to within 4 hours

An emergency is a repair which threatens your health, safety or security or could cause significant damage to your home.

Emergency call out contractors will make safe to enable full and proper repairs to be undertaken during normal working hours.

Some examples of emergency repairs:

- Total loss of water or burst water main
- Leaking water or heating pipe, tank or cistern (that cannot be contained)
- Flooding or severe storm damage
- Total loss of electrical supply or unsafe electrical fittings
- Breaches of security to external ground floor doors and windows
- Gas leak or blocked flue
- Blocked main drains, soil pipe or sole toilet
- Loss of heating (31 October – 1 May only)
- Loss of hot water for elderly or vulnerable residents
- Failure of lift (if this is the only lift available)
- Failure of Warden alarm/call system
- Fire damage
- Door entry system failure (if no access available)
- Loose or detached bannister or hand rail
- Severe roof leak
- Loss of keys (maybe rechargeable) if only one access to property



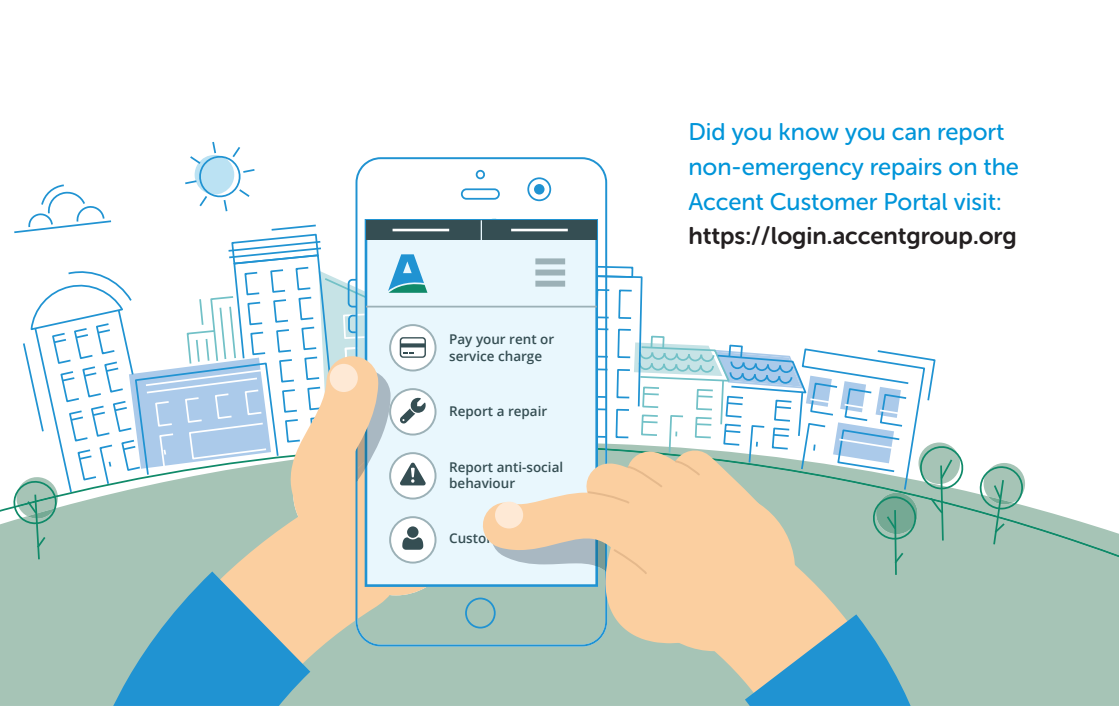
Important: Emergency repairs should always be reported by phone.

If the repair is an emergency, you must stay in your home until the contractor arrives (unless it is unsafe for you to do so).

If you exaggerate the urgency of the problem to get a quicker (emergency) response, we may charge you for the call-out fee.

We will attend within four hours and make safe.

Please note: In the case of an emergency we will try to contact you to gain access to your home. If we cannot contact you, it may be necessary for us to force entry into your home. For example, if there is a risk of injury to people, or a risk of damage to the property or to other properties.



Did you know you can report non-emergency repairs on the Accent Customer Portal visit: <https://login.accentgroup.org>

Non-emergency repairs

These are less urgent repairs that can wait a short time before being dealt with and include minor problems as detailed below.

Examples of non-emergency repairs:

- general woodwork repairs
- repairs to plasterwork
- loss of one light/power socket
- dripping or leaking taps or shower units
- repairs to kitchen fittings
- repairs/cleaning of gutters and downpipes
- repairs to all walls, brickwork, slates and tiles
- easing of external doors and windows
- repairs to fences or paths
- repairs to doors, windows and floors
- garage repairs
- minor plumbing works
- repairs to tiling

Repair appointments

The appointment system

We use an appointments system for booking repairs, with both AM and PM time slots available. Please be aware that this appointment system is not available for emergency repairs.

Cancelling an appointment

If we cannot keep an appointment with you, we will try to let you know as soon as possible. We will offer you another appointment that is convenient to you.

If you cannot keep an appointment we have made with you, please contact us as soon as possible to make a different appointment.

If you are expecting a contractor to visit your home and they do not arrive by the end of the appointment slot arranged with you, please contact us.

If you are not in when our contractor visits your home, the job may be cancelled unless you contact the office to rearrange the appointment. A contractor will leave a card to tell you they have called.

You will need to contact us to arrange another appointment.

Quality control

We will inspect a proportion of repairs when they are completed and so will our contractor, and instruct the contractor to remedy any unfinished or poor quality work.

You can help us by responding to our automated telephone service which will ask whether you were satisfied with your repair and whether your appointment was kept.

If you believe that a repair has not been completed satisfactorily you must contact us to inform us of this.

Our service to you

Our staff and contractors who work in your home will:

- ✓ make an appointment with you if they need access to your home
- ✓ carry out repair and inspection work (except in an emergency) between 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday
- ✓ show you identification before coming into your home
- ✓ let you know before starting work on the outside of your home
- ✓ explain what work they are going to do and how it will affect you
- ✓ be polite and respect your cultural beliefs and personal circumstances wherever possible
- ✓ cover your flooring and furniture to protect them
- ✓ keep all tools and equipment safe
- ✓ tell you how work is progressing
- ✓ take reasonable steps to keep your home secure
- ✓ try to avoid causing any damage
- ✓ make sure you have water, electricity, heating and cooking facilities before they leave at the end of the day
- ✓ remove all tools and equipment, materials and rubbish from your home at the end of each working day

Our staff and contractors are not allowed to:

- ✘ smoke in your home
- ✘ play a radio or CD player without your permission
- ✘ use bad language or behave inappropriately
- ✘ work in your home with children under 18 if a responsible adult is not present
- ✘ use your toilet without your permission
- ✘ receive gifts or payments from tenants/residents
- ✘ keep keys to residents' homes
- ✘ do private work for tenants/residents

Your have the right to:

- refuse to let someone into your home if you are not sure who they are – ask them to stay outside and call us
- refuse to let someone carry out work at your home if you are not happy about their behaviour or language

We expect you to:

- be polite and helpful when speaking with our staff and contractors
- refrain from smoking whilst our staff are in your home
- keep your pets under control and safe from harm whilst our staff and contractors are in your home

Your responsibilities

To help us carry out our responsibilities, we ask you to:

- contact us as soon as you notice a repair is needed and take action to prevent it getting worse
- give us as much information about the repair as possible – this will help us to get your repair fixed quickly
- tell us if you are hard of hearing or if you may have difficulty getting to the door when someone comes to your home
- let all our contractors into your home to carry out repairs, safety checks or inspections, failure to do so may result in us seeking possession of your home

When work is being done in your home

It is your responsibility to:

- move or protect furniture and other household items (not owned by us)
- lift flooring (not fitted by us)

We will tell you if:

- you need to move items of furniture
- lift the flooring (carpets, lino/laminate etc). Please arrange to get this done before our contractor arrives

If you are vulnerable, elderly or disabled and have no one to help you, we may agree to move furniture or lift flooring for you.

If we do agree to help, you will be asked to accept full responsibility for any damage that might happen while helping you.

Improvements and alterations

Before you make any alterations to your home you must write to us to obtain permission. We have to ensure that your home is not damaged or made unsafe. In some cases you will also have to obtain Planning Permission or Building Regulations Approval from the local authority. An alteration is anything which is an addition or change to the property or is gas, electrical or water supply related.

All electrical work must be done by a qualified electrician and a safety certificate supplied.

Your rent will not increase as a result of any improvements you make, but you will be responsible for repairs. It is important that you do not commence any improvement work until permission has been granted. Please be aware if you chose not to obtain permission you may be charged to repair or restore your home to its original condition at your own expense.

At the termination of your tenancy you may qualify for a compensation payment, less an allowance for depreciation, for an improvement or alteration you carried out after the 1st of April 1994.

Contact us for more information about the 'Tenant's right to compensation for improvements'.

Your right to repair

You have the right to compensation if we fail to carry out essential repairs. Certain conditions apply to this scheme and are available upon request.

Our repairs responsibilities as your landlord

The following tables outline who is responsible for repairs. Not all repairs are covered, and the information should be used as a guide only.

Repair type

	Accent	You
Basins and sinks		
Tap is leaking	✓	
Tap will not turn on or off	✓	
Basin or sink is blocked		✓
Plug and chain is broken or missing		✓
* Basin is loose, cracked or broken	✓	
Baths and showers		
Plug and chain is broken or missing		✓
Water is seeping between bath and wall	✓	
Electric shower does not work	✓	
Shower is blocked (1st attempt)		✓
Communal areas		
Entryphone is not working	✓	
Concrete or tarmac path is damaged	✓	
Lighting in public area	✓	
Doors		
Replacement keys and gaining entry to your home if you have lost your keys		✓
Door is sticking	✓	
Adjusting internal doors when resident has had new flooring fitted		✓
Water is getting in around door frame	✓	

* Tenant will be responsible if repair is required due to tenant neglect or damage

Repair type

	Accent	You
Electrics including lighting		
Mains-powered smoke detector	✓	
Replacing batteries in a battery operated smoke detector		✓
Electric socket is loose	✓	
Light bulb needs replacing		✓
Fuse box/consumer unit not working properly	✓	
! Appliances such as cookers, fridges and TVs		✓
Floors, walls and ceilings		
Skirting board is loose	✓	
Floorboard is loose	✓	
Wall tiles are loose	✓	
Decorating		✓
Small cracks in plaster on wall		✓
Small repairs to plaster on ceiling		✓
Large repairs to plaster on ceiling or wall	✓	
Garages		
Replacement keys and gaining entry to your garage if you have lost your keys		✓
Garage door is loose	✓	
Gutters and downpipes		
Plastic downpipe is loose	✓	
Gutter is blocked	✓	

! Unless the appliance is the property of Accent

Repair type

	Accent	You
Heating and hot water		
Storage heater is not working properly	✓	
Gas fire is not working (if owned by Accent)	✓	
Boiler is not working properly	✓	
No hot water	✓	
Insulation jacket to cylinder is damaged/missing		✓
Kitchen units		
Unit door will not open or close properly	✓	
Drawer front needs repair	✓	
Worktop is loose or damaged	✓	
Outside the property		
Gate will not open or close properly	✓	
Step is loose	✓	
Concrete or tarmac is damaged	✓	
Mowing and tidying your garden		✓
Roofing		
Chimney pot is loose	✓	
Tile is loose	✓	
TV aerials or satellite dishes (unless it is a communal area e.g more than one household is affected)		✓
Drainage		
Manhole cover is loose	✓	
Gully is blocked (Accent is responsible after you have tried to unblock this)		✓

Repair type

	Accent	You
Stairs		
Handrail is loose	✓	
Stair or tread is loose	✓	
Toilets		
Toilet is blocked (unless caused by faulty pipework)		✓
Faulty cistern	✓	
Replacing broken toilet seats		✓
Locks, latches and fittings		
Handle is broken	✓	
Replacement keys if you have lost them		✓
Water services		
Water pipe is leaking	✓	
Cold-water tank is leaking	✓	
Making sure pipes do not freeze and dealing with frozen pipes	✓	
Windows and glazing		
Window fitting is loose	✓	
Window glass has been broken by vandalism and tenant has a 'Crime Reference Number'	✓	
Pest Control		
Dealing with infestation (Accent may be responsible if communal areas affected)		✓
Damp and condensation		
Treating damp and condensation (Accent may be responsible if problem persists and has been caused by disrepair)		✓

Repairs you must pay for

If damage is caused by you, by someone in your home, or by police-forced entry, you must either do the work yourself or arrange and pay to get it done. We can arrange to fix any damage for you, but we will charge you for this. You may be able to claim for accidental damage through your **Home Contents Insurance**.

If the damage is caused by a break-in or vandalism we will carry out any work needed to make your home safe provided that you can provide a police crime reference number (not an incident number).

If at the time of reporting a repair it is evident that it is a repair that you must pay for, we can arrange to take payment over the phone prior to any work commencing.

If we undertake a repair which is later found to have been your responsibility, or that has been caused by obvious resident damage or neglect (e.g. unblocking a toilet blocked with an air freshener, nappy or if we attend to no heating or electricity and find that you do not have any credit on your meter etc) we will charge you for the cost of this repair.

For the duration of your tenancy we expect you to take good care of your home. At the end of your tenancy your home must be left in a reasonable condition so it can be re-let straight away. We have the right to charge you for any work we have to carry out to repair any damage that you may have caused.

Home Contents Insurance

We strongly recommend you:

- take out home contents insurance
- check what the policy covers; accidental damage cover, things like; damage to personal and household items, broken glass and replacing locks.

With home contents insurance you may be able to:

- claim for the cost of stolen items following a break-in,
- damage to personal belongings, furniture and other household items caused by fire or flood damage

We have buildings insurance for all our properties this does not include loss or damage to your belongings due to theft, fire or flooding.

Accent can help our residents obtain home contents insurance easily and at a price that is affordable. While many people often hope that nothing will happen to their belongings, sometimes things can go wrong unexpectedly.

With a special scheme called My Home arranged in conjunction with the National Housing Federation, Accent residents can protect their belongings and gain peace of mind knowing if the unexpected happens they have cover.

For more information visit www.thistlemyhome.co.uk

Asbestos

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral that has been used from the 1950's through to the mid 1980's in a range of building materials to make them more rigid and fire resistant. Its use has been phased out over the last 20 years and is now non-existent in today's products.

It is sometimes hard to identify whether materials contain asbestos but if you suspect that you are living with asbestos then please do not panic and leave it alone, it's safe unless it is damaged or disturbed.

If you are planning to do any alterations or additions to your home you should always contact us for permission before starting work. If you suspect that asbestos exists, or you come across it once you have started work in your home you must contact us straight away. Do not continue with the work until we have checked it.

You should:

- never sand, drill or saw asbestos containing materials
- always seek our advice before thinking of removing asbestos containing materials
- not attempt to remove asbestos lagging, spray coatings or insulation board yourself

These materials can only be removed by a licensed contractor.
If in doubt contact us straight away.

Condensation

Condensation occurs when there is an excessive build up of moisture in the air. There is always moisture in the air, but people create additional moisture in their homes by:

- cooking, or boiling water
- taking baths or showers
- drying clothes indoors

Warm moist air condenses and forms water when it cools: for example when it touches a cool surface. In your home these are outside walls, mirrors, windows, wall tiles and even on clothes.

If this condensation cannot dry out it will cause mould to form on walls, in cupboards and on window sills, and mildew to form on clothes, especially leather goods.

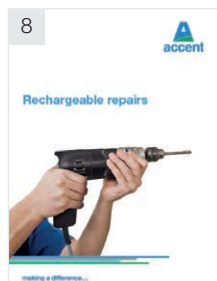
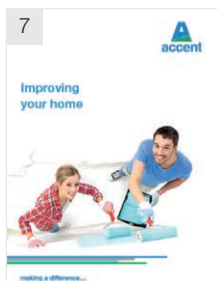
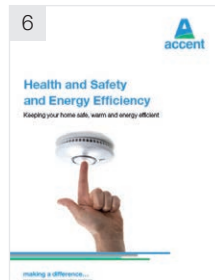
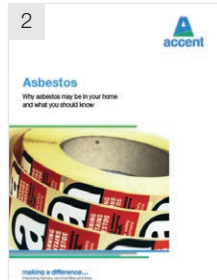
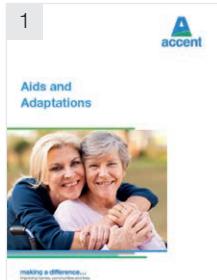
There are four things you can do to stop condensation forming:

- Produce less moisture by covering pans and turning down the heat when boiling, switching off boiling kettles, drying clothes outside, or in a well ventilated room
- Ventilation to let the moisture out, by opening a bathroom or kitchen window for a while to let the steam escape, using an extractor fan, and by opening windows for a while each day
- Keeping your home warm by at least keeping a low background heat. This need not result in significantly increased heating costs.
- Wipe down where moisture settles

If none of these suggestions help, please contact us and we will investigate the problem further.

More information

The leaflets listed below provide additional information to the Repairs Handbook, these can be found on our website by visiting: www.accentgroup.org/customer-publications



- 1 Aids & Adaptations
- 2 Asbestos
- 3 Damp & Condensation
- 4 Fire Safety
- 5 Gas Safety
- 6 Health & Safety and Energy Efficiency
- 7 Improving your home
- 8 Rechargeable Repairs

For hints and tips for completing simple DIY tasks around your home visit: www.diy.com/help-support or www.diydoctor.org.uk

Stay in touch

T: 0345 678 0555

E: customerservices@accentgroup.org

TW: [@accenthousing](https://twitter.com/accenthousing)

Office addresses and opening times
are available on our website



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