



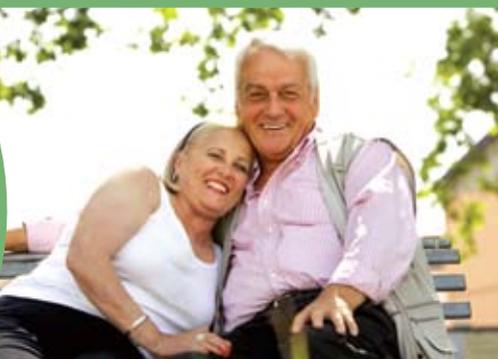
Care & Repair Caerphilly
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Maintenance & Home Repairs Manual

A guide to maintaining your home



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE



INTRODUCTION

Few things in a home are maintenance free but preventative maintenance is still far more cost effective than waiting until something breaks down. It can help to avoid repairs, extend the life expectancy of many components and, in some cases, reduce energy consumption.

Ideally, it should be performed before the start of each season, using the helpful hints in this book to assist you, e.g. autumn is the time to get your home ready for the coming winter. Throughout the year, it is also important to follow routine maintenance procedures by checking your home carefully for any problems and taking corrective action as soon as possible.

Think about it: your home is one of your largest investments, and the best way to protect your investment, is to get into a routine of carrying out preventative maintenance.

If you have any questions on how to undertake preventative maintenance on your home, or require advice on any aspect, please contact Care & Repair Caerphilly 01495 235393.

OUTSIDE THE PROPERTY

GUTTERS, DOWNPIPES & FASCIAS

Blockages in drainpipes are normally caused by leaves, dirt or debris that has washed off the roof.

Fascias should be inspected each year for loose and rotted areas. Defective downpipes and gutters can lead to problems with penetrating damp.

CHIMNEYS

It is advisable that if you're using the chimney, you need to have it swept at least once a year. At the same time why not get them to check for any loose or deteriorated bricks?

ROOFS – OUTSIDE

If you have safe access and can see your roof from your bedroom window or garden, check for any missing, slipped or cracked slates/tiles. It's easier to see these types of problems by looking at your roof from across the street. You can compare your roof with other properties in the street and can spot any obvious differences.

If you are unable to do this, you need to contact a reputable qualified roofing contractor or Care & Repair Caerphilly. The best time to have your roof checked is before the winter months and heavy rainfall.



IMPORTANT

DO NOT attempt any of these repairs yourself! Care & Repair Caerphilly can give advice and help you with a healthy home check. Tel: 01495 235393

STATISTICS

Falls represent the most frequent and serious type of accident in the over 65s age group and are a major cause of fatal injuries in older adults.

Reduce your risk of falling by following the advice below:



PATHS, YARDS & STEPS

Check that paths, yards and steps are in good repair. Clean off any algae and moss, which can become slippery. This can be done using bleach/soapy water and a hard bristled sweeping brush. During icy weather, scatter grit or salt to prevent ice forming. Care & Repair Caerphilly may be able to help if your path is dangerous.

ROOFS INSIDE

You can check for damp patches inside your home on ceilings, after long periods of rain. If stains are found, try tracing the cause. Again, we can help with this if you are unsure/unable to do so. If left unattended, small problems can become costly major repairs.

GARDENS

When attempting any gardening, remember to wear protective clothing and safety glasses. It is also advisable to wear ear plugs when using noisy machinery, and keep trailing leads well away from moving blades. Remember that overhanging trees, shrubs and vines should be cut back, especially from wood surfaces.

IMPORTANT

Ensure all gardening machinery is fitted with an RCD (more commonly known as a trip switch)

DRAINS & GULLEYS

The householder is responsible for the whole drainage system up to where it joins the main sewer. Most drainage problems are caused by simple blockages in the pipes.

People flushing large items down the toilet cause many blockages. Oil and fat from cooking also cause a lot of problems if they are poured down the sink or outside gully. The fat becomes solid in the drain and blocks the pipe. A blocked drain is normally identified by a strong, unpleasant smell from the inspection chamber. To keep your gulleys and drains working properly, make sure that there are metal grates over the gulleys and that the grates are not blocked with leaves.

Every three months, pour three large cups of washing soda crystals or half a bottle of strong bleach down the gulleys. Leave overnight and rinse, by pouring down some buckets of water. Do not breathe in any fumes given off from the bleach or crystals and protect your skin with gloves.

If your drain becomes blocked, the best course of action would be to contact a local qualified Plumber. Care & Repair Caerphilly will be able to assist you in getting the work completed.



IMPORTANT

Care & Repair Caerphilly can arrange for a reputable contractor to call.

Tel: 01495 235393

PLUMBING

Are taps dripping or supply or waste pipes leaking? Repairs at an early stage could be quite cheap, but if left, faults could develop which may be expensive to put right.

CLEARING WASTE PIPES

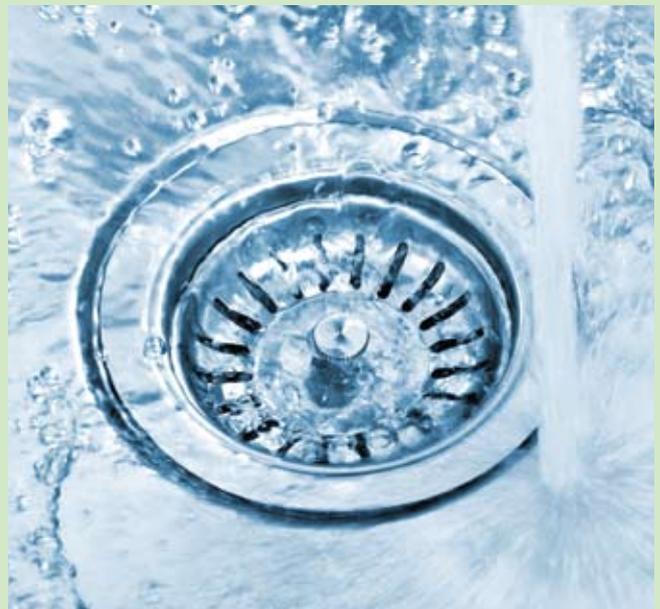
Water draining slowly is a sure sign that there is a blockage. Leave the water drain then pour an appropriate cleaner, which can be bought at any supermarket, down the waste outlet and flush with clean water. (If this fails a sink plunger could be used to clear the blockage). If this does not help then the waste system may have to be dismantled. Contact Care & Repair Caerphilly for further advice.

REPLACING WASHERS

Before replacing a washer remember to turn off the water supply. Dismantle the tap to reveal the worn washer and replace with new. Ensure you use the correct size washer as bath taps are larger than sink and basin taps. If you don't feel confident to tackle a job - however small, contact Care & Repair Caerphilly - we may be able to assist.

REMEMBER

Don't put anything down your waste pipes that is likely to block them, e.g., fats, cooking oils, food and hair.





PREVENTING BURST PIPES

Lag all pipes including overflow pipes that are likely to freeze. You can insulate pipes with foam tubes that are recut along their length to fit around the pipes. Ensure you lag the water tanks in the loft as well. For further advice and help contact Care & Repair Caerphilly.

Maintaining your home will save you money in the long-term and protect your health.

TIPS

If your pipes are frozen, NEVER use a naked flame. Too much direct heat may cause the water to boil and steam.

Make sure you know where all the control valves and drain cocks are in your plumbing system.

Check your stop tap regularly by turning it off. This will help to stop it from scaling up.

SECURITY & SAFETY

OUTSIDE THE PROPERTY

- **SECURITY LIGHTING:** Fit PIR (passive infrared sensors) security lighting where required. This will alert you to any unknown callers. The light switches on automatically when movement is detected.
- **CLOSED CIRCUIT TV (CCTV):** These systems are becoming increasingly popular and more affordable. CCTV uses PIR, which detects movement within its range which activates the CCTV.
- **DOORS:** When replacing locks, fit a 5 lever deadlock and security bolts. Fit a security chain and spy-hole to your front door.



INSIDE THE PROPERTY

- **WINDOWS:** Fit window locks to your windows. These are available in a variety of types. The best ones are those that require a key to open them. Make sure you know where to find the keys so you can escape in an emergency.
- **DON'T LET BURGLARS KNOW THAT YOU ARE OUT:** Leave a light on if you go out and are leaving the house empty at night. When you go away on holiday, cancel the milk, newspapers and have a neighbour move the post to where it can't be seen from the door or windows.
- **PROPERTY-MARKING PEN:** Use a permanent marker to identify property, and make sure you keep a list of serial numbers and any other identifying features. Photograph antique or unusual items as part of your security procedure.

- **LIGHTING:** Check that you have adequate lighting for your stairway and ensure you can clearly see the stairs whilst going up and down them. The lighting should not produce glare or shadows along the stairs, and you should be able to turn on lights before you use the stairs from either end. Do not leave any objects on the stairs that will cause an obstruction.
- **RUGS & RUNNERS:** Remove rugs or runners that tend to slide. Apply double-faced adhesive carpet tape or rubber matting to the rug or runner. Purchase rugs with slip-resistant backing. Over time, adhesive on tape can wear away and rugs with slip-resistant backing become less effective as they are washed. Also avoid highly polished wooden floors.
- **WET / SLIPPERY SURFACES:** Wet soapy tile or porcelain surfaces are especially slippery and can contribute towards falls. Use rubber backed mats in the bath tub and shower area and on the bathroom floor.
- **ELECTRIC BLANKETS:** Use electric blankets according to manufacturer's instructions. Do not set electric blankets so high that they could burn someone who falls asleep while they are on. Have your electric blanket checked regularly. Look out for free checks available from your local fire service.



- **KITCHEN SAFETY:** Roll up/fasten long sleeves whilst cooking. DO NOT reach across a cooker as long loose sleeves are very likely to catch on fire. Long sleeves can also catch on saucepan handles, and can overturn hot pots and pans causing scalds.

REMEMBER

Check your home insurance to see if you would be eligible for a discount by adopting the measures mentioned above and on the previous page.



- **SMOKE ALARMS:** Fit smoke alarms upstairs and downstairs to give you enough warning to escape before a fire really takes hold. Remember to test your smoke alarms regularly to ensure they are working properly. If battery operated, the smoke alarm will sound a very high pitched intermittent bleep, to let you know when to replace the batteries. Important: before choosing a smoke detector, ensure it carries the British Standard Kite mark and conforms to BSEN 14604.

- **KNOW YOUR ESCAPE PLAN:** Think about how everyone in the house will escape if there is a fire. Make sure everyone (including children) know what to do and where to go when the alarm goes off, especially at night.

- **EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS:** Keep phone numbers for the Police and Fire Service, along with your neighbour's number readily available by the telephone. Ensure you write them down using large print.

DAMP & CONDENSATION

RISING DAMP

This occurs when water from the ground gets into solid walls and floors, and a tide mark appears no more than a metre up from the ground. This problem can be resolved. If left unattended it could become harmful to your health. For further advice contact Care & Repair Caerphilly.

PENETRATING DAMP

This is when water gets into the building from the outside. You will see a damp patch a bit like a stain from a spilt drink. It could be as a result of cracks in render or defective gutters or downpipes and is often easily resolved.

CONDENSATION

Condensation occurs when water vapour in the air meets a cold surface. It appears on windows in the early morning and evaporates as the house warms. It may also appear on cold water pipes etc but is only a problem when water vapour condenses on cold walls and black mould begins to appear.

Water vapour is created by normal, everyday living in the home such as washing, cooking, bathing, drying clothes, breathing and burning fuel. You can reduce it by keeping lids on pans when cooking, drying clothes outside or having a pipe to take the tumble dryer's moisture outside, running the cold water for a bath before the hot water and not using liquid paraffin or bottled gas room heaters.

The amount of condensation in your home will be reduced by good heating and sufficient ventilation.



INSIDE THE PROPERTY



INSULATION

Double glazing, loft and wall insulation will help keep heat in your home for longer and can reduce problems with condensation. Rolls of loft insulation can be purchased from any DIY store. Follow the manufacturer's guidelines on how to fit the insulation. **DON'T** forget to insulate your tank.

For more information, contact Care & Repair Caerphilly on 01495 235393.

WINDOWS & DOORS

Oil all locks and hinges occasionally to keep them working smoothly and to prevent squeaks. You can use a spray lubricant or a small drop of washing up liquid. Screws to hinges can sometimes work loose and need tightening, however if this happens on a regular basis it may be that the screw is too small or the frame has split slightly. Repair any minor splits with wood or plastic filler.

If you need further advice, or more locks to your windows and doors, contact Care & Repair Caerphilly.

WALLS, FLOORS & CEILINGS

- **WALLS:** You can use fillers to repair areas of damaged plaster. Read the manufacturer's guidelines on how to use the product. Ensure that your shelving and curtain rails are secure. If not, contact Care & Repair Caerphilly for further help. Loose and perished plaster is often a sign of dampness.
- **FLOORS:** Are parts of the ground floor more springy or bouncy? Are there any loose or broken floorboards? Do any floor boards have tiny holes in them? Are there any loose or broken stair treads and are your handrails, banister rails or spindles loose? If you have answered yes to any of the above contact Care & Repair Caerphilly for further advice.

Rotting skirting boards on the ground floor may indicate rising damp or rot spreading from floor timbers. Woodworm can also affect skirting.

- **CEILINGS:** Check for any bulging or patches on your ceiling which may indicate a leak. Look for patches around the rose of the ceiling lights, which may indicate a problem with your electrics.

DECORATION

A nicely decorated house can lift your spirits and make your home comfortable. However, if you are decorating do things within your own capability. **DO NOT** risk falls from ladders or chairs.

Painting walls can also prevent mould growth. Ensure rooms are well ventilated when painting.

Take care when buying second hand furniture. Some old furnishings may not be up to the new regulations which require fire retardant fillings. Contact Trading Standards for further advice and information on purchasing second-hand furniture. G C Enterprises (Wales) Ltd may be able to help they can be contacted on 01685 846830.



GAS & ELECTRICITY

GAS

Gas appliances should be checked annually by a CORGI registered gas fitter to make sure they are safe. Burn marks on heating elements or walls round gas fires, and flames that are more yellow than the normal orangeyellow may indicate a problem. This should be checked and put right immediately by an approved Gas Safe registered gas fitter.

Carbon monoxide detectors are readily available and may provide peace of mind.

Are there any radiators which are cold at the top or which do not get as warm as the others? If yes then the radiator probably needs bleeding. Care & Repair Caerphilly may be able to recommend a suitable contractor.

SMELL GAS?

- DON'T smoke or strike matches
- DON'T turn electrical switches on or off
- DO put out naked flames
- DO open doors/windows
- DO keep people away from the affected area
- DO turn off the meter at the control valve
- Gas emergency number
0800 111 999





REMEMBER

ALWAYS fit a fuse of the correct rating for the job.

- 5 amp: lighting circuits
- 15 or 20 amp: immersion heaters
- 30 amp: socket outlets and average sized cookers
- 45 amp: larger cookers

ELECTRICITY

Do switches spark or crackle when turned on or off? Are there any burn marks on sockets? Are any sockets, switches or light fittings loose, broken or cracked? Are all cables and plugs wired securely without any cracks splits or coloured wires visible? Do fuses blow or light bulbs only last a very short time? If yes, contact Care & Repair or call an approved electrician approved by NIC EIC or ECA.

A fuse will blow when too many appliances are operating on a circuit, then the excessive demand for the current will blow the fuse in that circuit. The emergency number for electrical problems is the same as the number for Gas.

It is a good idea to keep a torch at hand, in case your electricity fails, especially during the winter months.

Additional telephone points are fairly simple to fit, however it is advisable to get a professional to do this. Contact Care & Repair Caerphilly for further advice.

BUILDING WORKS

DIY can be a very dangerous past-time. If you have got minor jobs to do within the home always use the right tool.

DIY & ASSOCIATED HAZARDS

- **TOOLS & CLOTHING:** Check that each tool is in good working order e.g. loose hammer heads could fly off. ALWAYS wear appropriate protective clothing e.g. goggles and gloves. If you feel unable to complete any jobs yourself, contact Care & Repair Caerphilly for further help and advice.
- **CHEMICALS:** Store chemicals safely. Keep them in their original containers and ALWAYS follow the manufacturer's guidelines. Keep flammables out of direct sunlight and in a well ventilated area to avoid the danger of explosion. Ensure that chemicals are locked up out of sight and reach of children.

GETTING A QUOTE & EMPLOYING A BUILDER

- Write down a full description of exactly what you want doing. Care & Repair Caerphilly can help if you have any concerns about dealing with builders.
- Get two written quotations – this is a fixed price as opposed to an estimate which is a calculation of the likely cost.
- Check whether VAT is included.
- Check the builders are qualified for the job and capable of carrying out the work. Use builders recommended by friends, family or by Care & Repair Caerphilly.
- Find out how long they will take and when they can do the work. Get this in writing.
- Ask about guarantees.
- Never pay anyone until you are satisfied that the job has been done properly and never trust the 'expert opinion' of someone who calls uninvited.



STATISTICS

- each week some 3,900 people are treated in hospital following DIY repairs going wrong
- 1 person is killed every week in accidents involving ladders and another 40,000 a year require hospital treatment
- 70 people are killed and 250,000 people injured every year in DIY-related accidents

STARTING WORKS

Before starting, meet with your builder and agree the following:

- start and finish dates
- areas of the house to be cleared
- the condition of fixtures, fittings and surfaces that should be left undisturbed
- times of day when the work can be carried out and if the builder can work weekends
- how/when payment is to be made
- what to do if you need extra work
- write down all these arrangements and get the document signed by both you and the builder – this is your contract

When work starts, make a daily note of what has been done and the weather conditions. Make notes of items you are not happy with and tick them off once resolved.

ONLY make the final payment when you are satisfied. Get a receipt and guarantees.

FUNDING WORKS

If you don't have enough money to pay for the work before agreeing to any work:

- contact Care & Repair Caerphilly to see if there are grants you may be entitled to, such as Local Authority grants or Energy Efficiency grants
- have the work done in stages
- borrow the amount required, i.e. get a bank loan or if the work is major, consider re-mortgaging your property but before doing this, get independent financial advice from a properly regulated advisor

GUARANTEES

Ensure you get a guarantee for all works completed at your home.

- Read guarantees carefully – there may be clauses requiring you to have an appliance regularly serviced or cleaned in a particular way.
- If you find a defect to something which is guaranteed, write to the company stating your complaint and give any relevant information, i.e. when the work took place, guarantee number etc. Keep a copy yourself. If the complaint is still not remedied contact the Citizens' Advice Bureau, Trading Standards or a solicitor.

- For major works, get a 'bonded' or 'underwritten' guarantee (backed by an insurance agent against the company going bankrupt).

CHOOSING A REPUTABLE CONTRACTOR

Consider your choice carefully when choosing a building contractor.

ALWAYS check them out before employing them. It is advisable to get recommendations. It is also advisable to contact relevant Trade Associations, who are well informed of reliable contractors who have experience in the type of work you are looking for.

Contractors can become members of the **Building Trade Charter** and can adopt the Fair Trading Charter logo (below). Should you have any difficulties with any contractors and need to know your legal rights contact Consumer Direct Wales on 08454 040506 .



REMEMBER

For advice on reputable contractors, phone Care & Repair on 01495 235393.

USEFUL NUMBERS

- **Care & Repair Caerphilly**
01495 235393
- **Caerphilly County Borough Council**
01443 815588 (switchboard)
- **Consumer Helpline**
08454 040506
- **Supporting People**
01443 864591
- **Pension Service**
01495 232694
- **Environmental Health**
01443 866544
- **Gas (Emergency No)**
0800 111 999
- **Water (Emergency No.)**
0845 6021 724
- **Age UK**
01495 227039
- **Citizens Advice Bureau**
0844 4772020
- **Citizens Advice Bureau**
02920 882105
- **Doctor**.....
- **Family**.....
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MISSION STATEMENT

Care & Repair Caerphilly is dedicated to providing advice and practical support to older and vulnerable people to enable them to remain independent in their own home for as long as they wish

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