

FACTSHEET

Getting to know your home

Here's how to make the most of your home and the equipment and facilities in it – including your electrics, water supply, radiators and drains.

1. Electricity

You need to know where your fuse box and mains switch are so you are prepared if your electric supply goes off. Always keep a torch handy in case it's dark when this happens.

Your fuse board will either have fuses or trip-switches. Modern fuse boards are fitted with a circuit-breaker fuse system.

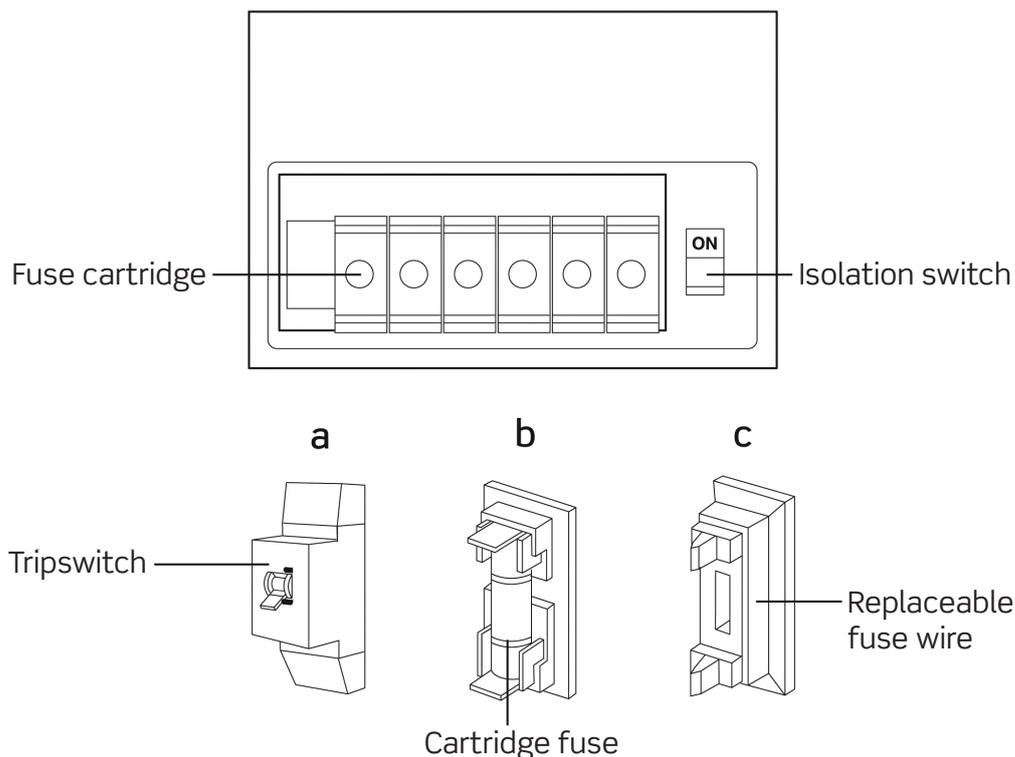
What should I do if my electric goes off?

- If there is a fault, a switch is tripped (see diagram a below) and the circuit is blown. Older fuse boards have fuse holders and when a fuse blows it must either be replaced, if it is a cartridge (see diagram b), or rewired using special fuse wire of the correct amperage (see diagram c).
- If you have a trip-switch, check if any switches on the fuse box have turned to the 'off' position, and reset them.

- If a fuse continues to trip or blow, this may be due to a faulty electrical appliance. Unplug all of your appliances from their sockets and then plug in each appliance one at a time and switch it on. This way, if the fuse blows again you'll know if you have a faulty appliance.
- If you can't find a fault with your fuse box, check with your neighbours to see if there's been a power cut.

Changing a fuse

- Keep fuse wire or replaceable cartridges handy in case a fuse blows. Before replacing a fuse, turn off the electric supply at the isolation switch (this is on the fuse board). Then replace the fuse with the fuse wire or cartridge.

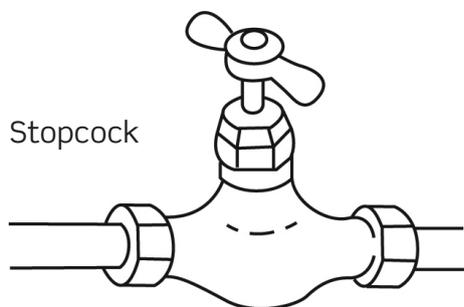


2. Water

Find out where the stopcock is (it's usually located where the water supply enters your home) and test it regularly to make sure it works. You do this by turning it off and running the cold tap in the kitchen. The tap should stop running almost immediately. If it doesn't, report the problem to us.

If there's a leak or burst pipe you should shut off the water supply to your property.

To learn more about treating frozen pipes, read our cold weather fact sheet.

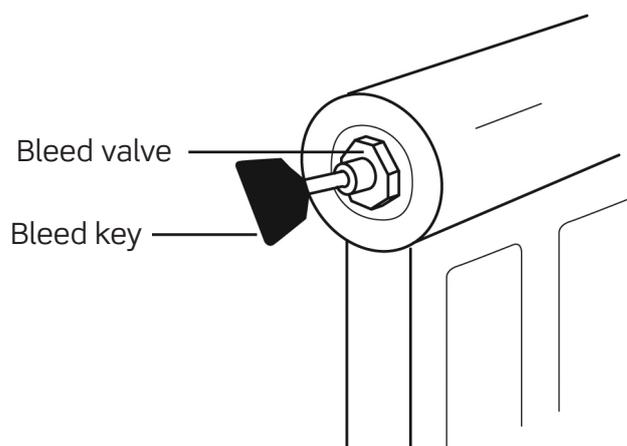


3. Radiators

If the top part of your radiator is cold, this may be because air is trapped. Bleeding the radiator will release this air and allow hot water to fill the radiator.

How do I bleed a radiator?

- Put the bleed key over the bleed valve, holding a cloth underneath to catch any water.
- Turn the key anti-clockwise and you will hear a hissing noise – this is the air being released.
- When the hissing stops and water starts to appear, turn the key clockwise and close the valve tightly. Never unscrew the valve completely.



4. Blocked drains

If you find you have a blocked drain, stop using the kitchen sink and bathroom until the drain has cleared. Report the blockage to us straight away.

5. Heating your home

Getting to know your heating and hot water system will help you use it more effectively.

- Identify your heating and hot water system's components and controls, and make sure you know how to use them. You can read the instructions provided or contact us if you're not sure.
- Most systems have a programmer which allows you to set the heating and hot water to come on when you need it.
- Use your room thermostat, if you have one, to control the overall temperature of your home.
- The programmer, room thermostat and TRVs will allow you to control the 'on time' and 'temperature' in your home. Together they control thermal comfort and efficiency.
- To help prevent condensation, damp and mould, avoid 'cold spots' by having some heating on in all of your rooms (also see our factsheet on 'Condensation, damp and mould').

6. How to stay safe

Your annual gas safety check is our way of checking your heating and gas systems are in good working order and safe for you to use.

If you use extra heating equipment in your home, such as a fire or an electric heater, please read our fire and gas safety page to make sure you're using them as safely as possible.