



TIPPERARY COUNTY COUNCIL

TENANT HANDBOOK

&

HOUSING MAINTENANCE POLICY

Welcome

Tipperary County Council is pleased to give you a copy of its new Tenant Handbook. As your landlord, Tipperary County Council is taking this opportunity to remind you of the wide range of services available to you as one of our tenants.

This handbook sets out to explain the main topics contained in your tenancy agreement, our legal contract with you. It explains your responsibilities as a tenant and our responsibilities as your landlord. It allows us to give you more and better information about the Council and the way it operates.

In addition to the handbook, there are a range of leaflets, circulars, public information notices and annual publications available.

Please keep your copy of this handbook in a safe place at home. We hope you find it useful and wish you the best of luck in your home.

For more information on Tipperary County Council visit our website on www.tipperarycoco.ie

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Tenancy Conditions

The Tenancy Agreement

When you accept your tenancy, you agree to abide by the conditions in your Tenancy Agreement. Its purpose is to ensure a good relationship between you and the Council and you and your neighbours.

When you become a tenant of Tipperary County Council, we give you the right to occupy the property as your home. By signing your Tenancy Agreement, a legal relationship is established between you and the Local Authority.

How does my Tenancy operate?

For example;

- The property must be used as your only and principal home.
- You must not, without written consent from the Council, cease to reside in your property for more than six weeks in any period of fifty two weeks.
- Rent must be paid in full every week in advance.
- You must give us full details of income and household circumstances.
- You must not take in lodgers or sub-tenants. All occupants of the property must be declared.
- You must look after and maintain the property in accordance with the Maintenance Guidelines.

- You must not make alterations without written permission from the Council.
- Authorised Officers of the Council must be allowed to enter and inspect the property at reasonable times or carry out necessary work.
- Only domestic pets (where Council has given written agreement) may be kept and these must be kept under control.
- You and your household, including visitors, shall not cause nuisance, annoyance, or disturbance to neighbours.
- You must give four weeks' notice when surrendering the tenancy.

Tenants evicted for breach of their tenancy conditions will be regarded as having deliberately rendered themselves homeless.

Tenants who leave their accommodation with rent arrears or with damage above normal wear and tear will not be considered for social housing support for a period of 12 months and will only be provided with social housing support when full payment is made in respect of same.

Confidentiality

All staff are committed to treating information about you in confidence. We try to ensure that information we hold is accurate and up to date, so if any of your details change, please let us know.

Rent Payment

Every tenant has a responsibility to ensure that the weekly rent for their household is paid in advance. Two weeks rent is payable at the start of your tenancy. Rent arrears management is dealt with by the Rents Office who can be reached on 0761 06 5000 to discuss methods of payments, arrears or evictions.

How is my rent calculated?

It is calculated using the Council'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 detailed copy of the scheme is available on request.

Your rent is calculated on the total income of your household and it is a breach of your Tenancy Conditions not to declare all household incomes.

How can I pay my rent?

It is the Council's policy to provide tenants with as broad a range of payment methods as possible, including:

- Household Budget Scheme – deductions from Social Welfare Payments
- In person at the Receipts desk in Carrick on Suir, Cashel-Tipperary, Clonmel, Nenagh and Templemore-Thurles Municipal offices
- By Standing Order through the bank

- By using your rent payment card in the Post Office or Post Point facility in certain shops.
- Online payment facility @ www.tipperarycoco.ie.
- Cheque payments via post or in person at the relevant receipts desk
- Over the phone using a debit or credit card

What if my circumstances change?

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

- A person in your household gets a job
- A person in the household starts claiming Social Welfare
- There is a death in the household
- There is a birth in the household

You should notify us of these changes by contacting the Rents Office and your rent will be adjusted. The Council's permission will be required before any person can join your household as an occupant of the property.

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

When changes in your circumstances come to light, your rent will be re-assessed and your rent account backdated, which could lead to a high level of arrears on your rent account.

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 Council immediately. It is much better that you inform the Council of your difficulties at the outset, and try to avoid allowing your rent account to fall into arrears. If you are in arrears, the sooner you tackle the problem the better.

How do I make an arrangement to clear rent arrears?

You should contact the Rents Office on 0761 06 5000. The next step is to work out a reasonable plan to clear off the arrears. Once you make an agreement, it is imperative that you stick to it and your arrears will reduce. The Council will be satisfied even if it takes a while to clear the arrears off completely.

Will I be taken to Court for rent arrears?

If you refuse to come to a reasonable agreement or if you do not keep to the agreed plan, the Council will serve a Tenancy Warning and if necessary take you to Court. This could lead to eviction from your home. If you are evicted from your home, you will not be able to apply for Housing Assistance Payment or for social housing for a period of 1 year after all outstanding monies are paid in full.

If you re-locate to another county or country your rent arrears debt will remain with you.

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (**MABS**) provide a confidential budgeting advice service and may contact the Local Authority on your behalf to arrange a schedule of re-payments.

Please be aware that rent arrears on your account will jeopardise the Local Authority carrying out repairs at your dwelling. It will also affect your eligibility to request/apply for other housing services, i.e. transfers, grants, extensions.

Your Housing Options

Local Authority Housing

Tipperary County Council provides suitable accommodation to qualified applicants, in accordance with its Allocation Scheme for Letting Housing Accommodation. We allocate dwellings in a fair and reasonable manner. 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 need, and you should, therefore, be aware of all the housing options open to you.

Can I apply for a Transfer?

Council tenants may apply to transfer to alternative accommodation due to overcrowding, wishing to downsize, for medical/compassionate reasons or exceptional circumstances. To qualify for a transfer, you must meet the following conditions:

- Hold a tenancy in the present property for a period of at least 2 years
- Have a clear rent account
- Have co-operated with the Council
- Have kept the dwelling in a satisfactory condition, subject to inspection
- Have no record of serious anti-social behaviour

Can the Council refuse to make a transfer?

Yes. The Council can refuse to make a transfer offer in the following cases:

- Rent arrears – if there are rent arrears and an accepted arrangement to clear the arrears has not been made and kept for six months
- Non-compliance with your Tenancy Agreement – compliance with the terms of your Tenancy Agreement must be satisfactory and the dwelling must be surrendered in a satisfactory condition
- Anti-social behaviour – Tenants or members of their household who engage in anti-social behaviour may not be considered for transfer
- Non-disclosure of information – The Council may refuse a transfer if false or misleading information is furnished to the Local Authority or if information requested is refused

Tenant Purchase Options

Can I buy my dwelling?

New Purchase Scheme

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government introduced a new Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme on 1st January, 2016 providing for the sale of existing Local Authority houses to tenants.

There are a number of pre requisites which households must meet including:

- Tenants/joint tenants must have minimum reckonable income of €15,000 per annum
- Reckonable income must come mainly from regular employment and not solely from social welfare
- Applicants must be in receipt of social housing support for minimum period of 1 year
- Applicants must not be disqualified from purchasing as a result of having purchased before
- Applicants must have a satisfactory rent record, and all charges up to date [i.e. Electricity bills etc]
- Houses must be available for sale and not restricted as in past schemes [i.e. not houses specifically reserved for elderly, transitional accommodation, traveller accommodation, in interests of estate management etc]

For income between €15,000 and €20,000 tenant purchase discount will be 60% of Purchase price and an Incremental Purchase Charge of 60% will apply to house and be reduced by 2% per annum over 30 years.

For income between €20,001 and €29,999 tenant purchase discount will be 50% of Purchase price and an Incremental Purchase Charge of 50% will apply to house and be reduced by 2% per annum over 25 years.

For income over €30,000 tenant purchase discount will be 40% of Purchase price and an Incremental Purchase Charge will apply to house and be reduced by 2% per annum over 20 years.

Application forms and further details are available from Tipperary County Council or from our website www.tipperarycoco.ie.

Please Note That Certain Older Persons Dwellings And Smaller Accommodation Units Are Excluded From The Tenant Purchase Scheme. The Council also reserves the right to exclude any dwelling from this scheme.

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

There is no automatic right to the succession of tenancy of an occupant of a house if the tenant dies or leaves the tenancy.

On the death or departure of both parents, an application must be made to the Council so that you can be assessed for eligibility to remain in your current accommodation.

What if I want to move to another area?

If you want to move to another area but do not qualify for a transfer, a mutual exchange with another tenant may be possible subject to certain conditions and criteria.

How do I end my Tenancy Agreement?

You must give four weeks' notice in writing and return all keys to the property. All properties must be returned in a fit and tenable state and all outstanding rent paid. The house will be inspected prior to vacation.

Will former tenants be re-housed by the Council?

Former Tipperary County Council tenants who apply for housing, may be considered for re-housing subject to meeting set criteria.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Tipperary County Council expects all its tenants to show consideration and respect towards their neighbours. The Council is committed to ensuring that all of our tenants enjoy living in their homes in a peaceful manner and without undue interference or disturbance emanating from anti-social behaviour.

What is Anti-Social Behaviour?

Anti-social behaviour is activity that adversely affects the quality of life of those living in close proximity to the disturbances, up to and including the quality of life of the overall neighbourhood. It is any behaviour which is likely to cause any significant or persistent danger, injury, damage, alarm, loss or fear to any person living, working or otherwise lawfully in the vicinity.

It can take many different forms and degrees of severity to include:

- a) The manufacture, production, preparation, importation, exportation, sale, supply, possession for the purpose of sale or supply or distribution of a controlled drug.
- b) Behaviour that causes or is likely to cause any significant or persistent danger, injury, damage, alarm, loss or fear to any person living, working or otherwise lawfully in or in the vicinity of a house provided by a housing authority and includes:

- (i) violence, threats, intimidation, coercion, harassment or serious obstruction of any person
- (ii) behaviour which causes any significant or persistent impairment of a person's use or enjoyment of his or her home
- (iii) damage, defacement or other marks on any property, including a person's home

How will the Council deal with tenants who engage in Anti-Social Behaviour?

Tipperary County Council implements an Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy. We will investigate every complaint in a fair, impartial and objective manner.

If you are the subject of a complaint from your neighbours and it is proven that you have engaged in anti-social behaviour, the Local Authority's Anti-Social Behaviour policy will be implemented. The matter will be dealt with in any (or all) of the following ways:

- Interview the offender and issue a verbal warning
- Engage with agencies and/or supports through our Second Chance Programme
- Written warning
- Final warning letter
- Tenancy Warning
- Commence court proceedings to recover possession of the property or excluding order as appropriate.

Tenants evicted on the basis of anti-social behaviour will be regarded as having deliberately rendered themselves homeless and not be considered for social housing support for a period of 12 months.

Talking to your neighbour

When you are experiencing problems, if it is safe to do so, first of all you should speak to whomever is causing the problem or to the parents where minors are concerned. They may not be aware that they are disturbing you and a compromise may be reached. Before approaching your neighbour, think about what you would like to say. Be clear about what the problem is and how it affects you. Think about what the outcome is likely to be and stay calm. Listen to your neighbour and think about things from their viewpoint. Try to look to the future and how you would like things to change.

Why it is important to deal with it?

No-one wants their neighbours behaving in an anti-social way. We understand that anti-social behaviour can have a big impact on people's lives and on the community as a whole.

Reporting a complaint is easy and can be made **IN CONFIDENCE** by ringing 0761 06 5000. The details of your complaint will be recorded onto our confidential

complaints database and referred to the relevant Community Liaison Officer.

We want people experiencing problems to feel safe about approaching us with a complaint. It is important that you leave your details as anonymous complaints may not be dealt with. Your details will not be released to the subject of your complaint.

Vacant Properties

Vacant properties in an estate can become a target for anti-social behaviour.

If you think a property in your estate is vacant, do not assume the Council is aware. Please phone and let us know on 0761 06 5000.

Waste Disposal

You are responsible for the disposal of your household waste and you shall avail of the services of an authorised waste collector or use an authorised Civic Amenity Site, and evidence of same must be provided on request. If you are unsure of who is authorised you can contact the Environment Section of Tipperary County Council on 0761 06 5000.

Waste should not be stored in gardens or emptied into gully traps, drains or sinks. It is your responsibility to keep your home and its environs clean and litter free.

The illegal dumping of your waste is an offence and perpetrators will be prosecuted. Burning of rubbish is also illegal and can lead to serious risk of fire. Any occurrence of illegal dumping or open burning can be reported to the Environment Section of Tipperary County Council on 0761 06 5000.

Recycling - *Recycle More – Pay Less!*

- Use your local bring banks to recycle glass, cans, paper etc
- Bulky items and other unusual waste can be recycled at Tipperary's Recycling Centres located in Nenagh, Roscrea, Clonmel, Cashel and Donohill
- Composting. Reduce food and garden waste by turning them into compost

Dog Fouling

Dog owners must clean up after their pets in public places and dispose of the waste in a proper manner. Owners of dogs who do not do so are liable for fines. Dogs can only be kept with written agreement from the local authority. If you are the owner of a dog you must have an up to date dog licence which can be purchased at your local Post Office and needs to be renewed on a yearly basis. Micro chipping is now a legal requirement for puppies and since March 2016 all dogs are required by law to have a microchip.

Resident Participation

A Partnership in Estate Management

Tipperary County Council recognises the importance of working with residents and resident committees. Becoming involved is an effective way of developing your community and promoting the interests of all residents in the area. When you are allocated a property by the Council, you become more than just a tenant; you also become a member of the community in which you live. To achieve better communication between residents and the Council, the Council employs Community Liaison Officers.

The Community Liaison Officer

The Community Liaison Officer (CLO) is responsible for building good relations within the community to ensure effective estate management.

CLO will help develop and support:

- Resident Committees / Networks / Community Houses
- Deliver Pre-Tenancy Training courses to allow tenants to understand the various aspects of their Tenancy Agreement
- Investigate complaints of an anti-social nature, working with residents to combat problems and reach positive solutions
- Work in partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations tackling issues of safety to allow your community to be a safer place to live

- Liaise with vulnerable tenants and relevant agencies to ensure they are in contact with necessary supports
- Work with other sections within the Council to further develop initiatives for the betterment of your community

How can I become involved?

Tipperary County Council wants you as a tenant to participate and have a say in the management of your estate. Don't leave it to the Council; join with us by working through your Resident Committee, and help make your estate a better place in which to live. If there is no Resident Committee active in your area and you and your neighbours are interested in establishing one, then contact your CLO to find out more on 0761 06 5000. Your estate enhancement could be contributing to the work of your local Tidy Towns Committee.

How to be a Good Neighbour

Living as part of a community means creating a social network amongst you and your neighbours. It involves being respectful, polite and considerate towards others. Working as a community involves helping one another out, looking out for those that are elderly or vulnerable and organising and taking part in events and activities, that allow for people to meet and socialise.

Moving In

When your property is ready to let, we will make an appointment to meet with you, so that you can sign your Tenancy Agreement. You will also be given the keys to your property.

The property will have been inspected and be in a good state of repair.

Further decoration of the property is the tenant's responsibility.

Furniture and white goods do not form part of the tenancy. If you need financial assistance purchasing essential items for your new home, you should contact the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection for further information on eligibility criteria.

You must set up your bills i.e. TV Licensing, Permitted Waste Collector etc.

Living in Your Home

Insurance

- Tipperary County Council will insure the structure of the property but you will be responsible for insuring all other eventualities including your personal contents. This should include cover for fire brigade charge and glass breakages. The Council will not replace broken glass, whether through accidental damage or vandalism.

Pets

- You are only allowed to keep domestic pets with the consent of the Council in accordance with your Tenancy Agreement. Pets must always be kept under control and well maintained. It is your responsibility to look after any pet and ensure it does not cause a nuisance or annoyance to your neighbours.

Gardens

- You are required to maintain your front and back gardens, boundaries, and any laneway adjoining your house. You must keep them tidy by keeping them clear of any rubbish, cutting any grass and ensuring that plants, shrubs and trees do not become overgrown.

Parking

- Poorly maintained vehicles and carelessly parked vehicles can spoil the appearance of a street or area. Careless parking across grass verges and footpaths can be dangerous and cause damage. Do not block access routes when parking your vehicle and be considerate to your neighbours when parking.

Maintenance

- There are certain responsibilities for maintenance of your home which rest with you as tenant. Please familiarise yourself with the Council's policy on maintenance which clearly outlines both the Council's and the tenant's responsibilities in this handbook.

Housing Maintenance

1. What type of repairs am I responsible for?

Each tenant, on the signing of his/her Tenancy Agreement, assumes responsibility for repairs to the dwelling as outlined in Section 12. The Council will carry out all other repairs as outlined in section 13, **assuming your rent is paid up to date and there are no other breaches of Tenancy.**

2. Will the Council carry out any repairs I want?

No. A clear division of repair responsibility between the Council and its tenants has been defined and is detailed in sections 12 and 13.

3. Will the Council make an exception?

The Council considers requests to execute "tenant responsibility repairs" where exceptional circumstances, such as infirmity or disability make it impossible for the tenant to do so. If you are unable to look after your house, you should contact the District Maintenance Section for more information and assistance. In all instances the Council reserve the right to recover from the tenant all costs incurred.

4. Must I insure the dwelling?

The Council insures the structure of the dwelling **only** against fire and storm damage. The Council does not insure contents, such as furniture, clothes, personal

possessions, etc. **It is your responsibility to insure the contents of the dwelling.** Any consequential damage caused to contents will not be reimbursed by the Council.

5. Am I responsible for the garden or just the dwelling itself?

You are responsible for both, and for any laneway/walkway within the curtilage of your house. Gardens and laneways should be kept in a clean condition and should not be used for dumping. **You are also responsible for the maintenance of walls, gardens, gates, trees, shrubbery, sheds and fences within the curtilage of the dwelling.**

Under the Litter Act, each householder is obliged to keep the footpath and garden adjoining their property free of litter and also any road gully on or at the side of the pavement.

Refuse should only be stored in a suitable covered bin for collection, and must be stored in a suitable location.

6. Can I make alterations to my dwelling?

You must get the Council's approval before starting any improvements, alterations or additions to your home.

All works shall be undertaken by a competent person, i.e., registered electrician, plumber, etc. depending upon the nature of the improvements/alterations/additions, etc.

For example you must get written permission from your relevant District to carry out any of the following:

- Install stoves
- Install fireplaces
- Replace kitchens
- Erect fencing or gates in the front or rear of the house
- Erect any aerial, satellite dish or any fitting or fixture to the side of the house
- Install CCTV cameras
- Paper the internal walls of the house
- Paint any external walls
- Alterations to internal layout, e.g. creation of a new door opening, sub-division of rooms, etc
- Fit an electric shower
- Removal of baths
- Installation of Pre-Pay electricity (Pre Paid Gas Meters are not permitted)
- Erection of sheds
- Extensions
- Installing new entrances
- Erection of dog runs

Maintenance and repairs to these items will always be the responsibility of the tenant.

You may also need planning permission for certain works. If you are in doubt as to whether permission is required for any proposed alterations, please contact your District Office for clarification.

Where the tenant vacates a dwelling and wishes to remove any equipment fitted by them during the course of their tenancy such as a stove or kitchen unit they must ensure that the dwelling is reinstated to its pre-tenancy condition.

- i.e. if the tenant installs a stove in place of an open fire and wishes to remove the stove on departure they must reinstate the open fire to its original condition.

In all cases the tenant will be responsible for any and all costs involved in reinstating the dwelling to its pre-tenancy condition.

In the case of unauthorised alterations carried out, the Council may require you to fully reinstate the property to the original condition at your cost.

7. Will the Council call to inspect my house?

Yes. Council employees may call to carry out an inspection of the property or to carry out necessary repairs. You must allow employees of the Council to enter and inspect the property.

Gas, water and electricity supply authorities or any contractor employed by the Council must also be allowed to enter the property to carry out inspections or necessary works. Where possible, advance notice will be given.

All Council and utility workers carry identification. Please make sure you check for appropriate identification before letting anybody into your home. Also, we ask you and anybody in your house not to smoke while inspections or repairs are taking place.

8. What should I do if a repair team calls to my house and I'm not there?

When you put in a request for maintenance, you will be asked to leave a contact telephone number and the best time for someone to call. The Council will notify you before they call to the house. If they call at the pre-arranged time and nobody is there, the assumption will be made that repairs have already been carried out and that no further action is required.

9. Do you repair properties before new tenants move in?

We do all we can to make a house or flat habitable, complying with the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2017, before a new tenant moves in. However, if it is an old building, we cannot renovate it to an 'as new' state. Once re-letting repairs have been carried out to the property to bring it up to an adequate standard, and handover has taken place, the tenant must accept the house in this condition.

10. Can I have a Satellite Dish fitted?

The fitting of a satellite dish to any house may require planning permission, so contact your District Office, if you intend to have one fitted.

11. What about maintenance in the case of transfer of tenancy?

Where a tenant is granted a mutual transfer, the tenants involved must accept their new dwellings in their existing condition. Inspections will be carried out by the Council to record the condition of each dwelling prior to approval being granted for any mutual transfer.

12. What repairs/works is the tenant responsible for?

12.1. Internal Repairs

- a) Internal plaster cracks and all damage to internal wall finishes.
- b) Decoration (both internal and external)
- c) Chimney sweeping
- d) Repair arising from condensation damage
- e) The Council will install and commission smoke and Carbon Monoxide alarms and heat detectors in the house prior to the commencement of the Tenancy. The tenant is then responsible for the maintenance of smoke and Carbon Monoxide alarms and heat detectors. This includes the checking

and changing of batteries on a regular basis, or when required. You should be aware of the lifespan of the alarm and the council should be informed when the unit is near end of life.

- f) Replacement of ventilation covers
- g) Replacement and repair of damaged tiles and floor coverings
- h) Timberwork should be painted by the tenant on a regular basis (maximum interval of five years)
- i) Repairs or replacement to the following:
 - i. Cupboards, wardrobes kitchen units and their doors, hinges, handles, locks, catches and drawers
 - ii. Doors, door saddles, door frames, window boards and skirting boards
 - iii. Door furniture including letterbox, knocker, door bells, etc. including all internal locks and handles and external locks and handles
 - iv. Window stays, catches, hinges, restrictors and seals

- v. Curtain rails and window boards
- vi. Window vents where fitted
- vii. Sanitary fittings

Tenants are responsible for repairs to doors, windows, fixtures and fittings in the dwelling caused by destruction or damage as a result of anti-social behaviour or authorised searches.

12.2. External Repairs

- a) Replacement of all broken glass
- b) Draught proofing of doors and windows
- c) Timberwork should be painted by the tenant on a regular basis (maximum interval of three years). This includes timber windows, doors, garden sheds, fences, fascias and soffits, etc.
- d) Cleaning of silt, leaves or other deposits from gutters, eave chutes and downpipes
- e) Clotheslines, where fitted will not be replaced/repared in any event by the Council

- f) External decoration must be kept in sympathy with the surrounding area and of a neutral colour
- g) Repairs and maintenance of the following:
 - i. Gardens, sheds, hedges, fences, boundary walls, gates and fuel houses
 - ii. Footpaths, drives and entrances
 - iii. ESB/Gas/Eir box cabinet doors

12.3. Electrical Repairs

N.B. Where it is the tenant's responsibility to repair any electrical/sanitary fitting or installation, a qualified and competent electrical/plumbing contractor should carry out the work. Where such a contractor carries out electrical or plumbing work in a Council dwelling, the name and the business address of the contractor must be sent to the District Maintenance Section together with a brief description of the work carried out.

- a) Replacement of light bulbs and any bulbs that may be required for pilot lights
- b) Repair/replacement of fuses, except mains fuses
- c) Where the council must rectify electrical repairs arising from the tenants'

unauthorised interference with electrical installations, the tenant may be charged for the cost of the repair. Unauthorised interference with electrical installations may result in the tenant being served with a Tenancy Warning.

12.4. Plumbing Repairs

- a) Cleaning of gully traps
- b) Cleaning blocked drains, pipes or sewers. Maintenance of sewers between the dwelling and the main sewer line is the tenant's responsibility. If problem is outside the curtilage of the property the first point of contact for all water supply or foul drainage issues is Irish Water at www.water.ie or on 1850 278 278
- c) Clearing of air locks and bleeding radiators
- d) Bath and sink stopper will not be replaced/repair by the Council in any event

- e) Repairs or replacement to the following:
- i. Sanitary ware including toilet, cistern, seat, handle, wash hand basin, bath, taps etc
 - ii. Waste pipes inside the dwelling
 - iii. Ball-cock, syphon or other flotation control device within the cistern unit
 - iv. Leaking taps
 - v. Clearing blocked toilets or drains
 - vi. Showers, where they do not constitute the sole source of bathing in the dwelling.

12.5. Cooking and Heating Appliances

- a) Repair and replacement of tiles on fireplace/hearth
- b) Repair or replacement of the basket/grate in all fireplaces and solid fuel appliances
- c) Solid fuel stoves and ranges. All solid fuel systems must be maintained on an annual basis. The tenant shall be responsible for the repair or replacement of all consumable items associated with stoves and ranges with the exception of items specified at No. 13.

Cleaning – Ranges and Stoves require frequent cleaning. Please refer to manufacturer's booklet instructions.

- d) The tenant is responsible for arranging of bleeding/restart of heating system if oil/gas runs out. A call out charge will be applied where the Council has been called to property for this reason.

12.6. General

- a) Pest Control i.e. rats, vermin, beehives etc, is the tenant's responsibility. Where these pests are affecting a number of residents the Environment Section of the Council may intervene to remove/eliminate the pests and recoup any cost from the responsible tenant
- b) De-sludging of individual (1 off houses) septic tanks and wastewater treatment systems
- c) Maintenance of individual wastewater treatment system – the tenant will be responsible for repairs
- d) The Council is responsible for repairs only. Following the repairs, the subsequent responsibility for redecoration lies with the tenant

- e) Tenants should not interfere with or block vents/airflow into the dwelling

13. What repairs are the Council responsible for?

The Council is responsible for all repairs that are not the responsibility of the tenant.

The Council is responsible for the maintenance of the following:

- a) Servicing of Gas & Oil Boilers.
- b) Repairs or replacement to the following;
 - (i) Immersion heater and associated switches and connections.
 - (ii) Light switches, sockets and ceiling roses. The Council is not responsible where tenants have installed non-standard fittings.
- c) Fire bricks in stoves/ranges
- d) Ball Valve with storage/heating tank in attic.

Where there are repeated call outs for any of the above and it is clear that the repairs or replacement are caused by mistreatment by the tenant, the tenant will be responsible for the cost and may be served with a Tenancy Warning

The Council is responsible for the following types of structural repairs to dwellings:

- (a) Leaking Roofs and chimneys (including tiles/slates, ridge cappings and barges)
- (b) Gutters and Downpipes
- (c) Fascias and soffits
- (d) External wall cracks including plastering, rendering, blockwork/brickwork and window sills (if deemed necessary by the Local Authority)
- (e) Subject to Capital Funding being available, severely weathered windows and doors, where damage is not caused by tenant's neglect
- (f) Repairs to burst pipes in the dwelling caused by frost or freezing temperatures. The Council's insurance will not cover the tenant's contents.
- (g) All damage caused by accidental fire or storm events. The Council's insurance will not cover the tenant's contents. The tenant must provide his/her own insurance
- (h) Repairs to stair lifts and hoists where they were originally fitted by the Council

14. How do I make a repair request?

If you have any queries about maintenance, you should contact the District office on 0761 06 5000. It is important to note that regard will be had to any arrears on a tenants rent account and tenant history in dealing with their request for repairs.

15. What if I am not sure whose responsibility the repair is?

On phoning 0761 06 5000 the tenant should outline the nature of their request and they will be advised whether it is tenant responsibility or responsibility of the Local Authority.

16. How long will it take for a repair to be carried out?

In the interests of providing an improved housing maintenance service, repairs are categorised as follows:

NOTE: The below response times are dependent on available resources

Category	Emergency	Urgent	Routine	Cyclical
	These are repairs carried out where there is a possible danger to human life.	These are repairs carried out quickly to avoid damage to the dwelling.	These are medium priority repairs.	These are low priority works that are more efficiently dealt with during the cyclical maintenance programme
Example	Smoking fuse board, Tiles falling off roof Pipe Burst	Leaking roof	Faulty radiator Internal door repair No water in hot tap	Leaking gutters Rotting fascia board Attic & Wall Insulation Replacement windows and doors (where capital funding available)
Target Response Time	24hrs	5 - 10 days	8 weeks	1 – 5 years

17. Are there any General Housing Maintenance Tips?

Yes, the following points should be noted:

- Notify your District Office immediately, should a problem arise
- You should be aware that electric live underground cable is laid from an ESB pole or mini pillar to the meter cabinet in your dwelling
- Avoid damaging roof tiles by not allowing T.V. aerial/satellite dish installers to walk on the roof. Where possible use gable mounted brackets instead
- Take all reasonable care when you are required to walk in the attic space and do not allow children in this area
- Check your smoke detectors etc on a monthly basis at least
- Read all instruction manuals carefully especially those which relate to showers, cookers, smoke detectors etc
- Keep wall ventilators and window sashes open as frequently as possible
- Avoid generating excessive amounts of steam in kitchen and showers as this type of moisture can lead to dampness and mould growth

- Fit door stoppers to prevent wall/studding damage
- Lubricate internal and external door locks and hinges annually
- In open fireplaces light small fires in the first instances to avoid cracking the fireback
- Clean cooker/stove regularly and clean chimney flues at least twice a year
- Identify all stopcocks and wheel valves and label
- Operate water stop valve in your hot press and under your sink regularly to prevent premature failure
- Check hot press pipe work, valves, cylinder etc. for leaks, removing linen if necessary
- When heating system is not in use for long periods, i.e. summertime, operate circulating pump fortnightly by turning thermostat to zero and returning it to proper setting after the pump has run
- Run cold water through electric showers after using
- Do not discharge foul waste water from washing machine, sink etc to the storm water system
- Paint external woodwork regularly

- Do not put nappies, sanitary towels, kitchen cloths, cleansing wipes or paper other than toilet paper into toilets
- Do not fit your waste outlet pipe with a mesh filter
- Do not put cooking oil, fat or motor oil down sinks, toilets or drains
- KNOW THE LOCATION OF YOUR MAINS WATER STOPCOCK
- KNOW HOW TO SHUT OFF ELECTRICITY IN YOUR HOUSE
- Fit a lagging jacket to hot water

18. What about new dwellings?

If you have moved into a newly built home, the Builder's Guarantee will cover it, which is normally 12 months. Any defects should be notified to the District Office. It is very important that while your home is under guarantee no one else does any work, which will make the guarantee invalid. All problems must be referred to the District Office in order that the Builder can be given the opportunity to put them right.

19. What about plaster cracks?

These are very common in new buildings and are due to the drying out process. Normally, they are nothing to worry about. Just fill them up when you decorate.

Danger of Fire

20. What should I do if fire breaks out?

Your first priority is to get everyone out of the house and then to call the Fire Brigade. Most often when fire breaks out, so too does panic and error. Things can happen very quickly and in a situation where seconds can save lives, you and your family need to be able to act without hesitation.

- ◉ A rehearsed fire escape drill can make all the difference
- ◉ Your fire drill at a glance:
- ◉ Together plan two escape routes from each room
- ◉ Practice the plan until perfected
- ◉ Close all doors behind you as you leave
- ◉ The stairs are your primary escape route - keep them clear
- ◉ If your clothes catch fire, stop, drop and roll
- ◉ Do not re-enter the house for any reason
- ◉ Phone the Fire Brigade from a nearby outside phone or neighbours house
- ◉ Decide on a meeting point outside the house near where the Fire Brigade is likely to arrive

If you are prevented from leaving via your primary escape route by smoke, heat or fire, close the room door and stuff a blanket, sheets or clothes at the bottom of the door to limit the spread of smoke into the room. Open the window in the room fully, stay near the window and attract attention by waving a piece of clothing/sheet and shouting for help. Only evacuate from an upstairs window without assistance as a last resort. If you are caught in a smoke filled room, get down on your hands and knees as there may be a layer of clearer air at floor level.

21. 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
- ◉ If you allow smoking in the house, provide large stable ashtrays
- ◉ Always use secure fire guards with open fires
- ◉ Do not smoke in bed
- ◉ Switch off and unplug all appliances not in use at night
- ◉ Test smoke alarms regularly.
- ◉ Vacuum the smoke alarms regularly

- Only one electrical appliance should be plugged into any outlet
- 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 Instructions
- Never cover convector or storage heaters
- Always provide ventilation with Gas Heaters
- At Christmas time it is very important that particular care is taken with Christmas tree lights and any lighted decorations
- Electric blankets must be properly used or they can cause fire
- Follow manufacturer's instructions at all times.

22. What should I do if the chimney goes on fire?

Call the Fire Brigade (999) or 112. Close doors and windows to reduce the draught. If possible, move furniture and carpets away from the fireplace. Tenants are advised to notify District Offices should a chimney fire occur in their residence.

23. How can I best prevent a chimney fire?

One of the best ways to prevent a chimney fire is to clean the chimney regularly - follow the recommended cleaning guide:

<u>Fire Type</u>	<u>Cleaning Interval</u>
Wood burning fires & stoves	2 times a year when in use
Solid fuel fires & stoves	Once a year if using smokeless fuel Twice a year if using coal
Oil fires	Once a year
Gas fires	Once a year if designed for sweeping

The cleaning of chimneys is the tenant's responsibility. When a fire occurs as a result of the lack of cleaning the tenant will be held responsible for any damage/costs incurred.

24. Can I use a chip-pan?

No. The Council prohibits the use of chip-pans.

25. What is the advice about open fires?

Use a suitably stable 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.

26. 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. Keep all portable heaters 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.

27. What should I do "last thing at night"?

- a) Ensure fires are well down and spark guards are in place in front of open fires
- b) Switch off and unplug electrical items Never leave a washing machine, dryer, electrical heater, dishwasher, television, radio etc on when going out or going to bed (Some electrical items are designed to stay on all the time e.g. fridges, so it is important if you are in doubt to get your appliance checked by a qualified electrician)
- c) Do not leave your television, radio or music system on standby and ensure your remote control is

visible to you before going to bed. If your remote control falls down the side of an armchair, sofa etc the buttons may press which can cause the remote to overheat and go on fire

- d) Plug out the mobile phone charger when your mobile is charged and when you are going out or going to bed
- e) Check every room and close all doors when going to bed
- f) Switch off and plug out your electric blanket before going to sleep
- g) If your exit requires a key for opening, ensure the key is in the lock before going to bed
- h) Ensure all escape routes are clear before going to bed

28. What happens if there is an emergency outside normal working hours?

If an emergency should arise outside normal working hours and represents a serious risk to life or health or a risk of significant damage to the house, tenants should contact the main emergency service providers e.g. Gardaí/Ambulance/Fire Brigade: 999 / 112

The emergency number outside of office hours for the following services are:

- Roads - 1890 923 948
- Housing (Emergency Electrical and Plumbing issues only) - 1890 923 948
- Water and Wastewater - 1850 278 278

If you need the FIRE BRIGADE, GARDAI, or an AMBULANCE, DIAL 999 OR 112 yourself. DO NOT WAIT for a member of the Council's staff to do so for you.

- If you smell GAS, phone Bord Gais immediately at 1850 205 050.
- If emergency personnel are called out where there is not an emergency, the tenant will be charged the full cost of the call-out.
- If the problem does not fall into the examples above, report the problem as soon as possible on the next working day.
- In the event of severe weather please check the Council's website at www.tipperarycoco.ie for updates.

In the event of a carbon monoxide alarm sounding please

- Immediately get fresh air into the property by opening all doors and windows

- Turn off all appliances, Cookers, Fireplaces, central heating etc.
- Contact the Fire Services on 999/112 (Please note the General Services Supervisor will not respond to incidents of carbon monoxide alarms as they do not carry the gas detection equipment necessary to deal with the incident).
- Do not re-enter the property until it has been thoroughly aired out and the appliances have been checked and fixed by a professional.
- Call a qualified technician to find the root cause of the problem and address it.

Protecting your home

29. How can I protect my house from break-ins?

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 like ladders lying about in the garden of your home
- 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 stores
- Cancel milk and newspaper deliveries when you go on holiday and tell a neighbour that you will be away
- Never leave valuables lying around where they can be seen through a window
- Don't forget to close and lock any side doors or gates
- Never leave keys on a string behind the letterbox, hidden under the doormat or in other "hiding" places
- Pull curtains at night
- Make sure you lock your shed
- Photograph and mark all valuable property
- If you have an alarm fitted, use it!
- Fit a good quality door chain and use it when strangers call

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:

- Don't let anyone in until you are satisfied you know who they are and what they want
- Ask to see the caller's identity card. All officials carry one and will be pleased to show it
- Take time to look at the 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 let anyone in, stay with them all the time
- Don't leave strangers by an open door

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.

Given the increasing levels of identity theft, when you are disposing of documents that contain your personal details, ensure that you shred or tear them up so your details cannot be read.

For information on Neighbourhood Watch contact your local Garda Station.

Condensation

30. What causes condensation?

Condensation is probably the main cause of dampness and mould growth in dwellings. As a result of continuing condensation, walls, ceilings and sometimes floors become damp, discoloured and unpleasant due to mould growing on them.

Condensation occurs when warm moist air meets a cold surface. The moistness of the air and the temperature of the surfaces depend on a range of factors, many of which are determined by the way the house is used. Condensation usually occurs in winter. This is because the building surfaces are cold, more moisture is generated within the house and, because windows are opened less, the moist air cannot escape.

Condensation, which you can see, occurs for short periods in bathrooms and kitchens because of the steamy atmosphere. It also occurs for long periods in unheated bedrooms and sometimes in wardrobes, cupboards or corners of rooms where ventilation and air movement is restricted.

31. How can I prevent it?

In order to prevent or cure condensation problems the following four precautions are very important:

- Minimise moisture production within the dwelling and confine it as far as possible to specific areas e.g. kitchen, bathroom
- Prevent very moist air spreading to other rooms from the kitchen, bathroom or where clothes are dried
- Provide some ventilation to all rooms so that moist air can escape
- Provide some level of heating

You can minimise moisture by:

- Drying clothes externally where possible
- If you are using a clothes dryer, provide venting to the outside
- Limit the use of moveable gas or paraffin heaters as these types of heaters release large amounts of water vapour into the air and greatly increase the risk of condensation
- Reduce cooking steam as far as possible e.g. keep lids on saucepans, do not leave kettles boiling for long periods. You can prevent the spread of moist air by:
 1. Having good ventilation of kitchen when cooking or when washing clothes. If you have an extractor fan in your kitchen, use it when cooking, washing clothes and particularly when the windows mist up

2. If you do not have an extractor fan, open the kitchen windows and keep the doors between the kitchen and the rest of the house closed as much as possible
- After taking a bath or shower, keep the bathroom window open and the bathroom door shut until the bathroom dries off
 - Do not use unventilated cupboards for drying clothes
 - If you dry clothes in the bathroom or kitchen, use the extractor fan if you have one. Do not leave the door open or the moist air will spread to other parts of the house
 - If you have to use a moveable gas or paraffin heater make sure the room that the heater is in is well ventilated and sealed off from the rest of the house. In older houses a lot of ventilation occurs through fireplaces and draughty windows. In many modern houses and flats sufficient ventilation does not occur unless a window or a ventilator is open for a reasonable time each day and for nearly all the time the room is in use

Too much ventilation in cold weather is uncomfortable and wastes heat. All that is needed is a slightly open window or ventilator. If possible, open the top part of the window about 10mm (1/2"). Try to make sure that all rooms are at least partially heated. Condensation most often occurs in unheated bedrooms. If you leave a room unheated you should keep the window open

slightly and the door shut. Heating helps to prevent condensation by warming the room surfaces. It takes a long time for the cold room surface to warm up so it is better to provide a small amount of heating for long periods than to provide a lot of heat for a short period.

Houses and flats left unoccupied and unheated during the day get very cold so, whenever possible, try to provide a small amount of heating all the time. In houses, the rooms above a heated living room benefit from the heat rising through the floor. In bungalows and some flats this does not happen. Some rooms are especially cold because they have large areas of outside walls. Such rooms are most likely to have condensation. Some heating is therefore necessary in these rooms. Insulation reduces the rate of heat loss and helps raise the temperature. However, even in a well-insulated house, some heating may be necessary in cold rooms with no indirect heat.

32. What do I do if I see Mould Growth?

If small black spots appear on the walls or other room surfaces, this is the start of mould growth. Any sign of mould growth indicates the presence of moisture. If the moisture is caused by condensation it is a sign that the level of moisture in the room needs to be reduced or that the heating, ventilation or structural insulation, or all three of them, need to be improved. The mould growth spots should be washed off and the affected areas sterilised using an appropriate fungicide.

33. Why is there vents in the walls/windows of the property and mechanical ventilation in some rooms?

Ventilation of a property is necessary to provide an adequate supply of fresh air to persons using part of a dwelling, to help dilute and remove airborne pollutants, in some instances to provide air for fuel burning appliances and to control excess humidity in areas where it is produced in significant amounts, for example kitchens and bathrooms.

Trickle ventilators often incorporate a simple flap that allows users to shut off the ventilation depending on the external weather conditions. These vents are intended to be normally left open in occupied rooms in a dwelling for the reasons stated above.

The closing of vents can lead to mould and health issues.

34. What about New Buildings?

New buildings can take a long time to dry out and during the first winter more heating and ventilation is necessary than in subsequent winters. Excessive temperatures should be avoided to prevent warping of new joinery.

Severe Freezing Conditions

35. What can happen in freezing conditions and how can I prevent it?

During severe prolonged freezing conditions frost penetrates deep into the ground and householders may experience problems due to frozen water pipes.

The two most common sources of the problem are:

- Either a service pipe between the water main and the house, which because of the depth at which it has been laid has frozen, or
- A pipe in an attic, which because of inadequate lagging, has frozen.

Because of the diverse nature of each individual case, it is not feasible to give "one size fits all" advice. Tenants experiencing problems with frozen pipes are advised to contact the Council.

Individual tips which might help to avoid frozen pipes are:

- Wrap a towel around an outside tap.
- Open the attic trap door to allow heat into the attic.
- Leave a light on in the attic.
- Leave heating on longer than normal.
- Place a hot water bottle in the Water Meter Box

In the longer term, when the thaw sets in, some of the frozen pipes will have burst and will need repair. With this in mind, householders should now familiarise themselves with the location of their external and internal stopcocks, ensure there is access to both stopcocks and know how to turn both off.

When leaving your dwelling for extended periods ensure the water supply is turned off at the stop cock or water meter, and that you have drained the water and heating systems.

Early action to turn off water will reduce the potential for damage, particularly from burst pipes in the attic.

Energy Saving Tips

36. How can I save on energy bills?

You can do a lot to save energy – and cut your bills – by using heat and electricity carefully and maintaining heaters, boilers and appliances. When making new investments or upgrades in your home, be sure to think about the many no-cost or low cost steps you can take to save energy. We have listed some of these here.

37. Appliances

- Look for an energy rating label. Appliances are rated from A to G, according to how much energy they use. Those with an A, B or C rating use less energy than those rated near G. Though these appliances may be more expensive at first, the lower energy use will save the cost difference over their lifetime.

38. TVs and video or DVD players

- Turn television, video and DVD players off rather than leaving them on standby. You could save up to €15 a year on your electricity bill by doing this.

39. Heating and water

- Heating and hot water account for over half the cost of the average fuel bill
- Use the shower instead of a bath – a shower typically uses only 20% of the hot water that a bath uses
- Fix dripping taps
- Turn your room thermostats down by 1°C – it could save you 10% on your fuel bill
- The ideal temperature is 18°–21°C

40. Lighting

- Buy and install energy-saving bulbs, which use about a quarter of the energy but last up to ten times longer than a standard bulb for the same amount of light

41. Queries to Housing Grants Section

If you have queries in relation to the following please contact Housing Grants Section, Nenagh.

- Access ramps
- Downstairs toilet facilities
- Stair lifts
- Accessible showers
- Adaptation for wheelchairs
- Extensions or other works necessary for the purposes of rendering a house more suitable for a person with a disability

"Please note Tipperary County Council will continue to update details contained in the Tenancy Handbook on an ongoing basis, as a result of changed policies, new legislation etc and any amendments will be binding on the Tenant"

Updated January 2019

For more ideas on simple and cheap energy-saving measures check out the following web sites:

www.seai.ie (Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland)

www.change.ie (Energy Efficiency Website)

www.enfo.ie (Environmental Awareness Website).



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann
Tipperary County Council

Tipperary County Council

Civic Offices

Limerick Road

Nenagh

Co Tipperary

Tipperary County Council

Civic Offices

Emmet Street

Clonmel

Co Tipperary

t 0761 06 5000

www.tipperarycoco.ie

