



Wexford County Council Information Handbook for Tenants



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1: About our service

Wexford County Council is your Housing Authority. It covers the entire county. We provide a wide range of housing services and supports and we try to do this effectively and fairly.

This handbook outlines the services we offer, tells you how to access them and explains your role as a tenant.

However, it is only a guide to our services and is not intended to be a legal document. Your tenancy agreement and housing legislation are the most important legal guidance more so than all the information in this booklet.

As a local authority tenant, you have agreed to a housing partnership with us. We hope that we can work together and will have an excellent relationship in the years ahead.

We're here to help

In this handbook, we have tried to cover all you need to know about housing services. There is information on issues like rent payments, repairs and maintenance. We also discuss how to develop good neighbourhood relations, how to become involved in your local community and what you can do about anti-social behaviour. Please keep this handbook in a safe place so you can refer to it for information.

Over time, our services and policies may change. When that happens, we will update you.

What do you think?

To deliver a quality service, we need your input. Please contact us and let us know your views.

- **Write to us at:** Housing and Community Department, Wexford County Council, County Hall, Carricklawn, Wexford Y35WY93.
- **Drop in to:** Housing and Community Department, Block E, Wexford County Council, Carricklawn, Wexford.
- **Phone us on:** 053 919 6000 or email: customerservice@wexfordcoco.ie
- **Email:** customerservice@wexfordcoco.ie

We promise that the personal data you provide to our Housing Section will be processed as set out in the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Acts.

You can find full details of Wexford County Council's Privacy Policy on our website www.wexfordcoco.ie



2: Welcome to your new home

Wexford County Council would like to welcome you as our new tenant. The property we are going to rent to you will become your home.

Before you move in

Before we give you the keys to your new home, we need you to attend a **pre-tenancy** meeting. At this meeting, we will explain your responsibilities as a tenant. We will also tell you about our responsibilities to you as your landlord.

All new tenants must attend a pre-tenancy meeting. Tenants transferring to other local authority homes must also attend a pre-tenancy meeting. It's a really good opportunity for you to meet us and ask any questions you may have.

Remember: We're here to help you.

Before you get your keys . . .

Once you have taken part in the pre-tenancy meeting and we think your home is ready for you

to move in, our rents section will contact you and you will be asked to sign your tenancy agreement and collect the keys to your home.

However, there are a few things you must do before you can move in.

Utilities (gas, electricity, TV, phone and bins)

You are responsible for paying for all your utilities. You should make sure that you tell your various service providers, such as your electric, waste disposal, gas, TV cable and phone network utility companies, about your change of address. **You are responsible for all of the contracts that you have with your utility companies.**

Gas and electricity supply

We will make sure that your electricity supply is switched on when you move into your new home. We will give both you and your electricity provider a meter reading taken before you moved in.

Within a week of signing your tenancy agreement, we will tell your electricity provider that we are no longer responsible for account charges.

If your gas or electricity is disconnected because you did not set up an account, we will not be held responsible for arranging or paying for re-connection. You can only install a pre-pay meter if we give you written permission to do so.

TV satellite dishes

If you want to put a TV satellite dish on your home, you must ask the Council for permission. We have to make sure putting up the dish does not cause structural damage to the property.

Waste disposal

You must organise a method of waste disposal (bin collection) when you move in. You may be

asked to give us proof that you have set up this collection. Any of the following 4 proofs will be accepted:

1. Receipts from Holmestown Waste Management Facility
2. Details of your bin collection company
3. Form signed giving consent to share a bin
4. Receipts from a compactor

Home insurance

The Council is only responsible for the structure of your property. You should take out insurance on the contents of your home. You will need a policy to protect your furniture and contents against fire, flood, water leaks, theft or accidental damage. The Council will not help you pay for this.

3: Know your rights – and responsibilities

What is a tenancy?

Your tenancy begins the moment the Council assigns a home to you. For your tenancy to be binding – that means recognised by the courts – you must sign a tenancy agreement when you receive the keys to your home.

This binding agreement sets out your rights and responsibilities and the Council's rights and responsibilities. It is a contract between you and the Council. It is a legal document, and the contents of this document can be enforced in court.

Make sure that you read your tenancy agreement carefully so you know your rights and responsibilities.

Your responsibilities

As a tenant, you must:

- pay your rent
- use the property allocated to you as your home only
- maintain your house and garden
- get written permission from us before you carry out any alterations (except decoration) to the property
- ensure that your pets or any visitors do not cause nuisance to other people
- report any of the repairs that the Council is responsible for to us by phoning 1890 787 878. Your House Maintenance Handbook for Tenants will tell you which repairs we will do
- provide access, at reasonable times, to the Council or to anybody they send to carry out repairs or maintenance checks

Give us notice of plan to leave

If you decide to end your tenancy, you must give us **at least 28 days written notice**. You must also return your home to us in a good state of repair, allowing for normal wear and tear.

Joint tenancy

The Council will usually grant a joint tenancy to two adults who apply to be housed together. Both people are then named on the tenancy agreement and both are equally responsible for making sure they follow its terms and conditions.

Here are some of the most common questions about joint tenancy agreements:

Q: What happens if one of the joint tenants leaves or dies?

A: In most cases, the Council will consider letting the remaining tenant stay in the property as long as they have been living there and have been assessed for rent during the previous 12 months.

See page 10 for information about rent assessment.

Q: If my parents are the tenants, what happens if they die or leave the property?

A: If you have been living at the property and it has been your home, the Council will consider switching the tenancy to your name if you have been assessed for rent at the property for the previous 12 months. **See page 10 for information about rent assessment.**

Q: What happens if the sole tenant moves into long-term care?

A: If the sole tenant moves to long-term care, and will not be returning to their home, the tenancy must be surrendered and the property returned to the Council. If this happens, you should contact the Housing Liaison Officer.

In all cases where the Council gets an application to amend a tenancy, we will not approve it if:

- rent is owed
- you as a tenant have breached (broken) your tenancy agreement
- there is evidence that you or a person you intend to share the property with have been involved in antisocial behaviour

Each case will be assessed on its own merits.

If you breach (break) your tenancy agreement

We may consider you to be in breach of your tenancy agreement if you do not keep its terms and conditions. By signing this agreement, you agree to follow its terms.

The Council has the right to end the agreement and repossess your home if you breach any part of your tenancy agreement.

However, repossession is the last resort, and we will discuss with you whether there are other ways to resolve any dispute we have with you. If we cannot resolve the problem, we may go to court and ask for a repossession order allowing us to take your home from you.

The kind of behaviour that may result in the Council taking legal action against you includes:

- rent arrears (owe rent)
- malicious damage to the property
- using the property for non-residential purposes
- abandoning the property
- substance misuse
- other antisocial behaviour

Wexford County Council expects both staff and tenants to be courteous when engaging with each other.



4: How we assess your rent

To assess and calculate your rent, we use what is known as the Differential Rent Scheme. If you would like more details of how this works, please go to the Wexford County Council website or contact the Council's Rent Section.

Your rent is charged weekly, but you can pay it monthly if that suits you better. There are a variety of ways you can pay it. **It is very important that you pay your rent on time.**

How we calculate your rent

When we write to offer you a tenancy, we send you a rent assessment form. You have to complete and sign this form and return it to us at the Housing Department. The form asks for details of all people who will be living with you and what they earn. You may need to include documents supporting the information you give.

The information you give about your family size and income is used to assess how much rent you must pay. The net income (income after tax

and stoppages like PRSI and USC) of the highest earning tenant is used first to calculate rent. It is usually a fifth of this net income, with reductions called allowances for the number and age of the dependants in the household.

We also take the income from other adults in the household into account when we assess the total rent you should pay. We will adjust your rent if your household income decreases or increases.

What to do if your circumstances change

Contact the rents section and they will send you a change in circumstance form, similar to the rent form you filled out when you first took up the tenancy. You will need to send documents to support what you tell us. We will then adjust your rent to take account of the change.

You must get written permission from us before you allow an extra adult to move into and live in your home. To apply for permission, you must fill in a Permission to Reside Form, which you can get from the Council Housing Department.

Always make sure that you tell us if either your

household income or the number of people in your household changes. If you don't tell us about these changes, you may soon find yourself in rent arrears.

The changes you must tell us about include:

- starting a job
- becoming unemployed
- changes in your social welfare entitlement
- a new person moves into your home
- a cut in your unemployment pay
- an occupant or tenant dies or moves out
- a new baby is born
- a cut in your social security entitlement

Rent review

The Council carries out regular rent reviews of all tenants. When you sign your tenancy agreement, you must agree that you will fill in a Rent Review Form whenever we think you need to and send it back to us along with documents to show that the information you give is correct. If you don't, we can make you pay extra rent and you will have broken the tenancy agreement that you signed with us.

How to pay your rent

As a tenant, you are responsible for making sure that you pay your rent every week. If you prefer to pay your rent monthly rather than weekly,

remember to multiply your weekly rent by 52 and divide this figure by 12 to work out how much you need to pay each month.

Household Budget scheme

If you are receiving a social welfare payment, Household Budget refers to a deduction of your rent amount before you get it. All households that receive a payment from social welfare must pay their rent by Household Budget.

Standing order form

If your rent cannot be deducted and paid to us through the Household Budget scheme, you must set up a bank standing order form. We will send you this form when you accept the offer of tenancy and you must return it to us at the Council rents section when you collect the keys to your home.

You can decide whether you want to pay your rent weekly or monthly, but don't forget that you will need to change the amount you pay if your rent changes.

Billpay card

We will give you a billpay card when you sign your tenancy agreement and receive the keys to your home. This billpay card is directly linked to

your rent account and you can use it to pay your rent at any post office in the country and also any retailer offering Postpoint services. You decide the amount to pay each time you use your billpay card.

Over-the-counter rent payments

The receipts desk in the Wexford County Council office or the Municipal District Offices in Wexford, Enniscorthy, New Ross and Gorey will accept rent payments. There is a list of these offices in the contact details at the end of this booklet.

On-line payments

We will give you a user name and PIN when you set up your rent account. You can use these to pay your rent online if that suits you best. To do that, log on to: www.wexfordcoco.ie – **and pay for it.**

Please note that we may change the way you pay your rent if we find a particular method works best.

What happens if I owe rent?

You will get into rent arrears (owe rent) if you:

- miss your weekly or monthly rent payments
- do not pay enough rent
- do not tell us about a change in your circumstance that should have led to a change in the amount of rent you pay

If you are in rent arrears, you must contact your local Council Credit Controller at 053 919 6000 to arrange a repayment agreement so you can clear the arrears.

If you are in arrears, the sooner you come to talk to us the better.

Once you make an agreement to clear the arrears, you must stick to it. We will closely monitor your payments and may take you to court if you break your payment agreement with us.

If you are in rent arrears, or fear that you might be about to get into arrears, it's usually a good idea to contact your local Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS). This is an independent and confidential service that will help you to make a realistic plan. Phone MABS on 076 107 2390.

Remember:

- Do not ignore letters that we send to you about your rent account.
- If you fall into arrears, act quickly and talk to our staff – we are there to help.

In some circumstances, the Council's social worker may be able to help and advise you if your family circumstances lead to rent arrears. Tell us if you would like us to arrange for the social worker to contact you.

Will I be taken to court for rent arrears?

Yes, you will be taken to Court if you refuse to come to a reasonable arrangement or if you do not keep to an agreed repayment plan. If we do have to take you to court, we may ask the judge to order you to pay all the costs of bringing the court case as well as all of your rent arrears.

Wexford County Council has zero tolerance for rent arrears. Under the tenancy agreement you sign with us, you accept that you will be evicted from your home if you do not pay your rent.



5: Repairs and maintenance

The Housing Maintenance Section at Wexford County Council is responsible for managing and repairing the Council's rented housing stock, which includes your home.

Any time you ask us to make a repair to your home, we check your rent account. **We will only provide you with a full maintenance service if you have paid your rent.**

The County Council are responsible for structural, major plumbing and electrical repairs. You are responsible for all other regular maintenance to your home.

The Council has a centralised maintenance unit, dedicated to answering housing repair requests and forwarding these to our maintenance crews.

Need to notify us of maintenance problems?

If you need to notify us about maintenance problems in your home, phone our lo-call number 1890 787 878 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday. In an emergency

outside of these hours, call 1890 666 777 or email customerservice@wexfordcoco.ie. You can also make a maintenance request by calling into our offices.

Leave your phone number

If you make a request for maintenance or repair, make sure you leave a contact phone number, so that the maintenance crew can contact you before they come to your home.

How do we classify request?

We list all requests for repairs or maintenance on our system and classify them as:

- emergency
- urgent
- routine.

After this, we send your request to our maintenance crews.

The following list tells you what parts of the inside of your home you are responsible for repairing and maintaining.

Inside your home

Inside your home, you are responsible for repairing or replacing:

✓	all internal cupboards, fitted wardrobes, kitchen units and their components, like hinges, locks and handles
✓	all woodwork, including floors, doors and skirting boards
✓	wall and floor tiling
✓	windows, external doors and broken glass
✓	bulbs and fuses (but not the main fuse or fuse board)
✓	your own electrical devices
✓	waste pipes
✓	taps, wash hand basins, cracked or damaged toilet bowls, cisterns and their parts
✓	the basket or grate in your fireplace and the tiles on your fire surround

Inside your home, you are also responsible for:

✓	clearing all blockages from waste pipes and sewage systems
✓	making sure there is enough ventilation to prevent mould from building up
✓	decorating and painting

Outside your home

Outside your home, you are responsible for:	
✓	getting rid of pests and vermin
✓	decorating and painting your home
✓	maintaining all the boundaries, paths, gardens, sheds and gates
✓	getting oil burner regularly serviced if you have oil fired central heating
✓	making sure your chimney is swept regularly if you use solid fuel. (You are responsible for paying the fire brigade if you have a chimney fire.)

We will decide who is responsible for repair and maintenance works not set out in this handbook or in our House Maintenance Handbook for Tenants.

We are responsible for . . .

We are responsible for some repairs inside and outside your home too.

Inside	Outside
Electrical repairs – including replacing or repairing:	Structural repairs to:
• the main fuse board	• roofs
• sockets	• chimneys
• smoke alarms and ceiling roses	• ceilings
• hot water cylinder, immersion and attic tanks	• other areas like fascias and soffits – outer areas of a roof
• electric showers if supplied and fitted by the Council	• maintaining drainage systems emptying septic tanks
• any heating systems we installed (if needed)	



6. Keep safe at home

Fire precautions

Fire is a danger in every home. Everyone is at risk, in particular the elderly and very young, so take the following steps to prevent fires.

Avoid:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Smoking when you are in bed, tired or on medication. ✗ Leaving the room when there are candles burning. ✗ Leaving young children alone near an open fire or cooker. ✗ Leaving your mobile phone or laptop on your bed or couch. These devices heat up quickly when even slightly covered over. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Leaving matches and lighters where children can get them. ✗ Leaving the room when a chip or frying pan is on, even for a minute. ✗ Overloading electric sockets – one socket, one plug. ✗ Using electric appliances that don't work. ✗ Running electrical appliances from a light socket. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Using a heater or the cooker to dry clothes. ✗ Using petrol or paraffin to light a solid fuel stove. ✗ Borrowing batteries from the smoke alarm. ✗ Having mirrors over fire places with real fires. Your clothes might catch fire if you stand too close to look in the mirror. |
|---|---|--|

Make sure to:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Check your house for electrical devices left on. Only leave on essential electrical equipment at night such as the fridge.✓ Charge or use devices like phones and laptops on a solid surface that will not burn easily.✓ Clean your chimney and service your heating system at least once a year. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Press the test button of all smoke alarms once a week to check they are working properly. Replace batteries as soon as you need to.✓ Use a spark guard in front of open fires.✓ Keep your gas cylinder outside, on solid ground and away from anything hot.✓ Use a proper holder for candles.✓ Keep a suitable fire extinguisher and fire blanket in the kitchen. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Empty ashtrays before you go to bed. Run the contents under the tap before you bin them.✓ Store hot ashes in a non-combustible container outside and away from anything that may burn. Allow to cool down for a number of days before you dispose of them.✓ Repair or replace faulty electrical appliances immediately.✓ Do a fire safety check before you go to bed.✓ Close all doors at night. |
|---|---|--|

Appendix 1 on page 34 has more information on fire prevention

Electricity

Know where to find your fuse board so that you can cut a particular circuit or switch the power off in an emergency.

Do not overload sockets or tamper with wall sockets, switches, the fuse board or any other electrical installation in your home.

Switch off the isolator switches on your fuse board before you move any electrical appliance, such as a fridge or washing machine.

Gas

Know where to find the shut off valve to your gas supply to the boiler and cooker.
Do not tamper with the boiler or any other gas appliances.
Make sure wall vents are open at all times in rooms with gas fires.

If you smell gas in your home:

- Make sure gas appliances haven't been left on and unlit
- Don't smoke or use a naked flame.
- Don't unplug or switch anything electrical on or off.
- Open windows and doors.

If the appliances are off but the smell persists, turn off the gas supply at the meter and contact An Bord Gais – 1850 205 050.

Water leak

Do not use the phone in the immediate area of the leak. If possible, call from outside the property.

Plumbing

Know the location of the stopcock inside your home. It is usually beneath the kitchen sink. You should know how to turn off the water supply at the main stopcock. This is usually where the supply enters your property from the road or pavement.

Carbon monoxide

Carbon Monoxide is a poisonous gas that has no colour or odour. It is produced when any fossil fuel such as coal, wood or oil is burnt without enough oxygen. The symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are similar to the flu and include aches, drowsiness, weakness, headaches and nausea.

If anyone at home has these symptoms while a gas appliance is being used, you should stop using the appliance until it has been checked by a qualified gas fitter. If the symptoms persist, talk to your doctor.

To prevent a carbon monoxide build-up:

- install a carbon monoxide detector
- make sure all heating systems are regularly maintained by a qualified fitter.
- check all your flues and chimneys. Clean them and remove any blockages at least once a year
- keep all permanent ventilation openings clear

Radon gas:

Radon is a radioactive gas. It has no taste, colour or smell. In Ireland, approximately 300 cases of lung cancer each year are linked to exposure to radon. Find out if you are exposed to radiation from naturally high radon levels. You can visit the website of the Environmental Protection Agency to find out more - www.epa.ie



7: Be part of your community

Keep and maintain your home in good condition, both inside and outside. Paint it whenever you need to, including any sheds walls, and piers. Regular upkeep of your home will reflect well on you and on the estate or community where you live.

Become actively involved in the running of your estate. To help manage our estates, the Council employs Housing Liaison Officers to support community development initiatives. These officers can deal with any queries you have about your tenancy, and will work with you to help create a vibrant sustainable community where you live.

Residents associations

Residents associations are made up of a group of people, who all live in the same estate or area, who have come together to maintain and improve their neighbourhood and communal areas. They can also be a representative voice for your estate and the broader community.

Wexford County Council helps to fund residents associations to do things like maintain open spaces. We help pay for plants and gardening equipment. Contact your Area Housing Officer if you have a funding proposal.

Neighbourhood relations

It's your responsibility to get on with your neighbours. Common sense and respect for others plays a large part in living in harmony. When people are living close to each other, they may not realise their behaviour, or the behaviour of their visitors, children or pets, can disturb and annoy others.

By living as part of a community, it is your responsibility to uphold a safe and caring environment.

- Make sure your house contributes positively to the appearance of the area
- Welcome any new neighbours
- Alert someone if you notice a change in your neighbour or if you haven't seen them for some time

- Look out for neighbours who are elderly or disabled. Offer them help if you think they need it
- Tell your neighbours before you start any noisy work in your house (DIY) or before a celebration
- Make sure your children are aware of how their playing habits affect others

Parking

Poorly maintained 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 you park your vehicle and be considerate to your neighbours' needs.

Pets

You may keep one or two small pets like cats or dogs as long as they do not become a nuisance.

- If you have a pet, do not leave it alone for long periods. Your neighbours will think it is a nuisance if it barks a lot and letting your dog do that can be considered as antisocial behaviour

- Dogs in public places must be accompanied at all times or they could be considered as strays and be impounded
- You should clean up after your dog if it fouls in a public place

Since the start of 2016, tenants of Wexford County Council are not allowed to keep dogs defined as controlled breeds under the Control of Dogs Regulations 1998. A list of prohibited breeds is available on Wexford County Council Website. Under the Control of Dogs Act 1986, every dog must have a license.

Council tenants are not allowed to keep horses or ponies.

Poultry, pigs and non-domestic birds are not pets. Keeping any of these is a serious breach of your tenancy agreement.

Common areas

Common green areas are for the benefit of all residents and tenants. You must never misuse or damage them.

8: Antisocial behaviour

Antisocial behaviour seriously affects the quality of life for both individual residents and the wider community. It can be a source of distress for individuals and families and its effects can be felt throughout the neighbourhood. As a tenant, you have a responsibility never to engage in antisocial behaviour.

We treat antisocial behaviour seriously

Wexford County Council takes all reports of antisocial behaviour seriously. Such behaviour can range from serious acts of violence to more day-to-day issues like noisy neighbours or vandalism.

Wexford County Council takes a strong position against antisocial behaviour. We recognise that taking preventative measures, such as early intervention and support, can prevent the problem becoming even more serious. Our housing team, including housing liaison officers and area housing officers in each of the Council's districts, actively engage with residents following reports of anti-social behaviour and support all involved to bring about resolution.

However, if necessary, as local authority landlords we have powers to evict people involved in antisocial behaviour. We can also get an exclusion order against a family member, ordering them to stay away from a home or even the area near a home.

We may take legal proceedings

Where tenants or their families are involved in criminal acts, such as drug dealing or allowing their homes to be used to commit crimes, we will take legal proceedings which may lead to eviction or exclusion orders. Wexford County Council works closely with the Gardaí and the HSE on such matters.

Where you can report anti-social behaviour

If you are aware of antisocial behaviour, you should tell us about the problem. Do not assume we already know. All calls and contacts are treated in strict confidence. You will need to complete an antisocial behaviour form, giving full written details of your complaint and when the antisocial incidents happened.

We will investigate your complaint and refer it to the Gardaí or relevant agency if we need to.

If you think a crime has been committed

If you think a crime has been committed, you must contact the Gardaí directly.

If you are evicted due to antisocial behaviour

If you are evicted as a result of antisocial behaviour, we will regard you as having made yourself intentionally homeless. This means you will no longer be considered for local authority housing supports.

For more details of our antisocial behaviour policy, check our website <https://www.wexfordcoco.ie/housing/council-tenants/anti-social-behaviour>



9: How to apply for a housing transfer

You can apply for a transfer to another local authority house if you meet certain conditions.

Complete a transfer application form

To apply, you must complete a transfer application form, give reasons for the transfer, with supporting documentation, such as medical reports.

You will not normally be placed on a transfer list unless you have been a tenant in your present council home for at least one year.

Transfers are considered on a 'need' rather than a 'want' basis and are most likely to be granted in cases of overcrowding, downsizing or disability.

The Council's reasons for having a transfer policy are to:

- make the best use of dwellings and to eliminate overcrowding
- satisfy the housing needs of the individual tenant where possible

Your home will have to be inspected as part of your application and your request will be turned down if:

- Your present property is not being maintained.
- You are in rent arrears (you owe rent).
- There is a history of anti-social behaviour complaints made against you.

Mutual transfers

The Council does help to arrange exchanges (swaps) in tenancies between two tenants, including exchanges from one local authority area or voluntary body to another. For your tenancy transfer application to succeed, you must be able to show that:

You have a satisfactory tenancy record, with no rent or other charges owed.

- There have not been any verified instances of anti-social behaviour made against you in the previous 5 years.
- Your present home is maintained in a satisfactory condition as set out the terms of your tenancy agreement.
- The house you would like to transfer to is big enough and has a layout which suits your needs.
- Both you and the other tenant involved agree in writing to accept the other property in its present condition.

Where the Council asks you to agree to a transfer

Sometimes the Council may need a particular type of home for somebody who needs special supports because they have a disability or particular medical needs. In such cases, Wexford County Council may ask people to transfer to an

alternative home more suited to their needs.

Buying your home

Council tenants can apply to buy their homes.

Wexford County Council also provides loans to first time buyers who meet the criteria to support home ownership.

For more information on either of these schemes, go to our website or contact the Housing Department at Wexford Co Council.

Adapting your home

Tenants can apply to have their home adapted to help people living there who suffer from physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual disability. We will consider the best housing option for the whole family, and we may decide it would be better to transfer you to more suitable accommodation.

Major alterations and extensions

Before you carry out major alterations to your home, you must get written permission from the Housing Maintenance Section. You will have to outline the changes you want to make and give details of an approved contractor who will carry out the work.

Under no circumstances should you begin to make any alterations to your property without written approval from the Council.

This includes changes such as:

- installing or converting heating systems, including stoves
- installing electric showers
- replacing kitchen units

If you need to extend your home, you should fill in a housing application form, making sure that you complete the section for extensions, and give it to your area housing officer. We will assess your need for an extension and we will carry out a survey to see if the property is suitable for what you propose. In some cases a transfer to another property may be a more suitable solution.

Moving on and ending your tenancy

If you plan to leave your property and end your tenancy, you must tell the Council at least four weeks before you go. If you give less than four weeks' notice, or if you hand back your keys before four weeks' notice has passed, you must contact your Housing Liaison Officer.

Once you end your tenancy, the Council will no longer be responsible for your future housing needs. You will no longer be regarded as having a housing need and will not qualify for social

housing supports. It might be best to take advice, so feel free to talk to a member of our housing team before you make your final decision.

If you do decide to end your tenancy with us, you must:

- agree a time for us to inspect your home before you move out
- arrange for repairs to any parts of your home that were damaged during your tenancy

You will be charged for the cost of any repairs or cleaning costs the Council has to pay after you leave.

You must also:

- return all keys for front and back doors, windows and sheds. You will be charged if the Council has to change the locks
- pay all your rent and any other charges up to the end of your tenancy

The Council may take you to court to recover any outstanding debts.

If you do not comply with these rules, or if you leave the property without telling the Council, this may affect any future housing application you make to Wexford County Council or any other local authority, housing association or voluntary housing body.

Useful contacts and numbers

Housing | Money advice | Abuse services | Hospitals and doctors | Mental Health Supports | Family services | Legal services | Employment services | Education supports

Housing contacts:

Housing and Community Department	
Phone	053 919 6000
Address	Block E Wexford County Council County Hall Carricklawn Wexford

Housing Maintenance Section	
Phone	Freephone: 1890 787 878 In an emergency after hours: 1890 666 777
Email	customerservice@wexfordcoco.ie
Address	Block E Wexford County Council County Hall Carricklawn Wexford

Money advice:

Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)

Phone	053 912 1504 (Wexford Office); 076 107 2390
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Abuse services:

Men Ending Domestic Violence (Wexford)

Phone	053 912 1876 Freephone: 1 800 220 444
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Wexford Rape and Sexual Abuse Services

Phone	1890 330 333
Email	support@wexfordrapecrisis.com
Websit	www.wexfordrapecrisis.com

Women's Refuge (Wexford)

Phone	053 912 1876 Freephone: 1 800 220 444
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Hospital and doctors:

Wexford General Hospital

Phone	053 915 3000
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Caredoc Medical Care

Phone	1850 334 999
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Mental Health supports:

Aware

Support for stress, depression, bipolar and mood disorders.

Phone	1 800 804 848
Email	supportmail@aware.ie
Website	www.aware.ie

YourMentalHealth.ie

A website developed by the HSE's National Office for Suicide Prevention which highlights things we can do to look after our mental health.

Website	www.yourmentalhealth.ie
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Console (Wexford) Living with suicide

Phone	053 912 22787
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GROW in Ireland Helps with current or previous mental health problems

Phone	087 229 1718 or 1890 474 474
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Website	www.grow.ie
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Family services:

Family mediation service

Phone	053 91 63 050
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Website	Welfare.ie
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Employment service:

Local employment services

Phone	053 91 55852
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Email	info@wld.ie
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Website	www.wld.ie
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Legal services:

Wexford Legal Aid - free	
Phone	053 91 2262
Email	info@legalaidboard.ie
Website	www.legalaidboard.ie

Education service:

Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board (ETB) Help with education and training	
Website	www.waterfordwexford.etb.ie/contact/ - fill in online form

General information:

Citizens Information	
Phone Bunclody	1890 777 121
Email	wexford@citinfo.ie
Website	www.citizensinformation.ie

Community Welfare Service

Phone Bunclody	053 937 7285
Phone Enniscorthy	053 924 3720
Phone Gorey	053 942 1374
Phone Wexford	053 912 1374

Social Welfare Office

Phone Enniscorthy	053 924 2900
Phone Gorey	053 943 3040
Phone New Ross	051 421 1693
Phone Wexford	053 916 5400



Appendix 1

Your Home Fire Safety Checklist

Introduction

Nothing is more important than you and your family’s safety. Using this helpful checklist will guide you on how to keep your home and family safe from fire. Read through the sections and if your answer is green, you’re doing the right things. If it’s not green, then you should take action to solve the problem. More information on where to look for advice is included at the bottom of the checklist.

Smoke alarms

1.	Do you have any smoke alarms fitted?	Yes	No
2.	Is there a smoke alarm fitted at each level in the house? (on the hall ceiling and landing ceilings upstairs)	Yes	No
3.	Do you have smoke alarms fitted in all or any of the following rooms?		
	Kitchen (a heat alarm may be more suitable)	Yes	No
	Sitting room/living room (a heat alarm may be more suitable)	Yes	No
	All bedrooms	Yes	No
	Attached garage or office or attic or other attached room	Yes	No
4.	Are all the smoke and or heat alarms interconnected ? Meaning, if one sounds, do they all sound?	Yes	No
5.	Do you test your smoke alarms once a week?	Yes	No
6.	How many rooms are in your house? Please include the attic as this may be the biggest room!		
7.	How many smoke/heat alarms are fitted?		

It is very good if the number of rooms matches the number of alarms.

Kitchen

1.	What type of cooking appliances do you use?		
	Do you use a deep fat fryer instead of a chip pan?	Yes	No
	Do you use a gas cooker or an electric hob ?	Yes	No
	Are these appliances clear of clutter and cleaned regularly	Yes	No
	When someone is cooking do they stay at the cooker or in the kitchen area?	Yes	N
2.	Are all electrical appliances that are not needed unplugged at night or when leaving your house ?	Yes	No
3.	Do you clean out your toaster regularly?	Yes	No
	Are there no rusted parts?		
4.	Have you checked your extractor hood filter and general condition recently?	Yes	No
5.	Can you switch off the gas or electricity supplies easily in the kitchen if a fire occurs without risking your own safety?	Yes	No
6.	Do you have a fire blanket and a fire extinguisher in your kitchen?	Yes	No
7.	Do you know how to use the fire blanket and extinguisher ?	Yes	No

Living room

1.	Is there an open fireplace in your house?	Yes	No
	Do you keep a spark guard in front of the fire after lighting it and when it is unattended?	Yes	No
	Are there mats or combustible items (for example, timber floor boards, paint thinner) near the fireplace?	Yes	No
	Is there a flat screen TV over the fire place or other electrical appliances near the fire? Electrical appliances may overheat easily if near a heat source!	Yes	No
	If you use an open fire , do you have your chimney cleaned twice a year?	Yes	No
	When you remove hot ashes , do you put them in a metal bucket and store them away from combustible items to cool down for 1 to 2 days?	Yes	No
2.	Is there a stove installed in the house?	Yes	No
	Is the flue installed into an existing chimney?	Yes	No
	Is the flue installed up through the house, through ceilings/floors or attics?	Yes	No
	Was the flue checked for any faults and cleaned recently?	Yes	No
3.	For heat producing devices in rooms, do you have a carbon monoxide detector?	Yes	No

4.	If candles are used, are they in a proper holder and never left unattended?	Yes	No
5.	Are all ashtrays emptied correctly, especially before going to bed?	Yes	No
6.	Are matches and lighters kept in a safe place away from children?	Yes	No
7.	Are all electrical appliances that are not needed unplugged?	Yes	No

Bedroom

1.	Do you use an electric blanket ?	Yes	No
	Is there any damage to the blanket ? Such as fraying fabric, scorch marks, exposed elements, creasing or folding, soiling, damp patches, tie tapes damaged or missing, worn flex or loose connections	Yes	No
	Does the blanket have thermostatic controls for safe all-night use?	Yes	No
	Do you switch the blanket off when going to sleep ?	Yes	No
2.	Do you unplug all unneeded electrical items?	Yes	No
3.	Do you leave devices such as laptops and phones charging and unattended?	Yes	No
4.	Is your floor area clear of toys and things in case you need to escape to safety?	Yes	No
5.	Are there dressing table mirrors facing the sunlight?	Yes	No
6.	Is there anything combustible near light bulbs of lamps ?	Yes	No

Hall

1.	Is there a clear path through the hallway if you need to make an escape?	Yes	No
2.	In an evacuation, can you and your family easily open the door ?	Yes	No
3.	If you need keys for the door , are they readily available?	Yes	No
4.	Do you have a working torch readily available?	Yes	No

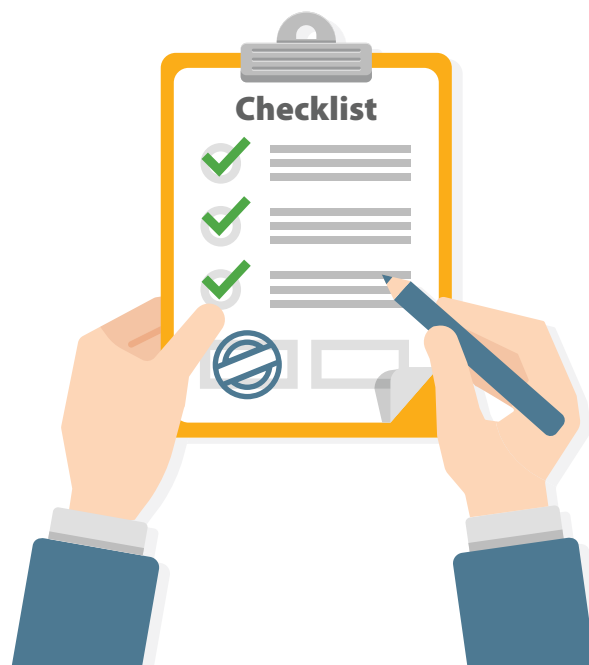
Before going to sleep

1.	Does someone carryout a night-time routine safety check?	Yes	No
2.	Do you close all doors before going to bed?	Yes	No
3.	Does everyone in the family know the escape plan ?	Yes	No
4.	Does everyone in the family know where the keys are left at night ?	Yes	No
5.	Does everyone know where to meet outside the house in the event of fire?	Yes	No
6.	Do you leave on the washing machine/dryer when going to bed?	Yes	No

Outside and other actions

1.	Is your oil tank secure and not leaking?	Yes	No
2.	Could your oil tank catch fire ?	Yes	No
3.	Are the electrics at your property in good condition ?	Yes	No
4.	Are people allowed to carry out hot works (cutting or welding using gas) without your supervision ?	Yes	No
5.	Are all gas cylinders stored in a safe place away from combustibles?	Yes	No

Using the answers as a guide, please do everything you can to make your home safe.



Remember:

- Keeping your **family safe** is a **priority** for all.
- Get into the **habit of routine checks** when going to bed and when leaving your home.
- It is far **cheaper** to replace faulty equipment than it is to replace your home.

What should I do if there is a fire?

- get everyone to the planned safe place,
- stay out,
- dial 112/999, ask for the fire brigade,
- stay on the line until the operator tells you to hang up.

If you need **further advice**, please visit these helpful sites:

1. <http://firesafetyweek.ie/homes>
2. For fire safety leaflets and so on, go to www.housing.gov.ie and type in "fire safety" into search box.
3. www.electricireland.ie see electrical safety around the home.
4. Be aware of electrical **appliance recalls by manufacturers**. Check on the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission website under Product Safety at www.ccpc.ie
5. For **stove installation**, please refer to **Part J of the Building Regulations** and follow the guidance rules.
6. Contact information: Wexford County Fire Service Headquarters, Clonard Avenue, Wexford.
Tel 053 19 6585; or Tel 053 19 6586 or email firedept@wexfordcoco.ie

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Notes

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Wexford County Council Information Handbook for Tenants