



# A Landlord's Guide to Boiler Servicing

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- [Who is responsible for boiler servicing?](#)
- [Why is boiler servicing important?](#)
- [What does a boiler service include?](#)
- [Do tenants have any boiler responsibilities?](#)
- [How soon do you need to fix a boiler problem?](#)
- [How To Keep Your Boiler in Good Working Condition](#)



## Who is responsible for boiler servicing?

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The **Landlord and Tenant Act of 1985** states that it's the landlord's responsibility to provide tenants with a safe and habitable home. Section 11 says they must 'maintain the property's exterior, structure and installations of the rental property'. And that includes the boiler.

So landlords are legally responsible for both the maintenance and repair of boilers. They must be kept in good working order to ensure tenants have reliable access to heating and hot water.

As a landlord, the **law** says that you must also:

- Complete a yearly gas safety check, by a Gas Safe registered engineer, on all gas appliances and flues installed in your properties.
- Continuously maintain all flues, pipework and gas appliances.



- Maintain a record of the gas safety check.
- Give a copy of the most up-to-date gas safety check certificate to your existing and new tenants.





## Why is boiler servicing important?

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Apart from the legal obligations involved, safety is the single most important reason to ensure you follow the recommended boiler maintenance schedule.

In extreme cases, a faulty boiler can cause a fatal explosion. With an average of **31 explosions** each year, missing a due service date could have devastating consequences.

Figures released earlier this year by the **Gas Safe Register** show that as many as one in three people will skip servicing their boiler due to the cost-of-living crisis. As a landlord, you can't afford not to follow the law.

And with your boiler in good working order, you'll also minimise the chances of a costly breakdown, increase its lifetime and help your tenants save money on their heating bills.



## What does a boiler service include?

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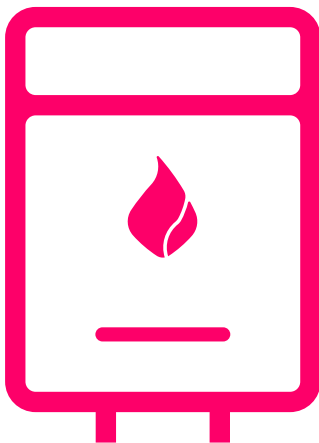
A boiler service is done by a Gas Safe registered engineer and typically includes:

- Visually inspecting the boiler's parts, including controls, wiring etc.
- Removing the boiler's cover to check and clean the internal components.
- Inspecting the ventilation vents and flue to ensure correct placement so they can adequately expel waste gases.
- Inspecting seals for signs of leaks.
- Checking the boiler's pressure.
- Running checks for faults.
- Testing the boiler's efficiency.



- Resetting the controls where necessary.
- Identifying faults that require repairs.

Expect to pay around £100 for a professional boiler service, carried out in line with the manufacturer's recommendations. And keep in mind that if you have a warranty on your boiler, an annual service will protect any guarantee.





## Do tenants have any boiler responsibilities?

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Yes, tenants also play their part in ensuring the boiler is operating properly. You can stipulate in your tenancy agreement that they carry out regular checks to ensure everything is working well.

They're also responsible for reporting any problems quickly to give you the opportunity to get it fixed.

You can ask them to look out for issues like:

- Higher than usual energy bills (outside of any current price rises)
- No hot water or the water not getting as hot as usual
- Heating the water taking longer than usual



- A leaking boiler
- Unusual noises coming from the boiler
- Any strange smells coming from the boiler which could be a gas leak

The only exception to the landlord's responsibility to fix a boiler is when damage has been caused specifically by the tenant through mistreatment.

**Whenever a new tenant moves in, make sure they have a basic idea of how the boiler works and know what the pressure should be.**





## How soon do you need to fix a boiler problem?

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Section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 states that repairs should be carried out in a 'reasonable time'. In reality, this will mean enough time to respond to the tenant's notice of an issue, source an engineer and book in the work.

If the boiler has completely packed up and your tenant has no heating or hot water, then this is classed as an emergency and should be fixed within 24 hours. This becomes even more important if there are small children in the house or temperatures are very cold.

One tenant-friendly idea is to supply them with alternative heating equipment, such as space heaters, if you think getting the repairs done is going to take a while.



# How To Keep Your Boiler in Good Working Condition

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Aside from regular servicing, there are other ways to maximise your boiler's efficiency, reducing the need for frequent fixes and financial outlay.

## Educate Your Tenants

Whenever a new tenant moves in, make sure they have a basic idea of how the boiler works and know what the pressure should be. Also advise them that they need to operate the boiler frequently during cold weather to prevent pipes from freezing. And, if they're away from the property for a long time over the winter, to keep the heating on low.

## Provide Adequate Ventilation

Boilers need adequate ventilation to work safely. Check that vents aren't covered by items and make sure your tenant knows the importance of keeping them clear for sufficient airflow.



## Bleed the Radiators

Once a year, it's a good idea to bleed each radiator to ensure maximum efficiency. Releasing any trapped air means the warm water can circulate freely and your boiler will be able to do its job properly. If you're not sure how to do it, get a specialist in and you'll have peace of mind that your property's heating system is working properly.





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