

This booklet should be read in conjunction with the Guide to Living in Service Family Accommodation which is available on the Defence Estates website:

[http://www.defence-estates.mod.uk/sfa/f&p\\_occupant.php](http://www.defence-estates.mod.uk/sfa/f&p_occupant.php)

**Guide to Living in Service  
Family Accommodation  
British Forces  
Germany-Booklet F**



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## Chapter 1

### Introduction by the General Officer Commanding HQ UKSC(G)

I place great importance on the provision of Service Family Accommodation for the community and its service delivery. The British Forces Germany (BFG) housing stock consists of 14,000 properties. The management of these is entrusted to housing staff who provide an efficient and professional Housing Service.

I wish to take this opportunity to welcome you to your new home and hope that you find everything to your satisfaction. The intention of this booklet is to help you adjust to life in Germany. Much of the housing and community life in Germany differs to that of the UK and some of the main differences are explained within this Booklet. However, your local housing staff are the professionals and have many years experience in housing. They will be able to provide you with more information should you require it and advice on other housing matters and issues you may have about the estate in which you live.

I continually look at ways for improvement and welcome any suggestions.

<b>Contact Telephone Numbers for Housing &amp; Community Support Officers' (HCSO) and Defence Estates /Garrison Works Alliance (DE/GWA):</b>	
<b>Rhine Garrison</b>	
HCSO Rheindahlen Stn	02161 472 2390
Rheindahlen Stn DE/GWA Helpline	02161 472 4001
HCSO Elmpt Stn	02163 97 2496
Elmpt Stn DE/GWA Helpline	02163 97 2284/5
HCSO Dulmen Stn	02594 962 2252
Dulmen Stn DE/GWA Helpline	02594 962 2240
HCSO Ramstein and Ramstein DE/GWA Helpline	06371 401408
<b>Osnabruck Garrison</b>	
HCSO Osnabruck Stn	0541 960 2441
Osnabruck Stn DE/GWA Helpline	0541 960 2059
HCSO Münster Stn	0251 9272 395
Münster DE/GWA Helpline	0251 960 2809/2168
<b>Hohne Garrison</b>	
HCSO Hohne Stn	05051 96 2381
Hohne Stn DE/GWA Helpline	05051 96 2907/17/18
HCSO Fallinbostel Stn	05162 971 2328
Fallingbostel Stn DE/GWA Helpline	05162 971 2401/2224
<b>Paderborn Garrison</b>	
HCSO Paderborn Stn	05251 101254
Paderborn/Sennelager Stn DE/GWA Helpline	05254 982 4585/4053/4075/4076
HCSO Hameln Stn	05151 917280
Hameln Stn DE/GWA Helpline	05151 917 83 2251

<a href="#">Güterlosh Garrison</a>	
HCSO Bielefeld Stn	0521 9254 3113
Bielefeld Stn DE/GWA Helpline	0521 981 3189/3042
HCSO Gütersloh Stn	05241 84 2516
Gütersloh Stn DE/GWA Helpline	05241 73 2922/2893
HCSO Herford Stn	05221 995 3549
Herford Stn DE/GWA Helpline	05221 82 3546/3363

[Abbreviations](#) - A list of abbreviations is contained in Booklet A.

[Additional Helpful Information Booklets](#) - Further information on life in Germany and your local community is available in the following:

- So You Are Posted To Germany
- Station Service Community Official Guide.

## Chapter 2

### Housing Management Processes

**Housing Management & Processes** - Headquarters UKSC(G) G1 provides direction on Housing policy for BFG. The Command Community Services Strategy underpins the development of housing policy in the Command. The responsibility for the Housing Development Agenda, which is published annually, is that of the Accommodation Core Working Group (ACWG).

The management processes, in general terms, are contained in Booklet B. This Chapter contains information that is relevant to UKSC(G). However, more detailed information will be provided by your Housing & Community Support Officers' (HCSO) staff.

**Type of SFA** - A large percentage of SFA in Germany are flats, therefore, the possibility of being accommodated in a house is greatly reduced. The type of SFA you were allocated, whether it was a flat or house, was in accordance with your entitlement and in strict order as either became available.

**Standardised Procedures** - It is of vital importance to both housing staff and customer that 'housing' procedures are standardised throughout UKSC(G).

## Moving In and Living In SFA

**Move-in 14 Day Report** - After taking over your SFA you have 14 days in which to record defects or damages (heating, electrics, cooking facility, plumbing, fixtures, fittings and furniture) that were identified during the Move-In process conducted with the Housing Estate Manager (HEM). These defects or damages should be listed on the 14 Day Report, which you should have received from the HEM during the Move-In process. All completed forms are to be handed, in person, to the HEM or HCSO staff, where the form will be stamped and a receipted copy will be returned to you. You are advised to retain your copy to assist you in your eventual Move-Out. Should you fail to produce a stamped receipted copy, when you Move-Out of the SFA you may have difficulties proving the defect or damage existed on Move-In. Please note that all defects or damages listed must be reported by you to the Garrison Works Alliance (DE/GWA) Help Desk and the DE/GWA Fault Number recorded on the report, prior to submission of the form to the HCSO staff. The HEM will discuss the 14 Day Report when they conduct their post arrival visit, which will be shortly after the 14 day period.

**SFA Defence Accommodation Stores (DAS) Inventory** - The DAS held within your SFA are listed on the documents shown below, which you or your nominated deputy will have signed on taking over the SFA.

- Army Form K 8963 - Inventory For SFA Types A - D.
- Army Form K 8964 - Inventory For SFA Types I - V.

Current regulations state that occupants are required to re-sign their inventory at 3 yearly intervals. The HCSO staff will notify you in writing if this is required.

**Wharfing Furniture** - You may apply to remove (wharf) certain items of DAS throughout your tour providing you have a minimum

of 6 months remaining to your assignment date. This does not apply to cookers, carpets, curtains, wardrobes and garden equipment which must remain in your SFA. To apply to remove items, you should contact your HEM or HCSO staff. It is advisable not to leave unwanted furniture in your cellar or garage as it will rapidly deteriorate or become damaged and may result in an unnecessary bill being raised against you. Fitted carpets should not be removed; if it is found that you have removed any of your carpets you may be required to pay the cost of professionally relaying the carpets and any damage caused due to the removal, storage or refitting of the carpet. However, if it is necessary to remove carpets, e.g. medical reasons, the HEM or HCSO staff will advise you.

Any DAS items added or removed from your SFA during your tour will be added or removed from your inventory as applicable. Occupants are strongly advised to retain all relevant paperwork.

**Furniture and Furnishings** - During your term of occupancy, it is likely that some items may be accidentally damaged. Such items may be exchanged free if it can be demonstrated that it was fair wear and tear. You may have to pay for any items found to be damaged through neglect, so you are strongly advised to take out adequate insurance cover. For a matter of your own safety around the home, it is advisable to exchange such items as they become damaged and not leave them until you move out. Therefore, it is in your own interest to make such exchanges as soon as possible by contacting your HEM or HCSO staff for advice and direction

**Care of Carpets in SFA** - Carpets are expensive items and they should be looked after through regular cleaning, vacuum cleaning and stain removal. Carpets will under normal use last a minimum of 10 years; you may be liable for any damage caused through negligence. To prevent infestation, pet owners are strongly advised to regularly clean their carpets. Pet owners are required

to have their carpets professionally deep cleaned prior to Move-Out and should obtain a certificate from the carpet cleaner.

**Decoration** - Occupants who choose to decorate their SFA will be required to return the walls to a suitable pastel colour and doors and skirting boards to white gloss before Move-Out. Your HEM will discuss what is defined as a suitable pastel colour when he conducts the Pre-Move-Out Advisory Visit. Please note that when paintwork is not up to the required standard a charge may be levied against you.

**Encroachments** - Encroachments are the authorised temporary use or modification of SFA for recognised recreational or welfare purpose beyond the agreed Service scale. It is also a term used to describe equipment fixed to, or alterations to, the infrastructure of the building or property. Encroachments come within the three categories, given below. Your HCSO staff will provide you with the appropriate application form and advice on other items. You are to submit all applications through the HCSO before any work is carried out:

- **TV Aerials/Satellite Dishes** - Before you attempt to erect a TV aerial or satellite dish to the outside of either a federal property or hiring, you should first seek advice from your HEM. You are responsible for the erection of TV aerials in your SFA (less those SFA refurbished under Programme to Modernise and Update Accommodation (PUMA)). You should be aware that you are legally responsible for any damage caused as a result of a lightning strike on unearthed television aerials. Therefore, make quite sure that your television aerial is adequately earthed. This rule does not apply to hirings where an aerial has been provided and erected by the landlord. Occupants should remove aerials prior to vacating SFA. In circumstances where an aerial has been installed by a previous occupant and is still in place on Move-In, the HEM will confirm that it meets required safety standards or have it removed.

Where the property has DTH availability, the antennae will be removed.

- **Direct To Home TV Antenna** - Direct To Home (DTH) television antennae are the responsibility of SSVc to erect and are not an encroachment.
- **Miscellaneous Encroachments** - These applications cover anything that does not come under the category of TV Aerials or Satellite Dishes (e.g. ponds, sheds, fences, pagodas).

**Garages** - There are insufficient domestic garages in the Stations for every privately owned car to be garaged. A few SFA have integral garages, but the majority of car owners must apply to their HCSO staff to be placed on the list for a pool garage in their particular SFA area. It is advisable that garage doors are kept closed and locked at all times, even when the garage is empty. Unlocked or open garages are a security risk and a possible hazard to young children. Availability of parking is very limited and the Stadt (Town) by-laws prohibit parking on pavements other than those designated with the appropriate blue and white sign. It is an offence to cross a pavement with a vehicle unless that pavement has been laid with the appropriate 'sets' (i.e. small blocks and not normal paving flagstones) and the kerb stone lowered. It is also forbidden to park on grassed areas unless parking signs permit it.

**Fuel & Light (Utilities)** - Personnel living in SFA, less those occupying misappropriated SFA as Mess Annexes, come within the scope of BFG X/Y Scheme for the payment of utilities charges (gas, electricity, domestic hot water and heating). Briefly; a fixed amount, according to type of SFA is deducted from the Serviceperson's pay at source. This amount is published periodically in General Routine Orders (GRO) and is known as the UKSC(G) Standing Charge (X Factor). An Occupant Information Sheet is raised on Move-in, which shows details of the annual

utilities entitlement (Y Factor). Annual consumption is determined from meter readings as at 30 September each year. You may be asked to conduct meter readings; the relevant paperwork will be sent to you in early September of each year. An account is kept for your SFA and consumption of utilities is measured. After the accounting is complete you will receive either a bill or a credit note. HCSO staff will be able to advise you on the scheme.

In addition to the meter readings taken each September, there may, in some Stations, be a requirement for the Stadt (Town) to conduct meter reading on an annual basis, these meter readings are conducted by the relevant Stadt (Town) and are not controlled by the HCSO. The HCSO staff will advise you if and when it is to take place.

Should you feel that there is a fault with your meters and you request that it is checked, a fee may be payable if it is found not to be faulty.

Further advice on utilities may be obtained from the HCSO staff, Fuel & Light Clerk.

Occupants of flats may apply to have the costs of shared facilities waived during periods of non-occupation of their SFA. The minimum continuous period is 7 days. Applications must be submitted within 14 days of returning to your SFA. Advice and application forms are available from the HCSO staff, Fuel & Light Clerk.

**Cellars Liable to Flooding** - All cellars are liable to flooding. You are strongly advised to carefully consider what, how and where you store your possessions. The MOD will not accept liability for items damaged by flooding unless it can be proven that the MOD is at fault. It is advisable to ensure that your household effects insurance covers such eventualities.

**Water Supply Isolating Valve** - As with any water system, there is always a potential for burst pipes. In the unlikely event of this happening, you will save yourself a lot of pain (and possibly even expense!) if you can turn off the water supply at the main isolating valve. The HCSO should point this out to you on Move-In.

**Cellars and Attic Conversions** - It is forbidden to convert any of the rooms in the cellar or attic into living accommodation (i.e. bedrooms). Furthermore, turning boiler rooms into bars, children's playrooms or the storing of inflammable materials is not permitted. **Such practices put your families' lives at risk.** Should the chimney sweep find that your boiler room is being used for such purposes he has the authority to seal the boiler room on the spot. You are reminded that you have signed a certificate to acknowledge this information on Move-in.

**Condensation** - As in any building, condensation can be a problem. The reasons for condensation and means of preventing this from happening are provided in the Specific Information section following Chapter 3.

**Frost Precautions** - Winters in Germany can be very severe and frost can cause extensive damage. Individuals may be held liable for the expense of repairs, if damage results from failure to observe the proper frost precautions during the winter months. Precautions to be taken:

- The flow of hot water through the central heating system must be kept going.
- Radiators in unoccupied rooms must not be turned off and should be set to a minimum setting of the star symbol or '1' where the symbol is not present.
- If the family is leaving the SFA for more than one day, the heating should be left on.
- External taps must be drained off prior to the onset of winter.

**Defects, Faults or Repairs** - Occupants of SFA are to report defects, faults or repairs through the Defence Estates/Garrison Works Alliance (DE/GWA) Help Desk. Each reported fault is given a DE/GWA Fault Number as a means of reference should you need to contact DE/GWA. It is advisable to record the Fault Number until the work is completed to your satisfaction. Defects, faults or repairs are listed under the DE/GWA Repair Response Categories under Specific Information section following Chapter 3, which will give you an indication to the degree of urgency given to defects. Timings for the responses may change from time to time and DE/GWA Customer Relations will be able to advise you.

**Out of Hours DE/GWA Emergency Service** - An emergency repair is defined as one, which is necessary because life or health is endangered, or the building is in danger of extensive damage. In such circumstances you are to contact the duty number provided by the HEM when moving into your SFA. If you have not received a duty contact number then you should contact your unit Duty Officer.

If the service provided by the DE/GWA is not to a reasonable standard please contact the DE/GWA Customer Relations Manager in your appropriate Garrison.

**Boiler Emission Testing/Chimney Sweeping** - In accordance with Stadt (Town) laws, boiler emission testing and chimney sweeping are conducted on an annual basis. Your HEM or DE/GWA Helpdesk will advise you when it is to take place. Any faults with the boiler or chimney should be reported in the normal manner through the DE/GWA Helpdesk.

**Electrical Supply and Fittings** - You are not allowed to alter existing electrical fittings in any way. Tampering with the power supply can be extremely dangerous.

If you own a deep freezer you are advised to take out adequate insurance against the possibility of damage to the unit, or loss of contents resulting from power failure. It is advisable that you affix to the electricity main switch a notice reading 'Deep freezer connected. Do not switch off' (Bitte nicht ausschalten. Tiefkühlschrank läuft.) in English and German. During long holiday periods it is advisable that you make arrangements for a neighbour to check the safe condition of the freezer.

**Keeping Pets** - There are certain limitations on the keeping of pets in all SFA. Before personnel arrive in BFG they are advised to seek advice from the receiving HCSO on what pets are acceptable. Before you introduce a new pet into your SFA you should seek advice from your HEM or HCSO staff. The HCSO acting on behalf of the German Authorities is responsible for the registration of all pets kept in Station. The HCSO staff can also seek advice on the current regulations for the movement of animals and birds now they are in Germany. Currently there is no restriction on the import of birds e.g. budgerigars and parrots, into Germany, however, in the event of any country being identified as a hazardous area in respect of birds i.e. Avian Flu, then the HCSO will advise of any restrictions that may apply.

If you want to take an animal back to the UK from BFG, you should first read the relevant instructions issued by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) which can be found on their website [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk).

**Dog Registration** - All dogs must be registered with the HCSO within 7 days of arrival in your Duty Station. Registration forms are available from the HCSO staff. When returning the registration form ensure you bring with you the documents that show the dog's microchip number. Certain breeds of dogs are banned in Germany and each Kreis has different rules. Advice should be sought from the HCSO staff prior to obtaining a dog.

Dog owners are reminded under German law that they are to clear up their dog's excrement.

**Cat Registration** - All cats must be registered with the HCSO within 7 days of arrival in your Duty Stations. Registration forms are available from the HCSO staff.

**Pest Control** - Any problems with pests (i.e. rats, mice, wasps etc) within your SFA or garden area should be reported to your HEM or HCSO staff who will in turn call out the pest control contractor to deal with the problem if necessary.

**Fire Safety and Precautions** - Actions to be taken on outbreak of a fire in your SFA and advice on the fire precautions, can be found in the Specific Information section following Chapter 3.

**Asbestos** - Asbestos has been used in construction of buildings for many years and exists in a wide variety of products from floor tiles to rainwater down pipes. DE/GWA staff may have visited your SFA and placed stickers on any construction materials that are identified as containing asbestos. Where you see these stickers, do not drill into, cut through or mount anything to the surface.

- The Specific Information section following Chapter 3 contains is an extract from a UK Government information leaflet that explains that Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM's) are relatively safe as long as the installation containing them is not abused or damaged.
- Do not be worried that there may be materials containing asbestos in your home. Many hazards exist in homes such as gas, electricity, and even, stairs.
- If treated correctly, the risks posed by all these hazards are minimal.

- The prime purpose of the stickers is to warn both the householder and any visiting workman or contractors of the presence of ACM's so that inadvertent damage can be avoided.
- Similarly, if you identify that any ACM has become damaged, you should alert DE/GWA Helpdesk to the problem so that remedial action can be taken.
- Obviously, **the stickers must not be removed by householders.**
- If you have concerns over asbestos in your SFA please contact your HEM who has been briefed on this issue. If necessary, the HEM will arrange for a Defence Estates construction specialist to advise you directly.

**Gas Central Heating and Hot Water Boilers** - Where these are fitted, your HCSO will provide you with an instruction and demonstrate on how they work when you Move-In. You will also receive the manufacturer's instruction handbook. If a fault develops, **DO NOT** attempt to fix this yourself. Contact the DE/GWA Helpdesk.

Gas boilers need a supply of fresh air to operate properly safely and efficiently. Calculations have been undertaken as part of the installation process to establish how much ventilation is required for each boiler. Therefore, wherever these are installed, **DO NOT** cover, close or remove any vents installed. Apart from efficiency of the boiler, ventilation helps in extracting safely escaped exhaust gases, such as Carbon Monoxide.

In accordance with Stadt (Town) laws, boiler emission testing and chimney sweeping are conducted on an annual basis. Your HEM or DE/GWA Helpdesk will advise you when it is to take place.

Gas and air make an explosive mixture; should you encounter a leak, (natural gas smells of "rotten eggs"), follow these basic rules;

- Know where the main gas isolating valve is and how to turn it off.
- Never look for a gas leak with a naked flame.
- Open doors and windows and do not operate light switches.
- Report any faults in gas appliances immediately.

Any faults with the boiler or chimney should be reported in the normal manner through the DE/GWA Helpdesk.

**Legionella** - Is a naturally occurring bacteria that is found in water and soil. It is commonly found in domestic water systems and generally poses absolutely no threat to you or your family. Unless you are at increased risk of contracting Legionnaires' disease (e.g. chronic lung disease, immunosuppression, transplant recipient), you are at such a low risk (or no risk) of becoming infected that there is no need for any action on your part. However, in the interest of general health and hygiene, it would be a sensible precaution to run all hot taps for approximately 1 minute every other week and when you return from holiday. Don't forget to also run the shower. Your domestic hot water system is set to 60°C, and this is more than adequate to sterilize and kill of any legionella bacteria.

As part of the Move-In Standard requirements, prior to the Move-In process the hot water will be run through shower and all taps for 1 minute by DE(E)/GWA. Shower heads will be removed cleaned and disinfected.

**Security** - Security of your home is your responsibility. Never leave the house or flat empty with windows open or unfastened. The following Do's and Don'ts should be studied and acted upon:

- Do insure your possessions adequately.
- Do turn your keys in locks, even when the door has a Yale-type lock fitted.

- Do inform your nearest RMP Duty Room if you are leaving your house unoccupied.
- Do lock your garage doors, even when empty.
- Do lock your garden gates; they provide another obstacle.
- Don't leave tools, garden implements and step ladders outside at night. You are providing the amateurs with their kit.
- Don't keep more money in the house than you need. Remember that money cannot usually be identified later and thus is a favourite of the thief.
- Don't leave your spare keys lying about; lock them in a drawer.
- Don't discuss your recreational and holiday movements with strangers.
- Ask a neighbour to empty your post box during periods of absence from the SFA
- Leave a key with a trusted friend or neighbour during periods of absence and let your HEM know who holds the spare key.

**Clearance of Household and Garden Refuse** - German local authorities are environmentally friendly and the disposal of household and garden refuse is taken seriously. There are differing methods and procedures for the disposal of the many commodities between the different Stadts (Towns) and Stations. You should seek advice from your HEM on the local method of disposal. Where a Stadt (Town) takes full responsibility it is not unusual to receive an annual disposal timetable. The Stadt (Town) may charge for specific services. Cardboard should be collapsed and bundled.

**Gardens** - Occupants of SFA are responsible for keeping their gardens neat and tidy, you are responsible for:

- Pruning of hedges and shrubs within your garden. Hedges within the garden boundary must be cut back to a specific height, not to do so is an offence under German law. The height varies between German Landers (districts) and can be 2

metres or 1.5 metres. Your HEM will be able to advise you on what height is relevant in your area.

- Where a hedge is adjacent to a public right of way such as a path or road, it is the householders responsibility to keep the hedge trimmed to the fence line; not to do so is an offence under German law.
- Snow and ice clearance from all paths, driveways and pavements. Occupants are by law, to grit (or salt substitute) the paths, driveways and pavement once cleared of snow and ice. Please note if anyone does injure themselves as a result of snow or ice not being cleared, you can be held personally liable. It is advisable to take out adequate personal insurance against such liability.
- Grass and weeds must be cleared away from fences, walls pavements and driveways.
- Garden or other rubbish must not be piled against chain link or wooden garden fences.
- The removal of fence sections to provide access for car or caravans to garden areas and the parking of any vehicle, including caravans and trailers on lawns or pavements is forbidden.
- Shrubs and trees should not be planted closer than 1 metre to the building or the boundary fence as the roots could cause damage. They should be thinned out and kept to a manageable height, not overhanging and touching the ground, pathway or building. If it is the intention to erect a bamboo type fence, prior permission is to be sought from the HCSO.
- Borders, pathways, drives and patios are to be kept free of weeds.
- Grassed areas cut frequently (April-October) and all cuttings removed.
- Windfall fruit should be cleared from areas and pathways.
- Compost heaps are to be removed prior to handover.
- Autumn leaf clearance within your garden (including paths and driveways).

The DE/GWA are responsible for pruning trees and cutting the front lawns of open fronted SFA. If you consider a tree within your garden is a Health & Safety hazard it is to be reported to the DE/GWA Helpdesk.

Families may have their grass cut and leaves cleared by the DE/GWA when the head of household is deployed on operations or away from their place of residence for long periods and there is no able bodied family member available to perform the function. Families wishing to adopt this service should register with the appropriate DE/GWA Helpdesk.

## Moving Out of SFA

**Notification to HCSO Staff of Intent to Vacate SFA** - You are required to notify the HCSO staff of your intent to vacate your SFA within 14 days of receiving a Posting Order or signal or notification to that effect. If retention of your SFA is being considered, then the HCSO is to be notified within the 14 days timeframe.

**Retention of SFA** - The general rules and conditions for the retention of SFA are contained in Booklet D. However for BFG, the most common reasons are educational and medical.

- **Educational Reasons** - To retain your SFA on 'educational reasons', it is first necessary to obtain approval for the retention of education at a BFG SCE school from HQ SCE. Approval will generally only be authorised for children who have commenced the second school term of a public examination course e.g. GCSEs, A Levels. Other exceptional circumstances may be considered. Applications (SCE Form 3016) are to be submitted through the school Head Teacher to HQ SCE. A copy of the application form and details on conditions and limitations of entitlement are contained in JSP 342; The Education of Service Children. Without HQ SCE authority the application for retention of SFA is unlikely to be granted.
- **Medical Grounds** - Retention on medical grounds will only be considered where there is supporting documentary evidence from a doctor, consultant or Regional Clinical Director that demonstrates that the dependant must remain in Theatre to continue his/her medical treatment. It must also be clearly stated that the treatment cannot be carried out in the new Theatre or the UK. It may be necessary for the Command to carry out an assessment to determine whether the person should continue their treatment in Germany.

- **Exceptional Circumstances** - Other exceptional circumstances may be considered. It is advisable in such cases to support the application with documentary evidence.
- **Application Process** - You are to apply through your UWO, in writing, attaching all relevant documentary evidence. The UWO will forward the application to the HCSO. The HCSO will consider the application and if delegated authority the decision will be made at that level. Where HCSO do not have the delegated authority to grant SFA retention, the case will be referred for a decision to the Garrison HQ staff.

**Pre-Move-Out Advisory Visit** - Prior to handing over your SFA you are to coordinate with the HEM or HCSO staff a Pre-Move-Out Advisory Visit. The intention of which is to review the condition of the property to identify defects or repairs and advise on cleaning requirements. It is to take place a minimum of 6 weeks before the arranged hand-over date or as soon as is reasonably possible on short notice assignments.

**Cleaning Standards On Vacating SFA** - In Germany a Married Quarter Cleaning Scheme (MQCS) contract exists. You have the option on whether to take it up or not. Before vacating your SFA the HEM (normally at the Pre-Move-Out Advisory Visit) is to offer you the service, explaining its benefits, costs and method of payment, pre-cleaning specifications and their cleaning responsibilities. Should the service be refused, you will receive a copy of the Move-In/Move-Out standards as a guide to the standard of cleanliness required.

## Chapter 3

### Miscellaneous

**Consultation between Housing Staff and Residents** - Lack of communication is often the main reason given for resident's dissatisfaction of the Housing Service. To develop communication, and generate an understanding of a partnership in housing provision, the following forums, or similar community meetings, are available to you to voice your concerns or suggestions for improvements. These forums will also allow the HCSO to convey plans for future developments.

- **Regular Occupant Consultative Meetings** - HCSO are required to hold regular Occupant Consultative Meetings at which you are given the opportunity to raise and discuss issues affecting the quality and provision of SFA locally. At the meetings HCSO staff will update you on developing housing priorities and policies. It is therefore, in your interest and that of the local community to attend the meetings.
- **Estate Meetings** - Before major refurbishment or maintenance work, the HCSO staff is to consult with families living in the affected area. Those families will be invited to view the planned work, ensure they fully understand the possible disruption and other factors that may have an adverse affect them.

**4 Tier Grading (Grading for Charge)** - The 4 Tier Grading (4TG) system is detailed in JSP 464, Part 4. It provides a consistent means of setting accommodation charges for differing standards of Service Family Accommodation (SFA) globally. The 4TG system assesses a number of criteria relating to accommodation scaling, accommodation condition, and provision of key local amenities and environmental factors (e.g. noise). All of these factors are assessed by a Board of Officers who award points for the

standard of accommodation from which the overall Grading and the charge is derived, with the criteria being:

- Where a standard is not, or cannot, be met, the SFA is awarded minus points.
- Where the specification of accommodation is very high, plus points may be awarded to offset the minus points so giving a balanced and fair grading.
- The overall points scored (i.e. minus points and plus points) then determines the accommodation grade, with the current grades for charging purposes being:

Net Overall Points Score	Accommodation Grade
0 - 4 minus points	1
5 - 9 minus points	2
10 - 14 minus points	3
15 - 25 minus points	4
26 or more minus points	Below Grade 4 See comments below

Accommodation Below Grade 4 - Accommodation attracting 26 minus points or more, the case will be referred to a higher authority to decide whether to waiver any additional charges.

The results of the Board of Officers are summarised on Table 5 (Grading Points Summary Sheet for SFA). You will find a copy of this document for your SFA amongst your Move-In documentation. **Please note that if you wish to dispute the grading of your SFA, then you must do so in writing to the HCSO, within 3 months from the date of occupation or at any other time should your housing or environmental factors be changed.**

The grading of SFA is subject to a four yearly review and as such, your SFA may well be reviewed during your stay in BFG. You will

be notified in writing by the HCSO, should this prove to be the case. You may also wish to challenge the decision of the Grading Board, which must be done immediately, in writing, to the HCSO.

**Complaints Procedure** - The Housing Service complaints procedure is contained in Booklet E. You should attempt to resolve the problem prior to resorting to a formal complaint.

**School Bus Registration** - School buses are provided for the majority of children attending Schools in BFG. Children attending schools that are with close proximity of their SFA parents are responsible for ensuring that their children get to school (This is for distances under 1km for children under the age of 8 years and 2km for children over the age of 8 years). There is no entitlement to school transport for children attending Foundation Stage 1. Families must register their children in person with the HCSO Bus Escort Supervisor before they can use the bus. When you register you will be given a copy of the Code of Behaviour on School Buses and a Bus Timetable. If a child misbehaves on school transport he/she may be subject to a ban imposed by the Garrison HQ. In such circumstances the parents become responsible for getting their child to school.

**Control of Children** - You are reminded that by German law parents are held responsible for the behaviour of their children to a much greater extent than is the case under British law. Parents may be held responsible in the German courts for damage caused by their children. Even if no proceedings are brought in the criminal courts it is very difficult to avoid liability for such claims. You are therefore advised to obtain adequate insurance against such liabilities. Policies of this kind are almost universally taken out by German families; they offer adequate protection at very reasonable rates.

**Vandalism** - We want to ensure that your housing estate is tidy pleasant area in which your family can live in comfort and play in

safety, but we need your help. If you see anyone damaging or defacing property on your estate, try to stop them, or get their names and report them to the Royal Military Police (RMP) Duty Room in the first instance or your HEM. It is up to all of us to try and keep our estates as pleasant places to live in.

[Local Laws & Bylaws](#) - A list of common local laws and bylaws that may affect you are given in the Specific Information section following Chapter 3.

[Door to Door Salesmen](#) - All tradesmen and hawkers are required to be in possession of a licence (Reisegewerbeschein) issued by the Stadt (Town) authorities, which they must produce on demand. Please be aware that the HCSO staff will not issue authority for any salesmen to call on families. All families are warned not to sign any documents or enter into any verbal agreement with door to door salesmen without consulting your Unit Regimental Administrative Officer or the Unit Welfare Officer. Sales personnel who cannot produce the Stadt (Town) Licence should be reported to the nearest RMP Duty Room (Also read the legal advice contained in the Specific Information section following Chapter 3).

[Authority To Trade From a SFA](#) - Should you wish to run a business from your SFA you must register your business with the Customs & Immigration (Germany) and the German Authorities. If you wish to register a business, please contact your HCSO staff for advice.

[US Army in Europe \(USAREUR\) Installation Passes](#) - If you wish to use the facilities offered by the American Forces Post Exchange/Base Exchange (PX/BX) you will require a USAREUR Installation Pass before you are allowed to enter the camp. If you wish to apply for a USAREUR Installation Pass to enter the US base or barracks, please contact your UWO, HCSO or HIVE for further advice. To purchase items in the PX or BX you will require to have with you; your identity card and NAAFI Shopping Permit.

## Specific Information

### Condensation In SFA

**What Is Condensation?** - Condensation is the formation of water as a result of warm moist air coming into contact with a colder surface. Moisture laden air is produced by:

- Drying clothes on or around a radiator.
- Cooking.
- Boiling kettles and ironing.
- Taking a shower or bath.
- Breathing.

**How To Combat Condensation** - The following list is not exhaustive and although essential they all require a daily routine to minimise condensation by:

- Using extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms where fitted, every time cooking washing or bathing takes place.
- Use the trickle ventilator installed in double glazed windows.
- Opening windows in the bathroom or kitchen before or after every shower/bath or cooking.
- Ensuring your SFA is kept sufficiently warm (report defective radiators).
- Removing condensation from windows, doors and walls with a sponge, soaked in a weak solution of bleach.
- Reviewing the generation of moisture in your home.

**The Consequences Of Condensation** - The visible condensation on windows is only a small portion of any condensation problem. The unseen remainder settles on carpets, curtains, furniture, doors, ceilings and walls. If left, condensation turns to black mould and invades every part of your SFA. Black mould cannot be totally cured other than to re-plaster affected areas and burn soft furnishings. Therefore, prevention is better than cure.

## DE/GWA Repair Response Categories

Element/ Component	Acceptable Condition	Emergency	Urgent	Routine
Doors	Structurally sound (including glass). Closes easily, locks effective.	External doors to living accommodation unable to be made secure (including glazing)	All doors with broken glazing and external doors with defective locks.	All remaining defects to all doors including cracked glass.
Windows	Secure, structurally sound & weather-proof.	Insecure fasteners or glass broken (not cracked) to living accommodation where first aid repair impossible.	Insecure fasteners or glass broken (not cracked) to all other buildings where first aid repair impossible.	Insecure fasteners or glass broken but first aid has been effective. All remaining defects including cracked glass.
WCs	No leaks, cracks or excessive chipping or staining; cistern functions.	WC blocked (only 1 available), serious waste leaks.	Blocked (more than 1 WC available). Faulty cistern minor leaks (only 1 WC available).	All remaining defects.
Taps, Sinks, Baths & Basins	Taps deliver & control water without leakage. Appliances are not cracked, surface damaged or excessive chipping or staining.	Continuous flow from closed tap. Complete blockage of waste if one sink, bath or basin only available. Serious leaks.	Complete blockage of waste where alternative fittings available. Minor leaks.	All remaining defects.

Element/ Component	Acceptable Condition	Emergency	Urgent	Routine
Cold Water Supply Pipes, Storage Tanks, Ball Valves & Stop Cocks	No leaks; adequate flow. Stop cock & valves in proper working order.	Bursts. Complete loss of supply.	Partial loss of internal distribution, and defective ball valves and stopcocks, minor leaks.	Inadequate flow & other defects.
Hot Water Supply	Water at design temperature. No leaks; adequate flow. Valves HOT in proper working order.	Bursts, complete loss of hot water. Attend site to identify cause.	Loss of hot water. Replacement of boilers, pumps, heat exchanges etc.	Partial loss and all other defects.
Central Heating	All rooms at design temperature.	Complete loss of heating. Attend site to identify cause (October to April).	Partial loss of heating.	Inadequate temperatures and other defects.
Electrical Lighting And Power Sockets	Electricity safe and all facilities functioning.	Complete loss of lighting or power to building. Attend site to identify cause .	Partial loss of lighting or power to socket outlets.	All remaining defects.
Gas Or Electric Cooker	Fully functioning, no excessive damage.	Complete loss of facility. Gas leaks. Attend site to identify cause.	Partial loss of facility.	Defects which do not prevent use of the appliance.
Roofs, Gutters And Down Pipes	No faults.	Serious roof leaks, which affect living conditions or seriously damage the structure.	Serious leaks or blockages liable to cause rapid deterioration of other elements.	Minor leaks or partial blockages. All remaining defects.

## Fire Safety And Precautions

In the event of fire, the following procedure is to be carried out:

### Immediate Action

- Shout "FIRE, FIRE, FIRE!" repeatedly to summon help
- Attempt to fight the fire with an appropriate fire extinguisher, only if safe to do so

**The Fire Brigade should be called to all outbreaks of fire by the following means:**

- Telephone the civil Fire Brigade on: Civil 112.

The senior person present should take the following action:

- Evacuate all persons from the house or block of flats and check everyone is accounted for
- Report the fire to the local RMP and your unit guardroom
- Ensure the unit guardroom contact the Duty Housing & Estate Manager immediately

### Follow up Action

- On the next working day, inform your Unit Fire Officer

### Domestic Fire Precautions

By taking the following fire precautions, you should significantly reduce the risk of a fire in your SFA

## Kitchen

- Never use gloss paint on expanded polystyrene tiles.
- Don't leave tea towels or washing over the cooker to dry.
- Always have the space around your cooker clear from combustible materials.
- Don't allow the flex from an electric kettle to drag over the cooker.
- Ensure saucepan handles do not face outwards into the kitchen or over lighted burners or hotplates.
- Never use an electric iron from a light socket.
- Gas and air make an explosive mixture; before you turn on the gas make sure you are ready to light it.
- Never look for a gas leak with a naked flame.
- In the event of a gas leak, open doors and windows and do not operate light switches.
- Report any faults in gas appliances immediately.
- Keep matches and other means of ignition out of reach of children.

Be most careful with chip pans:

- Never fill them more than one-third to one-half full of oil.
- Never leave them unattended when in use.
- Change the cooking oil regularly (oil impregnated with impurities has its flash point lowered - i.e. it will catch fire more easily).
- Never mix different varieties of cooking oil (i.e. vegetable and sunflower).

If the pan does catch fire:

- Switch off the heat.
- Cover the pan with a lid or damp cloth to smother the flames.
- Keep covered until cool.
- Never, never use water or take the pan outside. Air fans fire!

## Living Room

- When not in use and during electrical storms, switch off TV sets, radios and hi-fi equipment and withdraw their plugs from sockets.
- Disconnect TV aerials during an electrical storm.
- Always guard open fires from children, the elderly and infirm.
- If you have an open fire, never start it with petrol or paraffin and never draw it with newspaper.
- A mirror over an open fire invites people to get too close to the fire.
- Never leave a lighted cigarette in an ashtray where it could fall off into an armchair or something combustible.
- If an electric flex or cable is not long enough, the safest plan is to get a new one. Never join by the 'twist and tape' method.
- Check electric cables for chafing or fraying at regular intervals.
- If you have to use multi-way adaptors, remember a lot of electrical appliances connected to one socket can overload the circuit, causing overheating and a grave risk of fire.
- 

## Bedroom

- Don't dim bedside lights by covering them; use a lower wattage bulb.
- Never smoke in bed - it may be the last one you ever smoke!
- There are many makes of electric blanket. Those, which conform to British Standard, are made to give a high degree of safety when correctly used.
- Don't use an electric under blanket over you, or vice versa.

## General

- If you have to use extra heating, use only electric fires or heaters of an approved pattern.
- Do not place heaters near flammable material or in a draught.
- Never fill or move oil heaters when they are lit; always fill them outdoors.
- To prevent fire and smoke spreading at night, close all doors before going to bed. In blocks of flats and maisonettes, keep the doors onto the staircase closed at all times.
- Do not keep large amounts of newspapers, polishes, rags, etc stacked away in cupboards or cellars.
- Never tamper with electric circuits or fuses; call in a qualified electrician.
- Do not run electric flex or cable under carpets or floor coverings where they will become chafed or damaged.
- Keep aerosol-type containers away from heat; do not puncture them or attempt to burn them.
- Candles should not be left unattended whilst burning.
- Do not position candles close to other combustible material (beware of draughts blowing curtains, drapes onto candles).
- Always use the correct candleholder. Decorative /aromatherapy pottery items utilising 'tea light' candles have the potential due to reflection of heat to allow the candle to melt within the 'tea light' aluminium container resulting in a liquid fire.
- Never attempt to light a BBQ with any liquid fuels other than those specified for such as purpose. The use of petrol is extremely dangerous and should not, under any circumstances be used.
- Always ensure that the BBQ is on sturdy ground and positioned away from areas such as pathways where people are likely to pass.
- Always ensure that the charcoal used on the BBQ is fully extinguished before disposing of it.

## These Measures Could Save Lives - Follow Them

Here are a few extra points to remember if there is a fire:

- Close the door of the room where the fire is - this will help delay the spread of fire and smoke.
- If a closed door feels warm, do not open it. The fire could be behind it.
- Get everyone out. If you live in a flat do not use the lift.
- Telephone the Fire Brigade on Civil 112 from a neighbour's home, or a telephone box, clearly stating where the fire is.
- DO NOT RE ENTER THE BUILDING.

## Get Out - Stay Out - Call the Fire Brigade Out on Civil 112

If someone's clothes catch fire:

- A person whose clothes have caught fire should be made to lie on the floor and be rolled in blankets, rugs or a thick coat.
- If your clothes catch fire, roll on the floor to extinguish the flames.

If you are cut off by fire:

- Remember that smoke is as deadly as flames. Close the door and any other openings and block the cracks with bedding etc.
- Go to the window, try to attract attention and wait for the Fire Brigade.
- If the room becomes smoky, stay low. It is easier to breathe.

Think about making your escape:

- If the window is jammed - break it. Remove jagged edges from the lower sill and cover it with a blanket.
- Drop cushions or bedding to the ground to break your fall.
- Get out feet first and lower yourself to the full length of your arms before dropping.

## Smoke Detector

- Ensure that it is installed and working by testing as per instructions. The test should be conducted monthly.
- Change the battery annually or when warning beeps are heard which indicates low power.
- Clean annually to remove dust from the detector head through the use of a vacuum suction hose.
- If found to be defective, consult the DE/GWA Helpdesk to have replaced.

## Local Bylaws & Regulations

"When in Rome, do as the Romans do". This saying applies to all of us living in Germany. Although to many of us Germany is almost like "home", we must respect the laws and customs of the Land. The following information is an example of the more common requirements but it is by no means complete and you should seek further advice if there is any uncertainty. It is also aimed at helping you to have a trouble free stay in the Federal Republic.

**Identification** - Everyone must carry identity documents whenever they are issued, and at all times.

**Noise** - German law forbids activities, which might lead to the disturbance of people between 2200 and 0600 hours, this includes the playing of music above 45 decibels. The use of powered tools (lawn mowers, hedge trimmers, sanders etc) is allowed on workdays (including Saturdays), between 0800 to 1300 and 1500 to 1900 hours but not on Sundays nor public holidays.

**Sundays and Public Holidays** - In Germany Sundays and public holidays are generally work-free days. With very few exceptions all shops are shut and any work which might disturb the apparent peace of the day or cause offence to the general public should not be carried out. This applies in particular to any activity which may lead to the disturbance of religious services.

**Bottle Banks** - Due to the noise associated with them, bottle banks may only be used on workdays during the times specified either on the side of the bottle bank or in the local Stadt (Town) disposal instructions. They are not to be used on Sundays and Public Holidays.

**BBQ's** - Barbecue cooking or grilling is not permitted on the balconies of flats.

**Obstacles to Traffic and Pedestrians** - Objects (e.g. barbed wire, sharp edges, sticks etc), which could pose a threat to the safety of traffic, pedestrians or domestic animals, are forbidden on streets or adjoining property. This applies especially to branches, hedges and roots, which could extend over or into public rights of way. Householders are responsible to ensure that adjoining pavements, footpaths and cycle paths are kept free of all such obstacles. Similarly, road signs, streetlights, fire hydrants and the like are to be kept free at all times.

**Pets and Domestic Animals** - Pets and domestic animals are to be kept in such a way that neighbours are not disturbed by noise and smell. All dogs in the *Gar/Station* are to be registered through the HCSO office, which will in turn offer advice on the legislation specific to these animals. However, dog owners should be aware that:

- Dogs are to be leashed at all times in built-up areas.
- Dogs are forbidden to enter children's playgrounds.
- The soiling of public areas by dogs is forbidden. Owners are legally required to remove any droppings deposited by their dog.

**Surrounds to SFA** Occupants are responsible for cleaning pavements, kerbs and gutters surrounding their houses. In detail, cleaning includes removal of snow, ice, grass, weeds, leaves, mud, dirt, ashes, sand etc. In the absence of a pavement, the occupants' responsibility is for 1 metre into the roadway. It is forbidden to make slides on public roads, pavements or footpaths. It is a wise precaution to have third party liability insurance cover for the foregoing points.

**Clearing Snow and Ice** - Occupants are responsible for clearing snow and ice from all pavements, cycle tracks and footpaths adjoining the house they live in. This applies usually to the times between the following hours:

- Weekdays (including Saturday) - 0700 to 2100 hrs.
- Sundays and Public Holidays - 0900 to 2100 hrs, but hours may vary slightly from town to town. Your HEM will be able to advise you.

Failure to clear snow and ice could result in a fine being levied by the Stadt (Town) and/or a compensation claim being submitted should someone fall and injure himself/herself.

**Car Washing and Repair** - The washing of cars is not permitted on public roads. This includes SFA driveways and parking areas of garage entrances. Cars are not to be parked on grassed areas. Only very basic car maintenance is permitted on public roads. Cars that are parked on the road must face the direction of travel. Oil changing is strictly forbidden and oil is not to be disposed of in the drainage system or by pouring it onto the soil. Very heavy fines are due if you are caught contravening this law.

**Caravans, Horse Boxes and Trailers** - Owners of caravans, horse boxes or trailers should note that these vehicles may only be parked for a limited period in housing areas to facilitate loading or unloading. Under no circumstances are these to be permanently or routinely parked in these areas, this includes driveways, hard standing, grass verges and open plan areas. All such vehicles when not in use are to be parked in designated areas. Your HEM will be able to advise you of such areas.

**Litter** - All personnel of the BFG community are expected to be litter conscious. A glance at any German estate will show how they obey the rules and live in a clean and tidy environment. We must use all the facilities provided for the removal of rubbish from our homes, e.g. Stadt (Town) Bins/Recycling Sacks and not be tempted to dispose of litter in any other way. German law is particularly clear concerning the throwing away of casual litter in the Street, such as cigarette packets, paper, fruit peelings etc. Any person unfortunate enough to break bottles or other articles of glass or china in the road must remove the fragments without delay.

**Insurance** - Your German neighbours are all extremely careful that they are covered by insurance for almost any misfortune and they expect other people to be as careful. Should you, your family, your cat or dog be unfortunate enough to be involved in any kind of accident with a German, you are likely to receive a solicitor's letter claiming damages.

All families should therefore arrange insurance cover, not only for the usual incidents such as burglary, loss, etc., but also against the third party liability (so-called "third party liability insurance" or "Haftpflichtversicherung" in German).

**Contracts** - **PLEASE NOTE** that, unlike the UK, most contracts for personal or household requirements in Germany often contain a **renewal clause**. This means that unless you cancel the contract in time often 3 months before the end of its running time you are stuck with it for a further year.

Make sure that you are given and have read an English language copy of any policy before you sign a contract. **You must know what you are signing up to!**

**Door-to-door Salesmen** - Be warned against the dangers of doing business with callers at the door. Some are genuine, some are not. Many sell goods of dubious quality at inflated prices. Again, beware of signing contracts in German unless you understand it. The German courts will not accept ignorance as a defence against a claim when a contract has been broken. If you find that you regret a purchase from a salesman at the door, you must act quickly. If you cancel the contract in writing within 14 days, you may be able to get out of it. Make sure you send a cancellation letter by registered post and keep a copy of it. If you need legal assistance, contact the Army Legal Assistance in Bielefeld.

## Asbestos

### Extract from UK Government Leaflet on ACMs

**Pollution Control - Asbestos** - Many people have worries about asbestos, but undisturbed asbestos usually poses no problems. However, care should be taken to prevent the release of fibres as they can cause serious damage to your health.

**What is Asbestos?** Asbestos is naturally occurring mineral that has been used in a range of building materials to make them more rigid and fire resistant. It has been used in household products such as ironing boards and oven gloves.

Asbestos was extensively used as a building material in Great Britain (and Europe) from the 1950s through to the mid 1980s.

Some of areas in your home where you might find asbestos include:

- Eaves gutters and rainwater fall pipes
- Fire blankets
- Garage and shed roofs
- Lining for walls, ceilings and doors
- Insulation panels in some storage heaters
- Bath panels
- Central heating flues
- Loose asbestos packing between floors and in partition walls
- Floor tiles

Most people are exposed to low amounts of asbestos present in the atmosphere with no ill effects. Asbestos fibres and dust are potentially very dangerous if inhaled in higher concentrations over a period of time, when they can cause serious lung diseases including

cancer. The symptoms of these diseases often do not appear for between 20 - 30 years after exposure to asbestos.

**If You Suspect You Have Asbestos in Your Home** - It is very hard to identify asbestos, but if you suspect that you are living with asbestos:

- Don't panic, leave asbestos alone, it's safe unless it's damaged or disturbed
- Never sand, drill or saw asbestos materials
- Do not attempt to remove asbestos lagging, spray coatings or insulation board by yourself. These materials can only be safely removed by a licensed contractor.
- Sometimes it will be necessary to survey or take a sample, for example to identify the type of asbestos. This can only be done by suitably trained personnel.

### Asbestos Label



## Energy Conservation

Climate change is considered to be a **serious threat to our environment**. The Ministry of Defence is committed to the Government strategy of Sustainable Development, and through the Chain of Command, this applies to British Forces Germany (BFG).

As a result, the Government has set demanding targets for the reduction of Carbon Dioxide (CO<sup>2</sup>) in order to drive down consumption, reduce costs as well as the impact of global warming on the environment. BFG has to play its part in achieving these targets.

Did you know that almost half of the UK's CO<sup>2</sup> emissions actually come from the things we do every day. And were you aware the average British household spends almost £600 per year on fuel bills?

Your own fuel bill is estimated in advance (see Chapter 2 of this booklet [Fuel & Light \(Utilities\)](#)). Manage your energy consumption well and you receive credit, manage it without a care, and you'll receive an additional bill.

**So What Can You Do** - There are many simple things you can do to help you save energy, below are a few, but the list is not exhaustive;

### Reducing Energy Usage

- Only use the light appliances you really need. *It's a myth that leaving fluorescent lights on saves energy because of the starters. Even old fluorescents will use the same amount of energy required to re-start within 5 minutes*

- Don't leave TVs or videos on standby.
- Switch off your PC when it's not being used
- Turn your heating thermostat down by 1°C. You will probably hardly notice the difference and it saves about £10 a year.
- If possible, keep furniture away from radiators. *The foam in an upholstered chair is a very effective heat insulator!*
- When cooking choose the right pan size for the food and the cooker, cut food into smaller pieces and put lids on pans as the food will then cook a lot quicker.
- If you are defrosting food, or just warming things up, microwave ovens are ideal as they use much less electricity than conventional ovens.
- Regularly defrost your freezer and try to keep it packed full, even if this is with scrunched up paper to avoid wasting energy. Check the door seal on your fridge/freezer to ensure no warm air is getting in - the seal should be tight enough to hold a piece of paper securely when closed.
- Try to have full loads when using the washing machine and use the lower 40°C wash. With today's washing powders this temperature is more than adequate to clean clothes and will save you up to three quarters of the cost of the hottest cycle. On some washing machines, only cold water is used to fill the machine when it is set to a low temperature, which means that there is no need to heat up the central heating boiler: look at your washing machine instruction manual to see if this applies.
- When the time comes, it is well worth investing a washing machine, dryer, fridge or freezer that machine that is rated A or even A+ as these can, over their full lifetime, help save very much more than any additional purchase cost, and, as utilities prices continue to rise, the investment in low energy machines becomes even more worthwhile.
- Avoid using tumble driers and radiators to dry your clothes; on nice sunny days clothes can be dried outside.

- Make use of the sun! It is the most readily available source of heat there is - and the cheapest! Make the most of it by opening internal doors of any rooms which get more sun than others and let the warm air travel through your home.

#### Reduce Water Usage

- Wash vegetables and fruit in a bowl rather than under a running tap. The leftover water can be used for watering house plants.
- Use the minimum amount of water required when you boil water in saucepans and kettles saves energy as well as water.
- Keep a bottle or jug of water in the fridge instead of running taps until the water runs cold.
- Wait until you have a full load before switching on dishwashers and washing machines. Half-load programmes use more than half the water and energy of a full load.
- Don't leave the tap running while you brush your teeth, shave or wash your hands, as this can waste up to 5 litres of water per minute.
- Have a shower! A 5-minute shower uses about a third of the water of a bath. But remember that power showers can use more water than a bath in less than 5 minutes.
- Put cotton wool, tissues etc in the waste bin rather than flushing down the toilet.
- Dripping taps can waste up to 4 litres of water a day. Ensure that taps are turned off properly.

As with all of these measures, they require a little self discipline, but like wearing your seatbelt or sorting out your rubbish for recycling, they become second nature after a while. Keep at them, and you will not only be saving yourself money and playing your part in applying BFG policy, you'll be doing your bit for saving the planet too!

Finally, it is vitally important, that you report all failures, faults leaks etc. to your *GWA* for repair action. Early action will prevent not only wastage and loss, but it will prevent deterioration of your *SFA* and may even help prevent an accident.