

TENANT HANDBOOK

Everything you need to know as a commercial tenant

Version 3.1 • Updated 2026 • For commercial tenants managed by Levin & Whitmore

Welcome

This handbook is designed to answer the most common questions tenants ask us — from how to pay your rent to what happens at lease end. Keep it somewhere handy. If you have any question this doesn't cover, call us on 0141 255 0742 or email hello@levinandwhitmore.com.

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1. Getting in Touch

We're your first point of contact for anything related to your tenancy. Whether you need to report a repair, discuss a payment, ask about your lease, or raise a concern — please get in touch with us directly rather than attempting to contact the landlord.

Contact methods

Phone	0141 255 0742 (Mon–Fri, 9am–5:30pm)
Email	hello@levinandwhitmore.com
Tenant hub	levinandwhitmore.com/tenants
Emergency	Call 999 first, then 0141 255 0742
Client portal	invoice.zohosecure.eu/portal/levinwhitmore/signin

2. Paying Your Rent

Rent is typically paid quarterly in advance under standard commercial leases, though monthly payment arrangements are increasingly common. Check your lease for the exact payment schedule and amount.

How to pay

- **BACS / Standing Order** — Our preferred method. Details provided at lease signing; also available in the client portal.
- **Client portal** — Log in to view invoices and make ad-hoc payments.
- **Bank transfer** — Use your unit number as the reference so we can reconcile quickly.
- **Cheque** — Only by arrangement. Please do not send cheques in the post unless confirmed.

If you're going to be late

Call us as soon as you know. We'd much rather work with you on a short-term arrangement than start formal chasing procedures. A simple conversation usually avoids a lot of unnecessary stress — and legal costs.

Arrears escalation

If rent remains unpaid, we follow a structured escalation: reminder email, formal letter, phone contact, formal 7-day notice, legal action. We always prefer to resolve things informally. Get in touch early.

3. Service Charges

Many commercial properties have a service charge covering communal maintenance, insurance, security, cleaning, lighting and ground maintenance. Your lease will specify exactly what's included and how the charge is apportioned.

Service charges are typically issued as an annual budget in advance, reconciled at year-end against actual costs. You'll receive a statement showing what's been spent and any balancing charge or credit.

Common service charge items

- Buildings insurance (recharged to tenants pro-rata)
- Communal area cleaning, maintenance and lighting
- Security, CCTV and access control
- Ground maintenance, car park upkeep, pest control
- Fire alarm and life safety system maintenance
- Common area utility costs (electric, water, gas)
- Management fee covering the service charge administration

4. Maintenance & Repairs

Your lease will set out exactly who is responsible for what. Most commercial leases are "FRI" (Full Repairing and Insuring), meaning the tenant is responsible for the internal condition and often a proportion of external/communal repairs via the service charge.

How to report an issue

- Visit levinandwhitmore.com/tenants and use the maintenance request form
- Include photos, a clear description and your unit number
- Specify urgency: routine, urgent, or emergency
- Provide preferred access times
- You'll receive acknowledgement within 1 working day

Response times

Emergency	Same day — attend immediately
Urgent (affects occupation)	Within 48 hours
Routine repairs	5–10 working days
Planned works	Agreed timeline

Typical tenant responsibilities (FRI lease)

- Internal decoration and general upkeep
- Internal plumbing and electrical fixtures
- Glazing and window frames (often)
- Flooring, ceiling tiles and internal doors
- Any alterations you have made
- Keeping the property in good repair throughout the lease term

Typical landlord responsibilities

- Main structural elements (roof, foundations, load-bearing walls)
- External walls and rainwater goods
- Main service installations up to the point of entry
- Common parts and communal areas (via service charge)

Always check your lease

These are the typical splits, but every lease is different. Check yours or ask us before assuming responsibility for any significant repair.

5. Emergencies

A genuine emergency is anything that poses an immediate danger to people or property, or that will cause significant damage if not addressed right away.

What counts as an emergency

- **Fire** — Evacuate immediately and call 999.
- **Gas leak** — Evacuate, don't use electrics, call National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999.
- **Major flood or water leak** — Isolate at the stopcock if safe, call us.
- **Total power failure** — Check it's not a wider outage first, then call us.
- **Structural damage or collapse** — Evacuate and call us.
- **Major security breach** — Call police first, then us.

What to do

Step 1: Ensure safety — evacuate if necessary, call emergency services on 999.

Step 2: Take photos or video if it's safe to do so.

Step 3: Call us on 0141 255 0742 — we will arrange immediate attendance.

Step 4: Follow up with a written report via email within 24 hours.

6. Your Lease Responsibilities

Your commercial lease is a legally binding contract. The specific obligations will vary by lease, but here are the most common tenant obligations you should be aware of:

Payment obligations

- Rent payments on the due dates specified
- Service charge contributions
- Insurance rent (your share of the buildings insurance)
- VAT where applicable
- Business rates (paid directly to the local authority)

Use obligations

- Use the premises only for the permitted use specified in the lease
- Do not use for illegal or hazardous activities
- Do not cause nuisance to neighbouring occupiers
- Comply with all planning and statutory requirements

Repair obligations

- Keep the property in good and substantial repair
- Decorate at intervals specified in the lease (often every 5 years)
- Allow access for inspection on reasonable notice
- Return the property in repair at lease end

7. Alterations & Improvements

Most commercial leases require landlord consent before tenants can carry out alterations. "Alterations" generally means anything beyond minor decoration — partitioning, installing kitchens or bathrooms, signage, structural changes.

The consent process

- Submit a written request describing the proposed works
- Include drawings, specifications and contractor details
- We review with the landlord and respond within 10 working days
- If approved, a Licence for Alterations is usually prepared
- Works may only commence once the licence is signed

At lease end, you may be required to reinstate the property to its original condition — so keep records of everything you do. Photographs, drawings, receipts and licences should all be stored safely.

8. Insurance

The landlord typically insures the buildings and recharges the cost to tenants via "insurance rent." You remain responsible for insuring your own contents, stock, equipment, and public/employer's liability.

Your insurance responsibilities

- **Contents insurance** — Your stock, equipment, fit-out, fixtures
- **Public liability** — Covers injury to customers, visitors and members of the public (typically £5m minimum)
- **Employer's liability** — Legal requirement if you employ staff
- **Business interruption** — Recommended, covers loss of income during disruption
- **Plate glass** — Often tenant responsibility even in FRI leases

9. Health & Safety

As an occupier of commercial premises, you have legal duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and related regulations. These apply whether you have one employee or a hundred.

Key duties

- Conduct a fire risk assessment and review annually
- Test fire alarms, emergency lighting and fire extinguishers
- Maintain PAT testing for portable electrical equipment
- Keep an accident book and report serious incidents under RIDDOR
- Ensure First Aid provision appropriate to staff numbers
- Display relevant H&S posters
- Undertake COSHH assessments if handling hazardous substances

Asbestos awareness

Many older commercial buildings contain asbestos. If your lease includes an asbestos register, keep it on site and ensure anyone carrying out works sees it before drilling, cutting or disturbing any materials. Ask us if you are unsure.

10. Compliance Certificates

Certain certificates must be maintained and may need renewal during your tenancy. Who is responsible depends on your lease — check carefully.

EPC (Energy Performance)	10 years — usually landlord
Fire Risk Assessment	Annual review — usually tenant
Gas Safety	Annual — whoever controls the installation
Electrical (EICR)	5 years — often tenant
PAT Testing	Annual — tenant
Asbestos Register	Maintained — often landlord
Legionella Risk Assessment	2 years — often tenant

11. Lease Events & Renewals

Commercial leases contain several important dates you should be aware of well in advance. These include rent review dates, break clause dates, and lease expiry. Missing any of these can have significant financial consequences.

Rent reviews

Most leases of 5+ years contain rent review provisions, typically every 5 years. These reset the rent to the current market level (open market review), index it (RPI/CPI), or increase by a fixed amount (stepped review).

Break clauses

If your lease contains a break clause, you must serve notice strictly in accordance with its terms — wrong format, wrong recipient or wrong timing can invalidate the break. Always take advice before serving a break notice.

Lease renewals

Under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 (in England and Wales) or Tenancy of Shops (Scotland) Act 1949 (in Scotland), commercial tenants may have statutory rights to renew. Get in touch at least 6–12 months before expiry to discuss your options.

12. Moving Out

The end of a commercial lease involves more than just handing back the keys. Planning ahead makes the process smoother and can save significant money on dilapidations claims.

Your move-out checklist

- Give notice in the form required by your lease
- Settle all outstanding rent, service charges and insurance
- Remove all belongings, stock, fixtures and fittings you're entitled to remove
- Reinstate any alterations you're required to reinstate
- Clean the premises thoroughly
- Close utility accounts and provide final meter readings
- Return all keys, fobs, access cards and alarm codes
- Provide a forwarding address for any post and final account settlement

Dilapidations

At lease end, the landlord will usually serve a dilapidations schedule identifying any items in disrepair or alterations to be reinstated. This is typically settled as a financial sum rather than physical works. Negotiation is normal — take professional advice before settling.

13. Dispute Resolution

Most disputes between tenants and landlords can be resolved through open, early conversation. We strongly encourage tenants to raise concerns with us as soon as they arise — we've seen small issues escalate unnecessarily simply because they weren't discussed.

Escalation routes

- Raise the issue directly with us in writing
- We investigate and respond within 5 working days
- If unresolved, we can refer to mediation or independent expert
- Formal dispute resolution — arbitration, expert determination, court

Questions?

This handbook is a general guide. Your specific lease terms may differ. If anything here is unclear, or if you have a question not covered, get in touch: 0141 255 0742 or hello@levinandwhitmore.com. We're here to help.