

What to Do When Your Boiler Loses Pressure in Winter



A boiler that maintains losing pressure is one of the most common iciness proceedings, and it regularly shows up at the coldest morning of the year. The gauge drops, the heating stops operating and the display shows a fault. In many cases the cause is easy, however on occasion it points to a leak or a failing element. If you need to avoid repeat troubles, every year [boiler repair Bristol](#) families can assist to seize the reason early. This manual explains what strain manners are, the way to top it up adequately and whilst it's time to name an engineer.

What Boiler Pressure Means

Have you ever wondered "Why does my boiler need to have pressure?" Well, if you have a modern boiler, the good news is that it needs to be under a pressure system; this is because the water in the heating system is pressurized so it can make its way around the rods comfortably. We use a bar to measure the pressure of the water on the front of your boiler so whether your boiler is brand new from an installation in Bristol or was fitted by you two years ago, if the pressure is not adequate, then it could affect the safety of the boiler. If the pressure were to be too low then the boiler would switch off, and if the boiler was to have an excess pressure then the excess water would be pushed to a drain outside of the building. Is your gauge indicating one of these issues!.

The Normal Pressure Range

Have you ever thought about what the pressure on your boiler should be?. I think most boilers are great between 1 and 1.5 bar when the heating is cold but turn the heating on and the reading will quite likely climb up to 2 bar. That's nothing to worry about. Here's the rub: if the reading is below 1 bar, then your boiler could well refuse to fire up. If it's over 2.5 bar when cold then it's a bit high and it needs looking at. So, how do I test my boiler pressure?. Check your manual or the sticker near the boiler pressure gauge for the correct numbers (they differ depending on who made the boiler) and see if there is a green zone on the gauge. There's plenty of time for testing your boiler gauge. Checking the pressure gauge takes mere seconds.

Common Reasons for Pressure Loss

Is your pressure low? Or suddenly risen?. A simple answer can be found in one of these 3 common issues: There is a small water leak from a radiator valve, the pipe joint or perhaps your boiler is losing a small amount of water: don't forget that bleeding your radiators will remove some water from the system which will reduce your pressure. Your pressure relief valve is currently leaking water outside? The expansion vessel could also be a problem here! Check the last few things that have been added or changed to your system, a trial and error method of diagnosing your problem is the best way forward, saving you time and money.

Leaks

Leaks. Repeated pressure loss is usually due to a leak, which can be slow and discreet for example, a small dribble in a corner behind a cupboard, or a damp patch on the ceiling, discoloured plasterwork or rusty pipework. Any leak inside the boiler needs a Gas Safe registered engineer to repair it.

Checking for Visible Leaks

Begin by thoroughly inspecting the boiler and visible pipework. See if the joints, radiators and valves have any presence of water, drips or green or white markings on them which could indicate a leak that is happening. Check to see if there are any puddles beneath the boiler and to look at the outside of the building and around the point where the relief valve pipe comes out of the building. Use a dry cloth to wipe away any signs of water and then recheck after an hour. Be sure not to strip away the casing of the boiler yourself but make a note of the location of any leaks so the engineer can find it more easily.

How to Top Up Pressure Safely

This is an easy task most of us can do but always read your boiler manual before attempting. Turn off the boiler and let it cool. Locate the filling loop, a braided tube beneath the boiler with a valve on both ends. Gently open both valves on the filling loop until the pressure gauge reaches 1.2 bar and close. If your model permits, remove the hose. Turn on the boiler and ensure it is running. If you are not confident of doing this, contact an engineer, do not make an educated guess. Slow and steady wins the race, do not try to get away with forcing a valve.

Using the Filling Loop

Open the valve gradually and monitor the needle on the gauge. It's normal for the water to be a bit rumble coming in to the system. Remember to tighten the valves when at the right level as a loop left open can overfill the system and cause another fault.

When Pressure Keeps Dropping

If you top up the boiler and the needle falls in a few days, there's a problem. One drop of the needle can happen after bleeding radiators but if it keeps happening, you'll have a leak or a dodgy part. Don't top-up and top-up without investigating why, because you're adding oxygen to the system which speeds up corrosion. Make a brief note of how much top-up you do and how quickly the needle falls – this will give your engineer valuable information, cut down diagnosis time and could save your wallet. Don't dismiss the pattern, because it almost never sorts itself out. The earlier you get an expert in, the better.

The Expansion Vessel and Pressure Relief Valve

There are two bits that can cause pressure problems. The expansion vessel is a small tank with an air cushion that, when hot water expands, takes up the additional volume. If the air leaks out of the expansion vessel, you'll get high pressure when the heating is on, which will cause the relief valve to open, and if you see a dribble coming out of the pipe outside this is a symptom. A word of warning: both these parts will need an engineer to test and replace, and you wouldn't try it yourself with the correct training and equipment. Both these parts are straightforward and quick to replace.

Pressure Faults and Boiler Repair Bristol Visits

Pressure faults are one of the more common reasons for a call out, and most of them can be sorted in one visit, especially if the engineer sees a leaking valve, a faulty pressure gauge or a tired expansion vessel. Significant leaks will take longer or require a new part. Provide clear notes to the engineer to speed up the process and save costs include make and model, pressure, frequency of the drops, error codes. If your boiler is very old, check whether repairing is worthwhile, as this type of fault is often a symptom of general deterioration.

Preventing Problems in Cold Weather

A few easy precautions will prevent most winter problems. Check your pressure twice a year at the same time and, if it's cold out, also twice a year. If you bleed radiators in autumn, check the pressure afterwards. Lag outdoor pipes and anything in your loft or garage that's not already insulated. Make sure your boiler's condensate pipe is lagged if it runs outside otherwise, if it freezes it will trip off. Have your boiler serviced before the cold weather arrives. That way your engineer can spot any weak spots when there's plenty of time to spare.

When to Call an Engineer

The pressure falls again after you top it up. You notice a leak or you see water dripping out of the relief pipe. If you smell gas. You see black marks on the boiler. You hear banging noises. Do not try to repair sealed areas. Never switch the boiler on if you think it is unsafe. Gas smell? Turn off the supply at the meter. Open a window and leave the house. Call the National Gas Emergency number. Getting help early could be cheaper and save you a cold wait. Never risk it with gas, however little a problem seems to be.

What to Tell Them on the Phone

Tell us what make and model of boiler it is, current pressure and what you've already tried. Report any leaks, banging or error messages, as well as how long you've been experiencing the fault. The more information you give us, the better chance we have of getting an engineer out to you with the right parts to fix the fault.