



British insurers pay out £2.5m every day to customers making 'escape of water' claims.*

Smart safety: could tech look after our homes?

Mobile phones, televisions, and even ovens have smart capabilities these days – but what about the products designed to protect the inner workings of our households? **Yvette Murrell** takes a look

Have I turned my heating off? Was the cooker left on? Did I switch the water mains off? These are questions we all ask ourselves when leaving our homes for an extended period of time, whether for a holiday abroad or a weekend away. And while we might usually have run back to double check, asked a neighbour to pop round, or continued fretting for the duration of our break, a variety of new smart products are here to help give us peace of mind, whether we're at home or away. Like what, I hear you say. Well, the latest innovations in the smart home are created with maintaining safety of gas, water, and electrics in mind – great in winter, when the risks of frozen pipes and broken heatings are higher. Grohe's Sense and Sense Guard devices are both able to detect water leaks in the home and instantly alert you with a mobile notification – a real game changer. The Sense Guard, which needs to be professionally

installed into your pipes, will alert you about water damage as soon as it is detected. You can then isolate the affected ones, no matter where you are, by switching off your home's water supply via the Grohe Ondus app, preventing further damage. It works on its own or with the Grohe Sense, a smart water sensor. Placed on the floor, it alerts you of a potential flood if it detects water and also measures the temperature and humidity in the room.

We all see and hear the adverts to check our alarm systems, but Nest's Protect smart smoke and carbon monoxide alarm can detect and differentiate between fast-burning fires, smouldering ones, and carbon monoxide leaks. It will send real-time alerts directly to your phone in case you're out and also speaks up when there's a problem such as low batteries. A huge improvement from the humble fire alarm, which beeps annoyingly when running low, wouldn't you agree?

Smaller updates are also available. I recently came across Amazon's smart plugs for the



first time – and these easy additions could potentially be the handiest yet in terms of safety. Connecting to the Amazon Alexa app via Wi-Fi, their main drawing point is the ability to be voice-controlled, so you don't need a smart assistant to turn your everyday appliances on and off. But what I think is really helpful about these plugs is that they can be remotely controlled

1. Amazon's smart plug, £24.99.
2. Grohe Sense, £51.99.
3. Grohe Sense Guard, £439.
4. Nest Protect, £109.56.

"Products like these are designed to take the worry away and keep nasty surprises at bay, while eliminating that nagging voice of doubt."

through an app, meaning you can check whether you've left sockets on and, if necessary, switch them off wherever you are. Dashing home to check could be a thing of the past, and being able to put the kettle on before you walk through the door a thing of the future.

These products are designed to take the worry away and keep nasty surprises at bay, while eliminating that nagging voice of doubt. Now, who wouldn't want that? **KBB**