Damp, Mould & Condensation

Information, tips and guidance















Produced by **Homes2Opportunities** on behalf of Derventio Housing Trust

Our commitment...

We aspire for all our accommodation to be a place where our residents want to live both now and in the future.

We recognise that being and feeling safe in the home is an important factor in how people feel about where they live.

Damp and condensation can lead to mould, which can cause or exacerbate respiratory issues, cause an unpleasant smell and make your home an unpleasant place to live.

What are damp, mould and condensation?

Damp

Damp refers to unwanted water, moisture or condensation that has penetrated or accumulated in the fabric and structure of the building.

Rising Damp happens when moisture travels up from the ground through the masonry/plasterboard to the height of about one metre.

Penetrating Damp happens when water penetrates into the fabric of a building from outside to inside, for example, because of a leaking downpipe.

Both rising and penetrating damp will generally cause large, visible marks on walls or ceilings.

Condensation

Condensation Damp generally happens when a property can't deal with water vapour because of a lack of insulation, ventilation or heating, or a combination of all of these things.

Condensation is caused by warm, moist air coming into contact with a cold surface.

Damp caused by condensation is generally confined to areas around windows, at the join between ceilings and walls and along walls which form the exterior boundary of the property.

Mould

Mould is a fungus that grows on the damp surface. It normally appears as a black or dark brown pattern on top of moist areas and can adversely affect people's health.



Rising & Penetrating Damp

How to spot it?

Rising and penetrating damp are caused by moisture getting into the fabric and structure of the building.

Rising damp will generally appear as a tide mark at the bottom of the walls on the ground floor. Penetrating damp will generally appear as an obvious damp patch on the walls or ceiling.





What should you do about it?

Report it to H2O/maintenance. These types of damp are generally caused by a leak, structural defect or disrepair. Resolving the issue will generally require some remedial work.

If a lot of moisture has penetrated a wall or ceiling, it will need time to dry out once the issue has been resolved. A white, crispy or sometimes powdery substance will appear during the drying process. The substance, known as efflorescence, is salts and minerals that have condensed as the water evaporates. Redecoration can only be undertaken once all the moisture has dried out.

Is it dangerous?

As long as the damp area remains free of mould, it is safe for the room to remain occupied while the issue is resolved. While unsightly, salts generally do not pose a health risk.

Condensation

How to spot it?

Condensation doesn't always leave an obvious water mark. Sometimes, a puddle of water on a windowsill or a shiny, wet surface, wall or ceiling might be the only sign of a problem.

If a room feels obviously humid, windows are steamed up or soft furnishings feel damp then that could also indicate a possible condensation problem.



What should you do about it?

This is normally caused by excess moisture in the air, which is easily solved with ventilation. Ensuring windows are opened regularly, wall vents are uncovered and open and small trickle vents on windows are open will normally ensure any excess moisture in the air isn't trapped in the room.

In kitchen and bathrooms making sure extractor fans are switched on will stop steam from cooking and showering building up.

In your bedroom, try not to leave your clothes or belongings piled up against exterior walls and leave a small gap between furniture and any external walls for air to flow through. If you're drying clothes inside, make sure a window is open.

Is it dangerous?

Condensation or moisture on the inside of the windows isn't dangerous, but it does create the perfect conditions for mould to grow. Any excess moisture should be wiped off the windows and surfaces each day and windows should be opened to ventilate the room.

Mould

How to spot it?



Mould could appear anywhere there is a lot a moisture, including on patches of penetrating damp, on cold exterior walls and in poorly ventilated rooms. It will appear initially as small dark spots but can quickly grow into large patches.

You should occasionally check behind furniture, where airflow is reduced, to make sure that no mould has appeared. This is particularly important for furniture set against the outside walls of the property.

What should you do about it?

Report it to H2O/maintenance or your housing officer as soon as you notice it. If you are not sure whether marks on the wall are mould, then discuss it with your housing officer when they visit the property.

The mould will be treated with an appropriate anti-mould treatment and the area will be cleaned down. A member of H2O staff may come out to visit the property to assess whether there is an underlying issue, including installing additional ventilation, looking for the source of any damp or excess moisture and any repairs or actions that need to be taken to avoid further mould growth.

Is it dangerous?

It can be! Mould can cause or exacerbate existing respiratory illness if it is left untreated. You should avoid disturbing any mouldy areas as much as possible. The more mould is disturbed, the more spores will be released into the air, which can then seed new areas of mould growth or get into your lungs.

The sooner you report it, the sooner it can be treated and the sooner it's treated, the better!