



# Guide to Damp and Mould

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A guide to help you keep your home safe and healthy

## Introduction

Damp and mould are some of the biggest problems in homes. It can cause serious health issues and sometimes require complicated and expensive repairs. It is important you work with your managing agent to report and address issues as soon as possible and will not only best protect your health but also limit damage to the building.

## Who is Responsible?

Please report any issues as soon as possible, the sooner your managing agent knows about them the better as early intervention can lead to quick remediation.

The way in which you live in a property can contribute towards damp and mould issues, so it is important to avoid creating or adding to any existing issue. Anything that means that moisture cannot leave the home leads to damp and mould, so as well as limiting the effects of condensation within the home it is important to ensure the any ventilation and heating is used.

## Condensation

When moist air finds a cooler surface, the moisture changes into droplets which settle on surfaces as condensation.

Condensation becomes an issue when there is too much water in the air and it cannot leave your home. This then often leads to condensation damp and then, if unaddressed, mould. The level of condensation in your home depends on three things:

- The amount of moisture produced indoors
- The temperature in your home
- How well your home is ventilated

Keeping your home at a constant temperature can help, and combining this with improving ventilation and curbing the moisture production will help solve condensation damp.



## Other Types of Damp

As well as condensation damp there are three other types which can cause issues in the home.

### ***Rising Damp***

Rising Damp is rare and is generally identified by a tide mark or damp patch near the floor spreading upwards. Generally homes built post the Victorian era have had a damp proof course to prevent this, however if your home does not have a damp proof course, or the ground level water is higher than the damp proof course then rising damp could be an issue – if you suspect this is a problem please alert your managing agent as a matter of urgency.

### ***Penetrating Damp***

Penetrating damp occurs when water enters the building through a damaged structure, usually caused by issues with the guttering, the roof, walls or chimney, windows or doorframes or blocked air vents.

This is potentially an indicator of structural issues, so if you suspect penetrating damp please inform your managing agent as soon as possible.

### ***Traumatic Damp***

Traumatic damp is caused by leaks in pipes, sinks or baths or faulty water storage. These are usually remedied by identifying and fixing the cause and drying out the area to prevent further issue.

**Once damp is a problem, mould is often not too far behind. High humidity levels and cooler temperatures can encourage mould growth which is often more difficult to treat than the damp which has led to the mould evolving.**

## How to Prevent Damp and Mould

Cooking, cleaning and drying clothes are all unavoidable household tasks that add moisture to your home, however, by altering habits it is possible to limit the amount of moisture entering the air in your home.

### **Wipe Away Condensation**

If you have condensation on your internal surfaces always wipe these down, especially on doors and windows. Whilst opening the doors and windows may help, this will unlikely be enough to resolve the issue (and negate the benefit of the heating being on!)

### **Create Less Moisture When Cooking**

A simple step such as putting a lid on your pan will reduce the amount of moisture entering the air. It is also likely to speed up cooking time and reduce fuel consumption.



When this isn't possible, or you are still seeing steam in the air or condensation forming on the windows or other surfaces, then please use an extractor fan, if you have one, or open a window to allow the excess moisture to escape. Always close the kitchen door to prevent the moisture spreading to other rooms.

## **Drying Clothes Efficiently**

Of course, when your space and weather permits, it is always preferable to dry clothes outside. When clothes are dried inside, all of the evaporated water remains in the room unless it has a way to leave.

When you have no choice but to dry clothes inside, consider putting the clothes through a spin cycle twice to remove excess initial moisture. If possible, use an airer in the bathroom rather than other areas of the house as bathrooms are generally equipped to handle higher levels of moisture than other rooms.

If you are able to use the bathroom, ensure any extractor fans are on and avoid putting wet clothes on radiators. Close the door of the bathroom to prevent the moisture spreading to other rooms.

## **Let Damp Air Leave Your Home**

Improving ventilation can considerably help manage moisture and damp within your home. Even opening windows for ten minutes a day can help moist air to escape. The best time of day to open windows is around midday, when generally the moisture levels outside are lower.



Dry air heats up quicker than damp air, so it may be a little more efficient to heat your home if you ventilate it regularly. If your windows have trickle vents, leave these open as much as possible. It is also advisable to keep bathroom and kitchen windows a little open, if your windows allow for this to be done securely.

## **Heating Your Home and Allow Circulation**

If your home is not warm enough inside, moisture will remain. This will contribute to damp and mould growth. Temperatures should be set at 16 degrees Celsius at a minimum.

Furniture should be kept at least 30 centimeters away from the wall to allow for air to flow, which will help keep the walls, and the furniture and carpets, mould free.

## How to Treat Mould

The sooner that mould can be identified and treated the better. Any risk to health increases as the mould grows.

If you think that your home may be suffering with rising damp, penetrating damp or traumatic damp, please inform your managing agent as soon as possible.

If you identify the damp is likely to be caused by the effects of condensation within your home, please follow the above guidance to help curb the issue, and inform your property manager. Mould caused by condensation can usually be identified as black spots often in the corner of a wall or ceiling. These can be treated using a fungicidal wash on the affected hard surfaces. **Bleach, sweeping or vacuuming are not effective methods of removing mould.** Appropriate solutions can be identified by having a Health and Safety Executive approval number on the packaging. It is essential that any instructions given on the packaging are followed directly as the application method can vary, and throw away any cloths or sponges used after application.

Once the solution is dry then the area should be painted with an anti-fungicidal paint.

If your furniture or soft furnishing or clothes are subject to mould growth they should be cleaned accordingly; mouldy clothes and curtains should be dry cleaned and carpets shampooed.

## Protecting You and Us

We have a policy for how we hold and may use your personal details in the provision of our services. Our privacy policy explains how we use the information that we collect about you, how you can instruct us if you prefer to limit the use of that information and procedures we have in place to safeguard your privacy. Further details can be found on our website, [savills.co.uk/privacy-policy](https://savills.co.uk/privacy-policy).

## Feedback and Complaints

If you are not happy with our service you should first contact the office you originally dealt with and speak to the head of management for that team.

If your local team are unable to resolve the issue, we have a complaints procedure, the details of which can be sent upon request.

If you have been through our complaints procedure and we cannot help, you can refer your complaint to the independent redress scheme that we belong to: Property Redress Scheme (PRS). You have 12 months to do this. Please read their leaflet to see how they can help you and what timescales you have to work to: PRS consumer leaflet.

You could also speak to our governing bodies, either ARLA Propertymark or the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). Going through any of these processes does not mean you cannot take legal action.

Property Redress Scheme (PRS)  
Premiere House, 1st Floor  
Elstree Way, Borehamwood WD6 1JH 0333 321 9418  
[theprs.co.uk/ContactUs](https://theprs.co.uk/ContactUs)



ARLA Propertymark  
6 Tournament Court  
Edgehill Drive, Warwick CV34 6LG 01926 496 800  
[complaints@propertymark.co.uk](mailto:complaints@propertymark.co.uk)



Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Surveyor Court, Westwood Business  
Park Westwood Way, Coventry CV4 8JE  
020 7695 1670



Your money is protected through the RICS client money protection scheme (for exclusions and limits [see rics.org/clientmoneyprotectionscheme](https://rics.org/clientmoneyprotectionscheme)) and will be held in a designated client account.

## This is a guide and not a legal document

Your legal and contractual responsibilities will be in your individual tenancy agreement and any specially negotiated clauses. Speak to your local office if you would like any clarification on any of our fees.

Before you sign any paperwork, you must make sure you know and understand the contents of all of the above. If there is anything you do not understand (including any contents of this guide or within anything we give you to sign) please either ask your local lettings team or seek legal advice from a solicitor or the Citizens Advice Bureau before you sign.

We will not accept any responsibility for any actions by any parties who use out of date information included in this guide.