

Damp and Mould in your home

How to keep your home
free from damp and mould



What causes Damp and Mould?

Dampness can appear in almost any home and can be caused by lots of factors, including faults in the structure, not enough heating, not enough insulation, or not enough ventilation. Dampness can lead to mould growth which can make breathing problems worse.

There are three types of dampness that can appear in your home:

- **Condensation**
- **Rising dampness**
- **Penetrating dampness**

It is possible to have more than one type of dampness in your home. Each needs to be treated differently, so it is important to know what type of damp is affecting your home.



What is Penetrating Damp?

Penetrating damp is caused by water entering through walls or roofs and often made worse by strong winds. This type of damp may expand across your walls or ceiling or work its way down but will not travel up your walls from the bottom like rising damp. Penetrating damp is usually caused by problems with the building such as faulty guttering or roofing or cracks in mortar or render which allows water to find its way in from outside. It can also be caused by internal leaks from pipework or faulty seals round sinks, baths or showers.

What is Condensation?

Condensation is the most common kind of damp. Warm air holds more water than cold air and when it cools down it has to lose some of the moisture. Condensation happens when warm moist air comes into contact with a cold surface. Condensation is most common in rooms where a lot of moisture is generated such as kitchens, bathrooms, and bedrooms. Warm moist air will also travel to other parts of the home that are cooler and will condense there. Bedrooms tend to be cooler, and the air is quite still, so are more likely to have condensation.



What is Rising Damp?

Rising damp is caused by water from the ground moving up through a wall or floor. A building which is dry will naturally soak up water from the ground, but it is usually stopped from causing damage by a barrier called a damp-proof course or damp-proof membrane.

Newer properties will have a damp-proof course or damp-proof membrane, but older buildings may not, or they may be worn or damaged. If this is the case your walls or floor may suffer from rising damp.

Rising damp can also happen when there is a lack of drainage around a property or the ground level outside your home is higher than the damp-proof course allowing water to get above it.



Preventing damp and mould

Cooking, showering and drying clothes creates moisture in your home.

To reduce this, it helps to:

- Cover pans with lids when cooking
- Use extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms and let them run on after you have finished. Extract fans cost as little as 7p a week to run. The fans in your home will run automatically when moisture is detected in the air – please leave them switched on.
- Close internal doors when you cook or shower.
- Drying washing indoors may be unavoidable. If you do, close the door of the room where they are drying and open a window in the room. Consider using a drying screen in the bathroom and running the extract fan.
- Wet washing should never be hung over radiators to dry, especially if you have electric storage heating. This can damage the radiator and is a fire risk.
- If using a tumble dryer, make sure it's vented so the moisture is emitted outside your home, or use a condenser dryer.
- Keep a small gap between your furniture and walls to let air circulate.
- Open windows for 5 to 10 minutes each morning. The Germans call this "Lüften" meaning "to air out" and it replaces stale indoor air with fresh outdoor air.
- If possible, heating your home a little also helps. A low temperature of at least 15 degrees in all rooms can prevent damp and mould.



Dealing with damp and mould

Your landlord's responsibilities.

Dundee city Council will deal with damp or mould caused by structural or repair problems, including:

- Leaks in the roof
- Cracks or holes in walls
- Rotting window or door frames
- Lack of ventilation or poor ventilation in your home
- Water coming into your home from the ground

If you report damp or mould, Dundee City Council will:

- Carry out a Property Inspection by a competent person within 10 working days of receiving a report of damp or mould
- Issue you with a report within 3 working days of the inspection noting our findings and proposed next steps
- Treat mould in your home within 5 working days of the inspection, to remove any hazard
- Complete mould treatment within 20 working days from the inspection. If specialist works or more invasive treatments are required, this may take longer to complete, but we will communicate with you every step of the way
- Provide expert guidance on condensation and how this can be managed
- Review existing ventilation within the property and the potential installation of extractor fans in the kitchen and bathroom or ventilation systems dependant on the property needs
- Help you find the right advice on heating, ventilation, and condensation as well as energy efficiency measures through an energy advice referral.
- In certain cases we may install insulated plasterboard to rooms which may be prone to high condensation levels and low room temperatures

Your responsibilities

Regularly Check for signs of damp and mould. These can be:

- A damp and musty smell
- Mould or mildew on walls, floors or ceilings
- Walls, floors or ceilings that feel cold or damp
- Dark or discoloured patches on walls or plaster
- Lifting or peeling wallpaper
- Excessive condensation on windows

It is important to note that condensation will form on windows, especially in the colder winter months. If it is wiped up and not allowed to evaporate, mould should not grow on window frames and cills.

If mould grows you can remove it easily by wiping down walls with a fungicidal wash which is available to buy in any supermarket. If you deal with mould quickly, it shouldn't come back.

If you have a damp problem that persists or you are concerned about, please call the Housing Repair Centre on **01382 434343** and request an inspection.

If you are struggling to heat your home affordably you can contact; Home Energy Scotland for free advice and support on **0808 808 2282** or Dundee Energy Efficiency Advice Project on **01382 434840**

For advice on help with the cost of living, please visit the Dundee city council web page at www.dundee.gov.uk/costofliving council web page at www.dundee.gov.uk/costofliving

