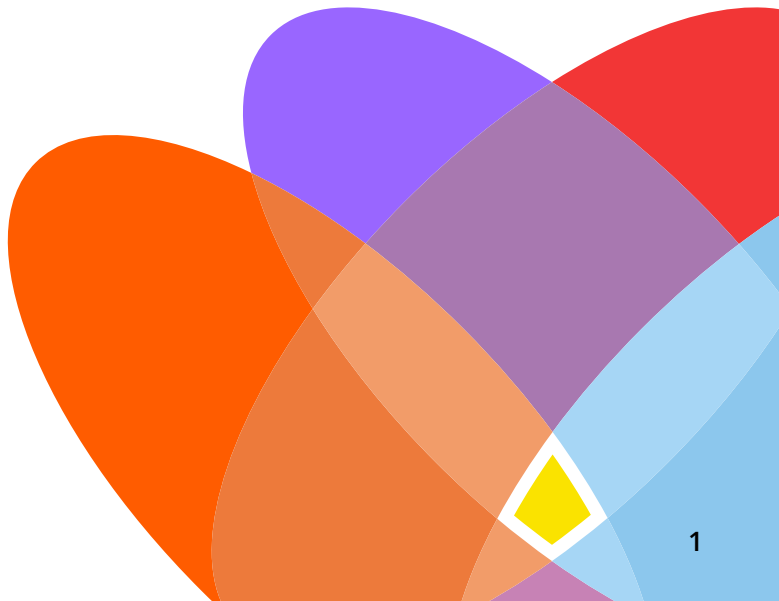


Preventing damp and mould - a guide for customers



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Introduction

Damp and mould in the home can be a health hazard, causing respiratory problems and exacerbating allergies. This quick guide explains how you can prevent damp occurring within your home, solutions to minimise and deal with small damp and mould issues, and when it needs to be escalated to your housing provider.

What is damp?

Damp occurs in moist places that never fully dry out, usually where there is little air movement. Damp is often caused by condensation and usually builds up in areas where there isn't much air movement.

What is mould?

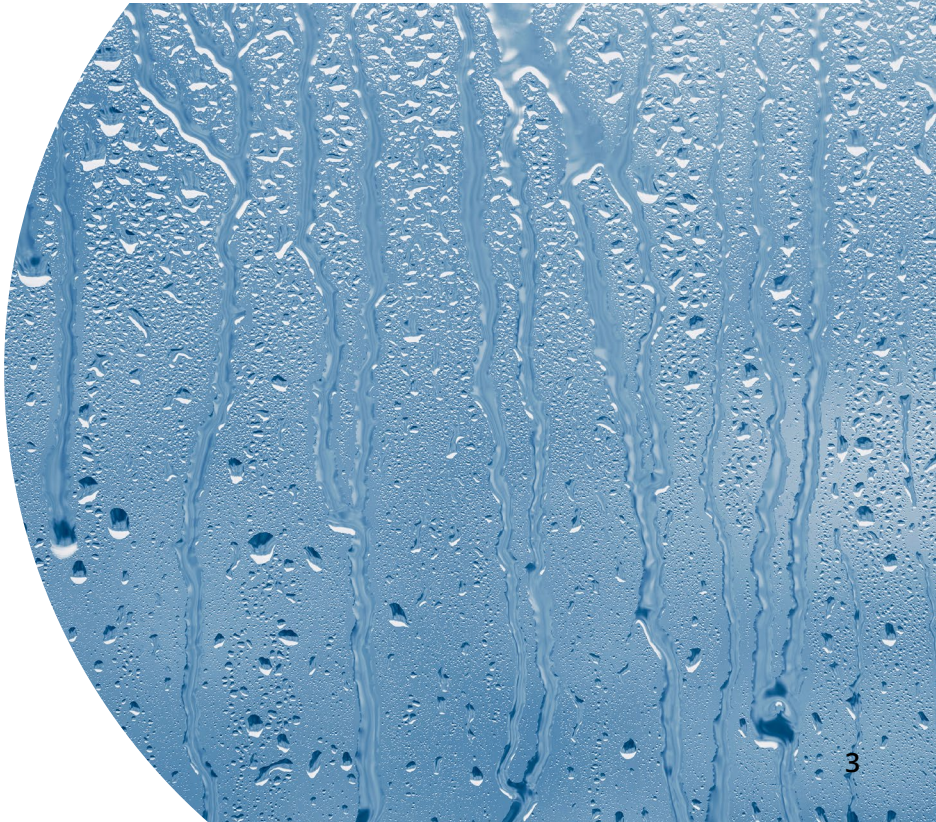
Mould grows and multiplies in moist areas, slowly at first then growing quicker. In most cases black mould is caused by condensation.

Causes of damp

Condensation

Condensation is created when warm air meets cold surfaces, or when there's too much moisture in your home. It's a more common problem during the colder months and it can be found on or near windows, in the corner of rooms and even in wardrobes or cupboards or behind large items of furniture where air flow is restricted.

If condensation builds up regularly, surfaces can stay damp for a long time. When this happens, mould can begin to grow on walls and ceilings, furniture, soft furnishings (such as cushions and curtains) and on clothing stored in wardrobes and drawers.





Penetrating dampness

This type of dampness is primarily found on the external walls of the property, due to defects such as missing pointing to the brickwork (the cement between the bricks), cracked rendering or missing roof tiles. These defects allow water to pass from the outside to the inner surfaces.

Penetrating dampness is far more noticeable following a period of rainfall and will normally appear as a well-defined 'damp-patch' which looks and feels damp to the touch.



Rising damp

This is caused by water rising from the ground into the home. Rising damp will only affect basements and ground floor rooms. It will normally rise to between 12 and 24 inches above ground level and usually leaves a 'tide mark' low down on the wall. You may also notice white salts on the affected areas. Rising damp will be present all year round but is more noticeable in winter.

If left untreated, rising damp may cause wall plaster to crumble and paper to lift in the affected area. If you think you may have rising damp, or penetrating damp in your home, get in touch with your housing provider as soon as possible.

How to prevent damp and mould

Reduce moisture

Keep doors closed

- Keep bathroom or kitchen doors closed when having a shower or bath, or when cooking. This will prevent moisture from spreading to other parts of your home.

Where possible dry clothes outside

- Try to avoid drying clothes on radiators. The vapour turns into moisture in the air and is then circulated around the rooms.
- This then gathers on walls, windows and other fabrics in the home and can be a mould risk. Instead, dry clothes on a clothes horse in a well-ventilated room. Open a window or use a dehumidifier to minimise the spread of moisture indoors.

You can also reduce moisture by:

- Cook with pan lids on and turn the heat down once the water is boiling.
- Dry condensation from your windows and sills each morning; wring out the cloth rather than drying it on a radiator.
- Make sure your tumble dryer ventilates to outside your home.
- Filling your bath with cold water before adding hot will significantly reduce the amount of steam.

How to prevent damp and mould continued

Improve ventilation

Use extractor fans

- If you have an extractor fan in the bathroom, always make sure it is running when you're having a shower or bath.
- If you have an extractor fan in the kitchen, you should also use it to disperse moisture and cooking smells. If you don't have an extractor fan, open a window when you cook to allow the moisture to escape.

Air your home regularly

- Open windows regularly to make sure your property is well-ventilated. Even when it's cold, moisture can gather in the home. Opening the window allows some of this moisture to escape.

Keep an eye out for leaks

- Leaky window frames, pipework, walls and doors are common sources of moisture. If you see a leak, you should report it to the housing repairs team who will deal with the problem swiftly.
- This will also stop the issue from turning into more serious problems and cause further damage to the property.
- In the meantime, use a bucket or bowl to collect any drips and make sure to keep surfaces dry with a mop or towel.

Don't overfill your home

- Avoid pushing furniture against the wall, or overstuffing wardrobes as this can cause damp and mould to grow and spread. Check behind furniture regularly for signs of damp or mould developing.

Heat your home efficiently

- If your home is under-heated, you're more likely to have issues with condensation.
- Use your thermostat to keep your heating at a steady temperature (18-21C). Find a setting that gives you the heat you need without increasing your heating costs.
- If you have thermostatic radiator valves, put them at a lower setting in rooms you don't use much.
- In bathrooms and kitchens keep your heating at a constant low temperature – this can be very effective.
- **Never use a gas cooker to heat your kitchen. Leaving it open to heat your home releases harmful carbon monoxide throughout your home.**
- Avoid using paraffin heaters – four hours of use can produce six pints of moisture.

Treating minor mould issues

You can clean and treat small areas of mould growth safely yourself by following these steps:

- Carefully remove excess mould with a damp cloth and throw away after. Do not brush mould as this release's spores into the air.
- Use rubber gloves to wipe down affected areas using a fungicidal wash or diluted bleach. Wearing safety glasses is recommended. Bleach can only kill surface mould and won't destroy its roots.
- **DONT** try to remove mould using a brush or vacuum cleaner.



When to report damp and mould issues

If you're concerned that moisture on your walls might be caused by something other than condensation, please contact the housing provider to avoid the issues becoming more serious.

When making contact, it's important that you give as much information as possible. This detail should include:

- The areas of your home that are affected
- How long these areas have been affected
- Any leaks or other plumbing issues that are causing the problems
- If the affected surfaces are wet to the touch
- If there is any visible discolouring, including black mould
- Any smells in or near the affected areas
- Any peeling of wallpaper and paint in or near the affected areas

Please also provide clear photographs that show the problem areas. These photos should include:

- Clear, close-up detail of the affected areas
- A wider view of the affected area within the room
- Any further photos that show important detail

How to book a repair

Please visit our contact page on our website to find out how to book a repair.

<https://morgansindallpropertyservices.com/contact-us/>

morgansindallpropertyservices.com

