

Damp and mould

Information for council housing tenants



What is damp?

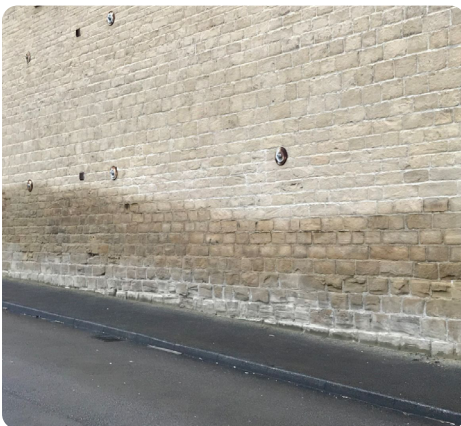
Damp is the build-up of moisture. As well as causing damage, some types of damp can lead to mould growth. Mould is a type of fungus that grows in moist conditions and can cause health problems. Damp can occur in homes for many reasons and affects both building materials (like walls, floors, ceilings, foundations) as well as fittings and furnishings (like carpets, curtains, wallpaper, furniture, clothing).

Types of damp



Condensation

Condensation is the most common form of damp. Condensation occurs when moisture or water vapour generated inside the home cools and condenses onto colder parts of the building. You will often notice condensation build up on windows, window frames and in the corner of rooms. Black mould is frequently seen as a result of this type of damp.



Rising damp

Rising damp is the name given to the process of water in the ground entering a property by travelling up through the pores in brickwork. It is usually caused by a broken or missing damp proof course - a horizontal membrane built into the walls of a house at low level. Rising damp only affects basements/cellars and ground floor rooms. It will usually rise to between 30cm to 60 cm up the wall and leaves a brown 'tide' mark caused by salts from the ground. Black mould does not normally develop with rising damp because the salts prevent it growing.

Types of damp



Traumatic damp

Leaks from water and waste pipes in the home are fairly common, especially from bathrooms and kitchens. Traumatic damp will occur all the time whatever the outside weather conditions, and could be coming from either your home or your neighbour's. You will see an area or patch of damp that feels and looks wet. You will not normally see black mould growth with traumatic damp because the chemicals in the water prevent it growing.



Penetrating damp

Penetrating damp is caused by water passing through the external walls or roof of a house because of a problem with the repair of the building, such as missing roof tiles, damaged pointing to brickwork, or cracked render. It is only found on external walls and sometimes on ceilings if there is damage to the roof. Penetrating damp is most noticeable after heavy rainfall or snow. You will see an area or patch of damp that feels and looks wet.

Mould

Mould spores like the damp environment caused by condensation. Mould spores become noticeable when they start to grow and multiply on surfaces. Mould appears as a cloud of little black dots. As well as being unsightly, it can cause health problems, so it is best to remove it as soon as it appears. Let us know if you see black mould in your home.



Health risks

Most people come into contact with substances produced by damp and mould (for example, allergens, irritants, mould spores, toxins) by breathing them in.

This means that they mostly affect the airways and lungs. Respiratory effects include:

- cough, wheeze and shortness of breath
- increased risk of airway infections
- development or worsening of allergic airway diseases or conditions that involve inflammation of the airways (for example, bronchitis, asthma, and COPD)

Other physical effects include:

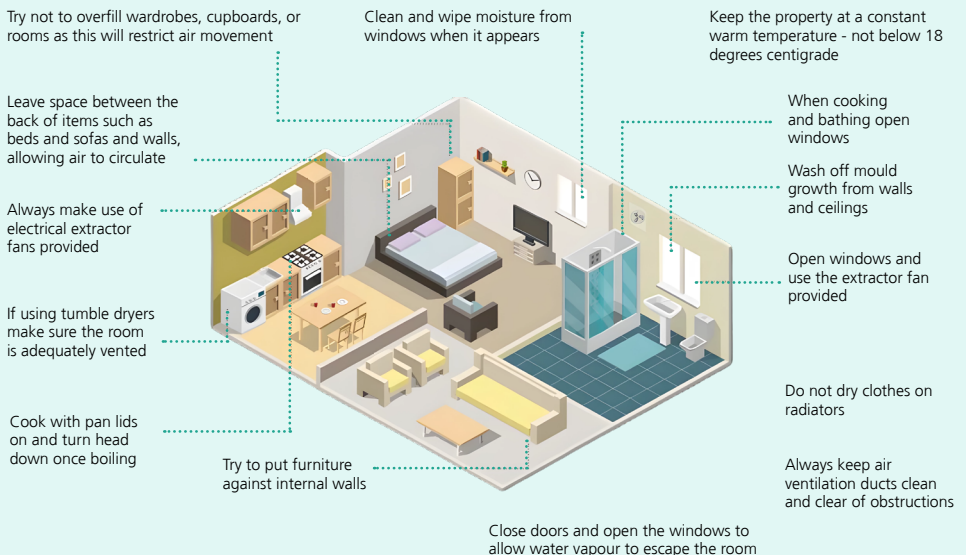
- irritation of the eyes
- eczema, itchy skin or skin rashes
- fungal infections including but not exclusively, of the skin

If you are concerned about symptoms, speak with a healthcare professional.

Top tips for reducing condensation

Normal day-to-day activities like cooking, showering and even breathing can add to condensation in your home. Here are some top tips for reducing condensation in your home:

- when you notice condensation, wipe down affected surfaces with a dry cloth
- keep your curtains open during the day
- if you have them, use extractor fans in the kitchen and bathroom
- try not to block air vents or trickle vents
- use lids on your pots and pans whilst cooking
- open windows after a bath or shower
- hang wet washing outside to dry whenever possible or keep windows open when drying washing indoors
- keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed to prevent moisture escaping into the rest of your home



What we are doing about damp and mould

All damp and mould cases reported by our tenants will be investigated thoroughly. If you report a problem to us, we will call you and ask some questions to establish how much of a risk it poses to you.

We will then ask our specialist damp and mould contractor, ZapCarbon, to arrange a visit to your home to conduct a comprehensive assessment. ZapCarbon will inspect your home and complete a clean and shield of affected areas to remove the risk to you. They will advise and support you on any changes that you can make to reduce damp and mould.

ZapCarbon will provide us with a detailed report with recommendations on any repairs or building issues that may need to be addressed to tackle the root cause of the damp and mould.

These reports and recommendations will be actioned by our dedicated damp and mould team. We will ensure that you stay informed every step of the way.



Testimonials

Resident 1: 'What a great job the team did. I am so happy with the difference it has made to my home. The team were lovely people, and I can finally breathe properly again.'

Resident 2: 'My mother is very happy with the work that was carried out in her home. The team exceeded her expectations, and we cannot thank them enough.'

Resident 3: 'I have been battling with mould for 2 years, scrubbing and cleaning with no results. The team did a fantastic job – everything is so bright after the clean.'

Report damp and mould to us

If you are a council tenant and you need to tell us about a damp or mould problem within your Ealing Council property, you can contact us by:

Email: dampandmould@ealing.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 8825 5682

Telephone lines are open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 9am to 5pm and Thursday 10am to 5pm

[You can also submit a form online](#)

Further information and independent advice

Ealing energy advice helpline:

Freephone 0800 073 0236

For independent advice on:

- grants and discount schemes for heating and insulation
- using less energy in the home
- understanding fuel bills

Other options for independent advice:

[Shelter - damp and mould: what tenants need to know](#)

[Citizens Advice - repairs - damp](#)

[National Energy Action \(NEA\) - dealing with damp and condensation](#)