

Step 1 - Identify the most probable cause of the damp or mould



Penetrating Damp from above - This damp starts as a wet patch, often caused by roof or gutter leaks, or leaking pipes. Water may drip through, usually beginning at plasterboard joints. Black mould rarely forms unless a hole develops in the ceiling. Condensation can look similar, but you can tell the difference by checking if the loft insulation is also wet.



Dried Penetrating Damp - After repairs or between rainy periods, this damp appears as brown stains on walls or ceilings. It can also result from plumbing leaks. Water travels through the plaster, carrying brown debris with it. Black mould usually doesn't occur with this type of damp, and condensation won't cause this kind of staining.



Penetrating Damp through walls - This occurs when driving rain penetrates through a wall or door, leaving a damp patch and salt deposits. Black mould is usually not found with this type of damp because of the salts. If black mould appears, it's more likely caused by condensation settling on the cooler surface.



Condensation and Black Mould - In this case, a wardrobe placed close to an external wall reduces ventilation, allowing moist air to settle and black mould to form, often in a crescent/pyramid shape. Water droplets may also appear on windows, especially in the morning in bedrooms. In severe cases, droplets can form on ceilings, resembling a roof leak, but the insulation above will remain dry.



Mould on furniture - This is usually caused by too much water (as a gas) in the air. It can appear severe because furniture and clothing, especially leather, absorb water from the air easily. Despite the mould, the wall and floor in these cases are structurally dry.



Rising Damp - The least common type of damp, often misdiagnosed, rising damp occurs on ground floors and is identified by a tide mark up to 1m above the ground. Salts are usually visible on the surface, and black mould typically does not grow due to the presence of these salts. Condensation can sometimes look like this in older homes.



Step 2 - Landlords should:

- Repair leaking roofing, chimney and guttering
- Repair plumbing leaks
- Repair or replace faulty extractor fans
- Make sure your windows open and close
- Provide and maintain heating
- Renew building components in accordance with legislation and the Decent Homes Standard.



Step 3 - What can and should tenants be doing to prevent, reduce or resolve damp and mould?

- Wipe moisture from surfaces and windows as soon as it appears.
- Treat mould with a fungicidal treatment as soon as it appears, avoid using bleach alone or general cleaning products as these can spread mould further.
- Keep a clutter-free home, and avoid over loading storage cupboards to allow sufficient air circulation.
- Avoid placing furniture against external walls, leaving a 3 inch air gap between furniture and internal walls.
- Dry laundry outdoors where possible. When drying indoors, hang in the bathroom or kitchen with the fan on and door closed. Never dry on radiators.
- Keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed during and after use, with fans on or windows open (not both), cover pans when cooking.
- Open windows at either end of the home for around 5-20 minutes a day, every day (cross ventilation). You can also try the COUNT TO 5 technique, explained below.
- Try to maintain a fairly consistent temperature, between 18°C and 21°C during the day and at least 15°C at night. Avoid using propane heaters as they produce moisture.
- Promptly inform your landlord of any concerns about damp, mould or condensation
- Use a dehumidifier if needed, although this is not a long term solution.
- Keep window trickle vents open.

The Journey to a Damp & Mould Free Home



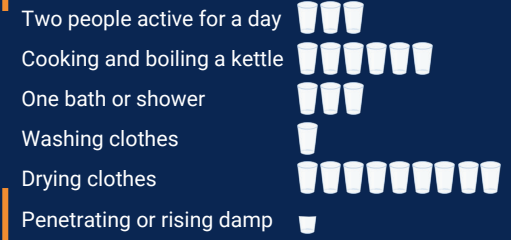
Step 5 Don't forget!

Like day to day cleaning to keep on top of dirt and dust, preventing damp and mould isn't a one-off action. It requires ongoing effort, learning and actions from both tenants and landlords. People will always create moisture and buildings will always require maintenance. If you notice any new or returning issues, let your landlord know.

Step 4 - It is worth speaking to your landlord about what improvements can be made to help prevent damp and mould. Grants may be available for these improvements.

- Installing extractor fans where there are none
- Upgrading fans to more effective types
- Installing air handling units
- Installing trickle vents to windows
- Increasing insulation to walls, cavities and/or roof spaces
- Upgrading heating to more cost-effective and consistent types.
- Adding retrospective damp-proofing

Where does the moisture come from? (pints)



The Right Tools For The Job

As well as visual inspections, we also have tools available to help us diagnose possible causes of damp. Damp meters measure how easily electricity passes through a material, which can help tell us if a material is dry or if further investigation is needed. Hygrometers measure humidity and temperature, with analogue gauges available to keep, and digital versions available for a short time period as part of an investigation.



TOP TIP: If you open a window on the side of the home receiving the least wind wider than an open window on the opposite side, pressure will remove stale air from the home without feeling so draughty. This is called **CROSS VENTILATION**.

Another great idea is the **COUNT TO 5** method. Every morning and bed time in bedrooms, open the window wide and count to 5 before closing it again. Do the same in kitchens and bathrooms before and after use. This releases the build up of pressure from moist air



Working in collaboration with:

YouTube @SafeSuffolkRenters
safesuffolkrenters@eastsuffolk.gov.uk
www.safesuffolkrenters.org

